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## The Relationship of Entrepreneurial Competencies and Entrepreneurial Intention of Disabled Youth: A Study on Behavioural and Managerial Competencies

Che Asniza Osman and Hardy Loh Rahim

Malaysian Academy of SME &amp; Entrepreneurship Development, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah, Alam, Malaysia.

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** There are about 445,006 disabled people in Malaysia, who were registered in 2012. The figure marked an increase by 71.87 percent from 283,204 in the year 2009. However, these figures do not reflect the real numbers, as in Malaysia, registration is not compulsory. Alarming, majority of them were not employed due to their disabilities and social stigma. They should be given equal rights, as the disabled would also be able to contribute to the economic growth of a country. One of the ways for effective economic empowerment for the disabled is by encouraging and supporting them in activities of their communities such as entrepreneurship - in order for them to be able to be independent and able to generate income on their own. **Objective:** To study the relevant behavioural and managerial entrepreneurial competencies that influence entrepreneurial intention for the disabled youth. **Results:** For behavioural entrepreneurial competencies, only opportunity seeking influence entrepreneurial intention positively whilst the other competencies; initiative, persistence and assertiveness do not influence entrepreneurial intention. Whereas for managerial entrepreneurial competencies, persuasion influences entrepreneurial intention positively, whilst problem solving and information seeking influence entrepreneurial intention negatively. **Conclusion:** This study proves that the competencies related to entrepreneurial intention differs from people with disability and those who are without disability. Though many of the entrepreneurial competencies in this study were the predictors for entrepreneurial intention for the common, it is not the case for the disabled. As little to none research has been done on the disabled in regards of entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention, this study fills the literature gap and extends the literature on the particular field.

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## INTRODUCTION

There are about 445,006 disabled people in Malaysia, who were registered in 2012 (UNICEF, 2014). The figure marked an increase by 71.87 percent from 283,204 in the year 2009 (Hashim, 2010). However, these figures do not reflect the real numbers, as in Malaysia, registration is not compulsory. Many of the disabled are 'hidden' at home or are placed in particular organizations due to social disgrace, prejudice and environmental obstacles that disallow them from participating effectively in the society.

People with disabilities essentially need to be empowered and their lives' requisite need to be taken care of. Hence, with the government intervention by providing benefits of equal rights, the disabled would also be able to contribute to the economic growth of a country (Osman et al., 2014). One of the ways for effective economic empowerment for the disabled is by encouraging and supporting them in activities of their communities such as entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is significantly known as a contributing factor towards economic growth for both developed and developing countries. The involvement of people with disabilities in the entrepreneurial activity will help to improve their quality of life as well as making the Millennium Development goal of most developing countries achievable by reducing fifty percent of the poverty rate by 2015 (Rahim et al., 2014; Mpofo and Shumba, 2013).

Disabled World (2014), disclosed about 10 percent or 650 million people of the world's population live with disability. It is also learnt that there are amongst 180 and 220 million youth (between ages 15-24 as per the United Nations) with disabilities and estimated around 80 per cent of them are living in developing countries (Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (2010-2011))

**Corresponding Author:** Che Asniza Osman, Malaysian Academy of SME & Entrepreneurship Development, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah, Alam, Malaysia.  
 E-mail: hardy@salam.uitm.edu.my

Issues highlighted on the disability by the World Bank, (2011) include; firstly is on inequalities that people with disabilities experience—for instance, when they are denied equal access to health care, education, employment, or political participation. Secondly, violation to dignity—for example, when they are subjected to violence, abuse, prejudice, or disrespect because of their disability. Finally, the disabled are deprived of autonomy—such as they are subjected to involuntary sterilization, or when they are kept in institutions against their will, or when they are regarded as legally incompetent.

In view of this, acquiring entrepreneurship skill is seen most relevant to help youth with disabilities and it is believed to be a vehicle for self-dependence, poverty reduction and economic empowerment (Oyewumi and Adeniyi (2013).

This paper takes on an empirical study on the entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention of disabled youth at the *Sekolah Menengah Pendidikan Khas Vokasional (SMPKV)*, a high school focusing on vocational education and training for the students with disabilities in the State of Shah Alam, Malaysia. The school accommodates youth with hearing impairment and learning disabilities. It is a public vocational high school which was established in 1996. The school has been supporting youth students by developing and sharpening their skills specialization through various courses. The youth can choose to attend any one of the 12 different courses offered.

A team of educationist conducted a basic Three-Day Entrepreneurship Workshop for the disabled youth through a collaborative program involving the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Malaysian Academy of SME & Entrepreneurship Development and the Special Vocational High School. A module was designed to embed into their curriculum and was named as The Special Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SYSEP). The module was developed with an aim to provide entrepreneurship values to the disabled youth. Also, the programme aspires to educate and give awareness to the disabled youth about entrepreneurship as their career choice so that they could exit from unemployment after completing school. SYSEP was a structured programme designed with several phases including: basic entrepreneurship workshop for the teachers and youth with disabled, product creation and prototyping, commercialization of products, report and documentation and monitoring of business transaction.

#### **Problem Statement:**

Most people with disabilities in the world are facing extremely difficult time with everyday survival let alone productive employment and personal fulfillment. Across the world, they have poorer health performances, poorer education achievements, lower economic participation and greater rates of poverty than the non-disabled people. This is partly because people with disabilities experience barriers in accessing facilities that many of us have long taken for granted, including health, education, employment, and transport as well as information. These difficulties are worsened in less advantaged communities what more when they are regarded as legally incompetent (WHO, 2011).

#### **Literature Review:**

##### **I. Entrepreneurial Competencies:**

The word competency has several definitions that depend on the tasks to be completed by individuals under different situation. Boyatzis (1982) describes competency as, "A capacity that exists in a person that leads to behavior that meets the job demands within the parameters of organizational environment, and that, in turn brings about desired results". Kaur and Bains, (2013) cited Spencer & Spenser definition of competency as an underlying characteristic of an individual that is connected to criterion referred to as superior performance in a job or state of affairs. In common, competency is known as the combination of knowledge, abilities, skills and other characteristics needed for effective job performance.

Entrepreneurial competency is recognized as the characteristics of an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial Development Institute of (EDI) Ahmadabad identified several factors that could regulate entrepreneurs' success. This factor include initiative, knowing, persistence, see and acts on opportunities, concern for high quality of work, commitment to work contrast, efficiency orientation, systematic planning, problem solving, self-confidence, assertiveness, monitoring, persuasion and concern for employee welfare (Kaur and Bain, 2013). Kochadai, (2012) explains that there are three components of entrepreneurial competencies which include attitudinal, behavioural and managerial. However, this paper is focusing on behavioural and managerial competencies.

According to Kochadai (2012), behavioural competencies discusses on the fundamental characteristics of causal relationship with effective of superior performances in the process of an entrepreneur carrying out his business activities. The following are the attributes of behavioural competencies; initiatives, sees and acting opportunities, assertiveness, persistence, creativity, need for achievement, risk-taking, drive and energy, need for autonomy and innovation. While managerial competencies is the way an entrepreneur approach to manage others and to make certain optimal use of available resources in achieving business objectives. The elements of managerial competencies involve information seeking, systematic planning, problem solving, goal setting and perseverance, persuasion, social skill, communication skill and technical knowledge.

## II. Entrepreneurial Intention:

Ashokan and Suresh, (2012) on citing Vesalainen and Pihkala, 1999, explains the definition of the word 'intent' is, "a state of mind directing a person's attention toward a specific object or a path in order to achieve something". Another quotation from Wu, Wu, 2008, Nabi, et. al., 2006, and Guerrero, et. al., 2008, defines entrepreneurial intention as feelings that people wish to create a new business venture or a new value driver inside existing organizations.

There are two models that can be referred when study entrepreneurial intention: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen,(1991) and Model of the Entrepreneurial Event (SEE) by Shapero and Sokol (1982).

In entrepreneurship theory and research it is identified that individual entrepreneurial intent is a significant and a continuing construct element.(Carr & Sequeira, 2007; Hmieleski & Corbett, 2006; Wilson et al., 2007). Entrepreneurial intent is extensively more than just as substitute for entrepreneurship. It is a valid and useful construct that can be used as a dependent, an independent and a control variable (Thompson, 2009).

## III. Disability:

According to the International Classification(IC) developed by World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2001, "disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)" (WHO, 2011).

The Malaysian Disability Act, 2008 defines persons with disabilities such as mental, physical, intellectual or sensory impairments, who are in interaction with environmental barriers and it prevents them from participating productively in the society. Hashim, (2010) classifies disabilities into different categories such as visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically disabled, learning disabilities, mental disabilities, speech impairment, and multiple disabilities.

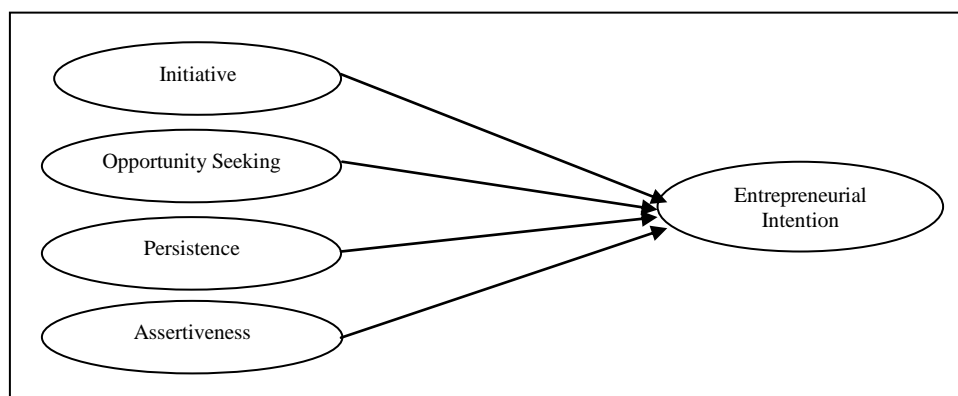
## Research Method:

This research employs a survey using standard questionnaire as a primary data collection technique. The questionnaire was presented in both languages, Bahasa Malaysia and English. 5-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used. The measures were adapted from previous study (Osman et al., 2014). The samples in this study were disabled students from *Sekolah Menengah Pendidikan Khas Vokasional (SMPKV)*, a high school focusing on vocational education and training for the students with disabilities. 87 students were chosen using the random sampling technique from 195 students. Face to face interview with the assistance from the teachers was conducted, thus 100% response rate was achieved. Frequency, descriptive, reliability, correlation and multiple regression analysis were tested in this study. The study focuses on two different entrepreneurship models – behavioural competencies (Figure I) and managerial competencies (Figure II). The objectives of this study are to identified which competencies are predictors to their entrepreneurship intention and which model suits the disabled respondents the most.

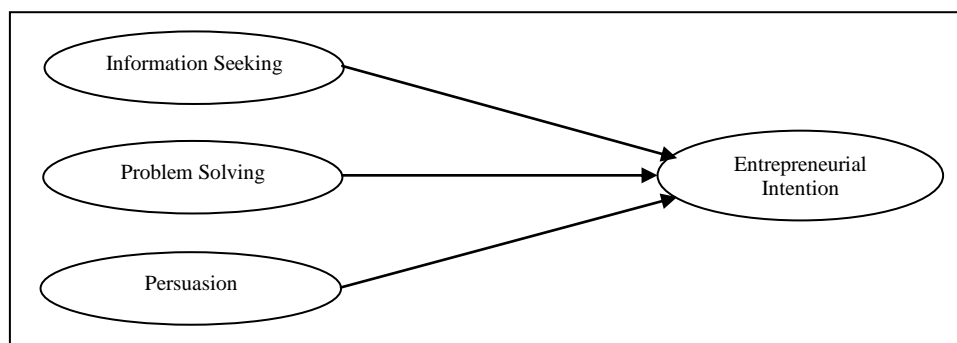
## Results and Findings:

### A. Frequency Analysis:

The frequency statistics of the respondents is shown in Table I. The respondents are SMPKV students, which consists of male (n=49, 56.3%) and female (n=38, 43.7%). Majority are at the age of 19 years old (n=45, 51.7%) and 18 years (n=31, 35.6%). There are 12 specialization offered in the school, the most popular specialization was electrical and welding (n=15, 17.2%), followed by computer technology (n=14, 16.1%) and tailoring (n=13, 14.9%). The learning disabilities faced by the students are learning disability (n=53, 60.9%) and hearing impaired (n=34, 39.1%).



**Fig. I:** Theoretical framework of behavioural competencies.



**Fig. II:** Theoretical framework of managerial competencies.

**Table 1:** Demographic Frequency Analysis.

Variable	Description	N	%
Gender	Male	49	56.3
	Female	38	43.7
	Total	87	100
Age	17	8	9.1
	18	31	35.6
	19	45	51.7
	20	1	1.14
	25	2	2.29
	Total	87	100
Specialization	Batik painting	9	10.3
	Computer technology	14	16.1
	Hairstyling	5	5.8
	Furniture-making	10	11.5
	Tailoring	13	14.9
	Electrical and welding	15	17.2
	Air-conditioning	3	3.4
	Chambermaid	6	6.9
	Construction	3	3.4
	Metal arc	2	2.3
	Vehicle assembly	2	2.3
	Food and beverage	5	5.8
	Total	87	100
Types of disabilities	Learning disability	53	60.9
	Hearing impaired	34	39.1
	Total	87	100

### B. Descriptive Analysis:

The descriptive analysis of the variables for behavioural competencies is shown in Table II. The mean for initiative is 3.68, opportunity seeking is 3.84, persistence is 3.77 and assertiveness is 3.62.

**Table II:** Mean result for behavioural competencies.

No	Questions	Mean
Variable : Initiative		3.68
1	I look for things that need to be done.	3.78
2	I do things that need to be done before being asked to by others.	3.68
3	I do things before it is necessary that they must be done.	3.54
4	I take action before others	3.72
Variable : Opportunity seeking		3.84
1	I like challenges and new opportunities	3.86
2	I notice opportunities to do new things.	3.82
3	I try things that are very new and different from what I have done before.	3.98
4	I take advantage of opportunities that arise.	3.69
Variable : Persistence		3.77
1	When faced with difficult problem, I spend a lot of time trying to find a solution.	3.92
2	I try several times to get people to do what I would like them to do.	3.61
3	When something gets in the way of what I am trying to do, I keep on trying to accomplish what I want.	3.39
4	I try several ways to overcome things that get in the way of reaching my goals.	4.14
Variable : Assertiveness		3.62
1	I tell others when they have not performed as expected.	3.67
2	If I am angry or upset with someone, I will inform that person	3.98
3	When I disagree with others, I let them know.	3.60
4	I tell people what they have to do, even if they do not want to do it.	3.23

The descriptive analysis of the variables for managerial competencies are shown in Table III. The mean for information seeking is 4.07, problem solving is 3.65, and persuasion is 3.56.

**Table III:** Mean result for managerial competencies.

No	Questions	Mean
Variable : Information seeking		
1	When starting a new task or project, I gather a great deal of information.	4.14
2	I seek the advice of people who know a lot about the problems or tasks I am working on.	4.45
3	When working on project for someone, I ask many questions to be sure I understand what the person wants	3.83
4	I go to several different sources to get information to help with tasks or projects.	3.85
Variable : Problem solving		
1	I think of unique solutions to problems.	3.45
2	I think of many new ideas.	3.82
3	I think of many ways to solve problems.	3.54
4	If one approach to a problem does not work, I will think of another approach.	3.78
Variable : Persuasion		
1	I get others to support my recommendations.	3.72
2	I convince others of my ideas.	3.31
3	I want others to see how I will be able to accomplish what I have planned.	4.08
4	I am very persuasive with others.	3.11

The descriptive analysis of entrepreneurial intention is shown in Table IV. The mean for it is 3.67

**Table IV:** Mean result for entrepreneurial intention.

No	Questions	Mean
1	I am considering in becoming an entrepreneur once in completed my study	3.70
2	I will make every effort to start and run my own business.	3.80
3	My professional goal is becoming an entrepreneur.	3.45
4	I am determined to create my own business in the future.	3.63
5	I have seriously thought in starting a business.	3.79
Average		<b>3.67</b>

### C. Reliability Analysis:

Table V describes the reliability of the constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha value ranges between 0.625 and 0.928, which is within the recommended value. (Hair et al.,2010).The result shows that the measures used in this research are reliable.

**Table V:** Reliability analysis.

No	Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha's Value
1	Initiative	4	0.625
2	Opportunity Seeking	4	0.686
3	Persistence	4	0.749
4	Assertiveness	4	0.660
5	Information Seeking	4	0.606
6	Problem Solving	4	0.674
7	Persuasion	4	0.669
8	Entrepreneurial Intention	5	0.928

### D. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis:

Pearson correlation coefficient analysis has been conducted to determine the strength and direction of relationships of each construct. Table VI indicates that for behavioural competencies model, only opportunity seeking (0.251) has significant positive correlation on entrepreneurial intention.

**Table VI:** Pearson correlation coefficient analysis (behavioural competencies).

Construct	Initiative	Opportunity Seeking	Persistence	Assertiveness
Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.079	0.251*	0.040	0.155

While Table VII indicates that for managerial competencies model, only persuasion (0.354) has positive correlation on entrepreneurial intention.

**Table VII:** Pearson correlation coefficient analysis (managerial competencies).

Construct	Information Seeking	Problem solving	Persuasion
Entrepreneurial Intention	-0.078	0.043	0.354**

### E. Multiple Regression Analysis:

Further analysis was performed using multiple regression. Based on the adjusted R-square (0.091) in Table VIII, it shows that the behavioural model explains 9% of variance in entrepreneurial intention of disabled youth. The Durbin-Watson value (2.082) indicates independence of residual and there is no problem of serial correlation (Field, 2005).

**Table VIII:** Model summary (behavioural competencies).

Model	Construct	Adjusted R Square	Durbin-Watson
	Initiative Opportunity seeking Persistence Assertiveness	0.091	2.082

Table IX shows that the managerial model explains 40% of variance in entrepreneurial intention of disabled youth based on the adjusted R-square (0.402). The Durbin-Watson value (1.527) indicates independence of residual and there is no problem of serial correlation (Field, 2005).

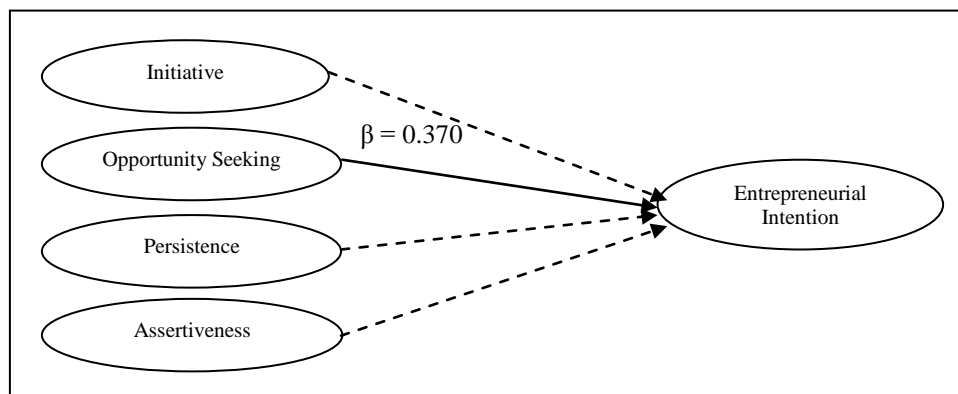
**Table IX:** Model summary (managerial competencies).

Model	Construct	Adjusted R Square	Durbin-Watson
	Information seeking Problem solving Persuasion	0.402	1.527

Table X indicates that for behavioural model, only opportunity seeking ( $\beta = 0.370$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly influence the entrepreneurial intention for disabled youth. The collinearity statistic indicates that there is no multicollinearity issue as VIF ranges from 2.206 to 3.176, below the cut of point of 10 (Hair et al., 2010).

**Table X:** Multiple regression analysis between variables (behavioural competencies).

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Initiative	-0.396	0.215	-0.282	-1.847	0.068	0.453	2.206
Opportunity seeking	0.503	0.213	0.370	2.357	0.021	0.428	2.335
Persistence	-0.139	0.224	-0.114	-0.621	0.536	0.315	3.176
Assertiveness	0.190	0.224	0.146	0.846	0.400	0.355	2.815

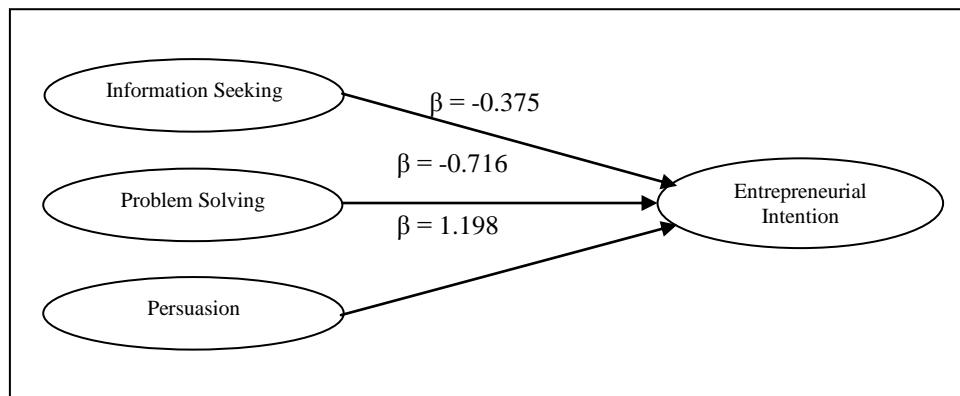


**Fig. III:** Hypothesis testing of behavioural competencies model.

While for managerial model, Table XI indicates that all of the variables significantly influence the entrepreneurial intention for disabled youth. Persuasion is the most significant predictor ( $\beta = 7.591$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), while information seeking ( $\beta = -0.375$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and problem solving ( $\beta = -0.716$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) has significant negative relationship with entrepreneurial intention for disabled youth. The collinearity statistic indicates that there is no multicollinearity issue as VIF ranges from 1.865 to 3.582, below the cut of point of 10 (Hair et al., 2010).

**Table XI:** Multiple regression analysis between variables (managerial competencies).

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Information seeking	-0.640	0.195	-0.375	-3.292	0.001	0.536	1.865
Problem solving	-0.995	0.224	-0.716	-4.441	0.000	0.267	3.739
Persuasion	-1.478	0.195	1.198	7.591	0.000	0.279	3.582



**Fig. IV:** Hypothesis testing of managerial competencies.

#### Discussion:

Based on the result, it shows that in behavioural competencies model, only opportunity seeking influence entrepreneurial intention while all of the constructs in managerial competencies model influence the entrepreneurial intention. However, the managerial model illustrates that only persuasion has positive influence on entrepreneurial intention while information seeking and problem solving have negative influence on entrepreneurial intention. Hence, for the disabled, it helps to increase their persuasion skills in order for them to be entrepreneurs but it will bring opposite effect if they were to rely on information seeking and problem solving, probably due to their disability. While in terms of behavioural, the disabled need to increase their opportunity seeking competency to increase their intention on becoming an entrepreneur.

This study proves that the competencies related to entrepreneurial intention differs from people with disability and those who are without disability. Though many of the entrepreneurial competencies in this study were the predictors for entrepreneurial intention for the common, it is not the case for the disabled. People with disabilities behave and react differently compared to those without any, this may be the cause behind the differential results in terms of their entrepreneurial competencies towards entrepreneurial intentions. As little to none research has been done on the disabled in regards of entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention, this study fills the literature gap and extends the literature on the particular fields.

This study has its limitation as respondents are restricted to the disabled students from only one particular school (SMPKV). Therefore, future empirical research could be done in a group with bigger number of respondents to understand the scenario better. Another research could also be done to understand why there is a difference of entrepreneurial competencies for people with disabilities compared to those who are not.

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