

# How does Enterprise Awareness assist the Physically Challenged Persons to Participate in appropriate Small Businesses? An Empirical Study among the PCPs in Starehe Constituency, Kenya

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## Abstract

According to the 2019 Population Census, approximately 2.2% of Kenyans have disabilities, with Nairobi County accounting for 0.2% of the total population. Specifically, within Starehe constituency, 0.05% of residents are physically challenged individuals. These individuals experience significant disparities, including extreme poverty, limited access to education, housing, and employment opportunities. The study investigated the impact of enterprise awareness on the participation of physically challenged individuals in small businesses. A sample of 319 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique from a total of 1878 individuals with disabilities residing in Starehe constituency, Nairobi County. To assess the influence of enterprise awareness, respondents were asked ten Likert scale questions regarding enterprise awareness programs and small businesses. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 24.0. The majority of respondents (70%) agreed that enterprise awareness programs help physically challenged persons understand the opportunities available in small businesses. These programs are perceived as essential in raising awareness, empowering individuals, boosting confidence and self-esteem, enhancing knowledge and skills, providing access to funding options and resources, and overcoming barriers. Based on these findings, the study recommends further development and promotion of enterprise awareness programs to create a supportive environment and facilitate networking within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

**Key words:** *Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Awareness, Monitoring and Evaluation, Physically Challenged Persons, Small Businesses*

## Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report shows that approximately 1.5 billion (15%) of people globally live with physical challenges (UN, 2018). Among individuals with disabilities, women constitute three out of five cases. The majority of persons with disabilities reside in developing nations, with more than eighty percent facing poverty (WHO, 2011). Disabled individuals encounter significant participation challenges due to discrimination, leading to marginalization and barriers to involve them in constructive activities. They face inequalities across cultural, political, social, and structural environments, resulting in limited opportunities, exclusion, attitudinal and institutional barriers, as well as inadequate access to physical and virtual spaces. Additionally, disabled women and girls experience intersecting discrimination, facing gender-based segregation and violence both in private and public domains (Della, 2017).

These challenges faced by persons with disabilities have far-reaching social and economic impacts on both individuals and their communities. Unemployment rates among disabled women and men surpass those of their non-disabled counterparts, leading to a loss of over five percent of global GDP (Buckup, 2009). The high rates of unemployment and low wages jeopardize the livelihoods of disabled individuals and contribute to their poverty. They also face difficulties acquiring necessary personal support and accessing medical care. The establishment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) in 2006 aimed

at advocating for equal promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human dignity for disabled individuals. To ensure inclusivity of the physically challenged persons in development programs, the UNDP uses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to promote the PWDs. Involving the disabled individuals in self-employment is one of the possible solutions to address their inadequate participation in managing their start-ups. According to Arnold and Seekins (2002), establishing their own businesses can rehabilitate and integrate the physically challenged persons into active employment. The European 2020 Strategy and Lisbon agenda also emphasize entrepreneurship as a growth which is sustainable, smart, and inclusive. The solution to address challenges in the employment sector and social exclusion is only through entrepreneurship (De Clerq & Honig, 2011)

In Australia, where over four million people live with disabilities, self-employment has been significant in increasing their participation in the labor force (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Statistics show that over 80% of disabled individuals in Australia have physical disabilities, while around 20% have mental disabilities. However, despite their high participation rate of over 52%, ranking 25th out of 29 member states (OECD, 2010), more than 44% of disabled individuals in Australia still live-in poverty. To address this issue, the Australian government has taken steps to engage the abled differently in the labor force. The creation of a Disability Employment Taskforce and the implementation of initiatives like the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme have provided support and training services for disabled individuals to pursue self-employment (Australian Department of Social Services, 2015).

In Tanzania, persons living with disabilities are among the most socially excluded, marginalized, and poorest. They have limited access to social capital, support networks, education, and face high unemployment rates compared to their non-disabled peers (Rohwerder, 2020). Disabled individuals often experience food insecurity and are found in the poorest households, headed by disabled individuals who are unable to work (Rohwerder, 2019). For the poor people, start-up capital poses a significant barrier for disabled individuals to participate in appropriate small businesses. on the informal sector, Hence, self-employment through small businesses has become the only way for most disabled individuals in Tanzania to survive. Only 2% of disabled individuals in the country's mainland are engaged in formal employment, and the private and public sectors have low representation of disabled individuals (Mboya, 2019). Statistics show that Tanzania loses over 480 million US dollars annually through employment exclusion arising from discrimination and inaccessible work environments. Unemployment among disabled individuals prevents their active participation in the community and leads to reliance on begging (Rohwerder, 2020).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed social security guidelines through conventions and recommendations, and Kenya, as a member, adheres to these guidelines. ILO Recommendation 202 on National Social Protection Floors, introduced in 2009, aimed at achieving socio-economic development and strengthening human rights through an integration strategy. The approach aims at meeting essential healthcare, education, adequate nutrition, and a basic level of income, with a specific focus on responsiveness, non-discrimination, disability dignity, and respect for human rights (SPF Advisory Group, 2011). Kenya's 2009 Draft on Social Protection Policy recognizes the importance of alleviating poverty by providing support to orphans, vulnerable children, aged people, and the abled differently. These groups are identified as social protection targets. The right to employment and work, and the right to adequate living standards are the rights of the disabled persons as reflected in Articles 27 and 28 respectively. Training, social benefits, and counselling are parliamentary Acts that empower disabled persons to access any help from the Government of Kenya.

The Kenya's eighth Population and Housing Census, conducted in August 2019, provided valuable data for the government to design disability-inclusive policies and programs. According to this census, around 900000 persons in Kenya exhibit a particular disability. Out of this population, 2.5% consist of women, while 1.9% represent men. Disabled individuals in urban areas make up 1.4% of the population, while those in rural areas account for 2.6%. Mobility difficulties is the most common type of disability, and it affects approximately 400000 persons. Vision, hearing, cognition, self-care, and communication form the other forms of disabilities. with prevalence ranging from 12% to 36%. The population of individuals with albinism is 0.02%. Consequently, it is

important to consider the involvement of the physically challenged persons in business activities to support their livelihoods and enable them to lead dignified lives.

According to According to the 2019 Population Census, approximately 2.2% of the Kenyan population (0.9 million individuals) are living with disabilities, with Nairobi County accounting for 0.2% of the total. Within Starehe constituency, 0.05% represents the physically challenged individuals who face significant inequalities, such as inadequate access to employment opportunities, housing, education, extreme poverty, and employment opportunities. The abled-differently constituents of Starehe lack the necessary enterprise awareness skills to initiate and expand their knowledge and understanding in starting appropriate small business ventures to improve their living standards. This inadequacy increases negative attitudes towards them. In a similar measure, they face an uphill task in securing financial assistance from credit institutions which make them unable to start small businesses. These ventures need funds since they involve assistants, equipment, and technology. Currently, ICT tools have revolutionized the business world which includes the abled-differently. These persons lack these essential tools to run their start-ups in order to compete favorably with their normal colleagues in securing clients and selling their goods and services.

Hiring companies often struggle employing the physically challenged persons due to perceived limitations and the need for additional support, which can increase operational costs. As a result, many individuals with disabilities resort to self-employment or even end up begging on the streets of Nairobi to support themselves and their dependents. Thus, including persons with physical challenges in mainstream income-generating projects creates employment opportunities and improves their livelihoods. Despite attempts by abled differently in Kenya to establish income-generating ventures, they experience inadequate information on the challenges they face and the dynamics of their businesses. Stigmatization and discrimination further hinder their full participation in social and economic activities, leading to their marginalization within the community. Starehe constituency, located in Nairobi County, is home to a significant number of physically challenged individuals who either beg on the streets or engage in small businesses. Entrepreneurship has become a vital means for them to survive in Nairobi and meet their various needs, such as housing, education, and healthcare. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the County Government of Nairobi has initiated research on interventions to integrate physically challenged individuals into appropriate small businesses in Starehe constituency. It is the backdrop of this context that the study investigated the role of enterprise awareness in facilitating the participation of physically challenged individuals in suitable small businesses within Starehe Constituency.

## **Literature Review**

Examining how the characteristics of physically challenged persons match with their involvement in business is a revelation that gender, residential location, education, severity and impairment type influence entrepreneurship (Sainsbury, 2018). In this case, individuals experiencing greater limitations in daily chores exhibit higher self-employment prevalence as opposed to the ones with lower limitations. Castillo and Fischer (2019) discovered that men and women in the United Kingdom affected by musculoskeletal conditions and women with mental impairments were more engaged in business activities, whereas men with sensory nerve impairments showed little participation.

Many researchers argue that unemployment, autonomy, employer apathy, socio-economic factors, and financial paybacks drive individuals to entrepreneurship. Self-employment is seen as the most viable income source for disabled individuals due to factors such as proximity to work, flexibility in tasks, and time management (TK, 2019). According to Pagan (2018), there is a preference for self-employment especially for individuals with extreme physical disabilities. The physically challenged persons turn to self-employment as a result of employer discrimination and limited job opportunities (Dhar and Farzana, 2017). It becomes difficult for physically challenged persons to secure jobs due the negative stereotypes surrounding disability and biased employer perceptions. Individuals with physical and mental challenges face even more employer discrimination (Pagan, 2018). Consequently, the next best option for their survival becomes self-employment which balances disability and work for the abled differently.

It is worth noting that disabled business owners often work alone, operate from home, and rarely hire employees. Researchers found that individuals with mild disabilities or no disabilities had more than 74% of their businesses employing others, whereas 80% of disabled individuals operated without employees. Additionally, disabled individuals in self-employment have a likelihood of retiring from work compared to their non-disabled equals. Regarding the transition from self-employment to other types of employment, Pagan-Rodriguez (2012) discovered that females with disabilities had a higher possibility of transitioning to other jobs from being self-employed compared to females without disabilities. Overall, a higher proportion of disabled individuals incline to leave employment and opt for entrepreneurship.

In any nation's economic development, small businesses have a critical part to play as they contribute to the growth of indigenous and local entrepreneurs (Erdem & Erdem, 2011). However, it is important to maintain a realistic perspective on the significance of small businesses in relation to living standards national growth. The healthy activities of small businesses (Fabayo, 2009), influence the success of large-scale enterprises. Small businesses can be categorized as survivalist, medium, very small, and micro-businesses. Survivalist enterprises possess little to no assets and need minimal start-up capital. They are often undertaken by unemployed individuals and generate income that is below the poverty line, meeting basic survival needs. Typically operating in the informal sector, the expansion of survivalist businesses is unlikely. Micro-businesses can be initiated and managed by the owner and their family, with an employment capacity of five employees (Fadahunsi, 2012). These businesses do not require formal premises and fall below the government's value-added tax threshold. Transitioning into small enterprises may involve the application of business skills and relevant training.

Micro and small businesses initiated and run by individuals with disabilities hold several significances for them. These businesses offer flexible working hours, proximity to residence, access to local markets, and ease of entry. For disabled individuals facing challenges in securing employment in the traditional job market, these small enterprises provide a cost-effective means of livelihood. The participation of disabled individuals in small businesses contributes to the well-being of their families. The income generated from these businesses improves the psychological well-being of the participants, further demonstrating their ability to initiate and manage a business (Thibault et al., 2002). Self-employment is prevalent among small business owners, who face various challenges in running and expanding their businesses. Success in small businesses depends on factors such as business structure, technology utilization, and access to financing (Kithae et al., 2012). However, the long-term development and survival of these entrepreneurs are limited. The key hindrances to the success of small businesses in Kenya involve poor financing, inaccurate and irrelevant business information, insufficient management and business skills, and inadequate information and communication technology (Kinyua, 2013).

In Kenya, there has been a lack of focus on entrepreneurs with disabilities in national surveys and Small and Medium Enterprises reports, leading to limited data on these businesspersons. This matter calls for interventions that boost their business development opportunities through financial resources, technical support, and managerial training (WHO, 2017). Globally, small and micro-enterprises have been recognized for their contribution to poverty reduction, job creation, and economic stimulation, thereby improving living standards (Filion & Dolabela, 2007).

The term "enterprise awareness" refers to initiatives that focus on expanding self-employment and small business ownership's understanding and knowledge that involve potential benefits, challenges, and associated risks. By providing awareness training, aspiring entrepreneurs with physical disabilities can boost their confidence levels and gain a better understanding of entrepreneurship (Foster, 2010). Training can also be provided to advisors who support disabled individuals, enabling them to offer more effective services tailored to the needs of disabled entrepreneurs. This training not only opens up opportunities for disabled individuals considering self-employment but also helps advisors recognize self-employment as a viable option to address negative stereotypes and provide long-term solutions for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, enterprise awareness is vital for boosting the confidence of physically challenged individuals to pursue self-employment.

Role models with disabilities can serve as powerful examples to promote business creation among disabled entrepreneurs. Showcasing these role models can inspire potential entrepreneurs with disabilities, demonstrating that self-employment is achievable and providing motivation to pursue business ventures. Additionally, disabled role models help to overcome stereotypes and negative attitudes relating to the societies physically challenged. Another way to increase awareness is by recognizing and awarding successful disabled entrepreneurs, highlighting their success stories and inspiring others with disabilities to pursue entrepreneurship. These rewards can take the form of public recognition or financial support, further encouraging and promoting self-employment among individuals with disabilities.

### Methodology

The study applied a mixed methodology comprising of the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The study employed a case study design whose descriptive analysis enabled the researcher to investigate the subject devoid of any natural workflow disruption. The selection of this method was purely because of its capability to answer questions such as “what” and “how” (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

The study was conducted in Starehe constituency, located in Nairobi County in the Republic of Kenya. The target population consisted of 1878 physically challenged individuals who were in need of empowerment through small businesses.

To determine this study’s sample size, a sampling calculator was applied, and it considered a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5% from a target population of 1878 (Naing, et al., 2006). Hence, from the calculation, 381 participants became the sample size. This was as presented in Table 1.

*Table 1 Sampling Matrix*

Type of Disability	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage
Mobility Challenges	783	133	42
Visual Challenges	835	142	44
Hearing Challenges	260	44	14
Total	1878	319	100

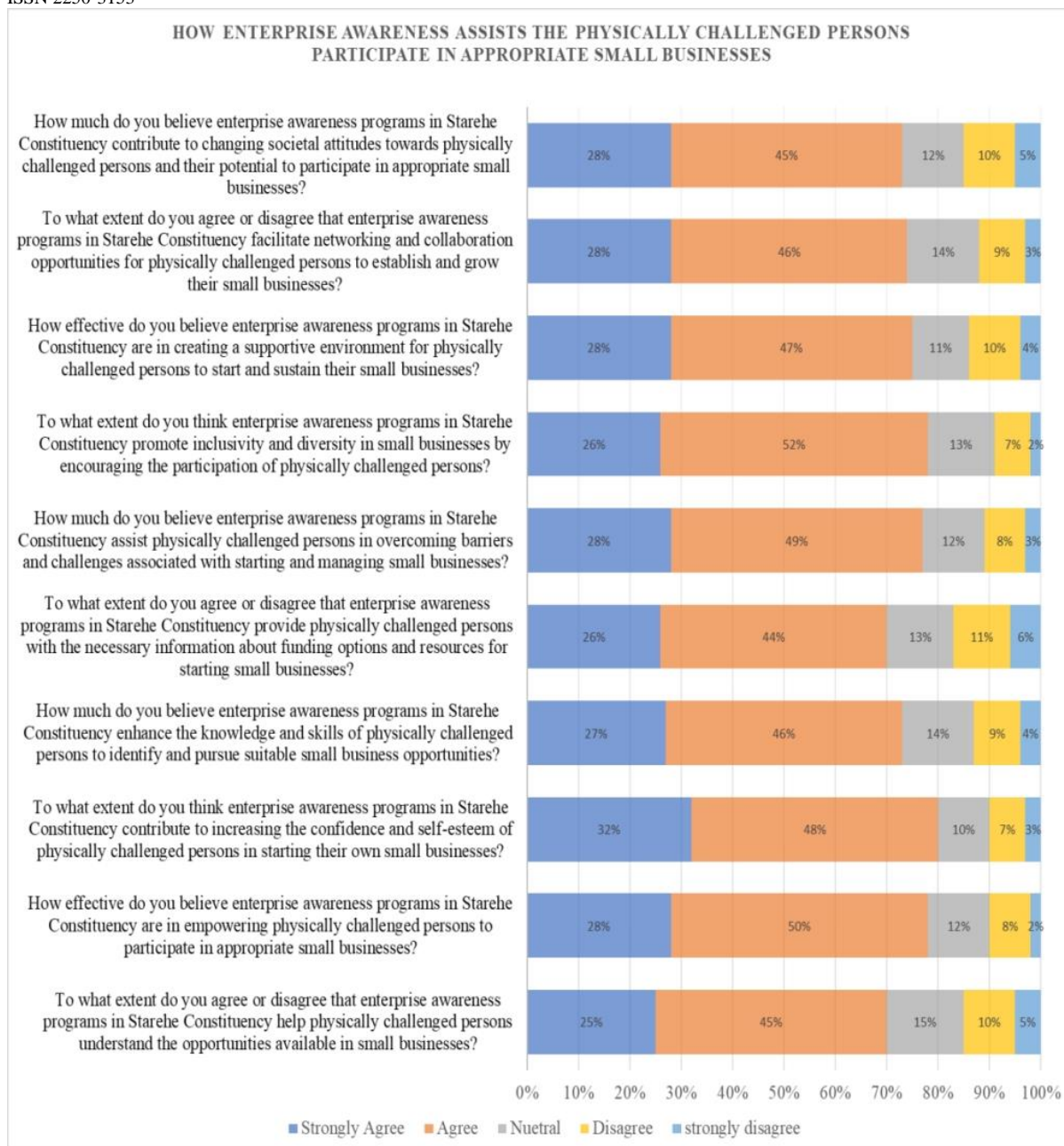
Data collection involved structured questionnaire and focused group discussions among the disabled research participants, and interviews among the community leaders, residents, and professionals. To ensure validity, the questionnaire included the study objectives, aligning the questions with the research goals. A pilot study was conducted in Nairobi Central Business District. A test-retest method was used using the pilot data to assess reliability such that the same questionnaire or structured interview was administered to respondents at different times.

Actual study quantitative data was analyzed in relation to the research questions using SPSS version 24.0, while qualitative data was reported, categorized, and organized using established themes. The closed-ended questions were subjected to analysis utilizing the nominal scale, whereas the open-ended questions underwent conceptual content analysis.

### Results and Discussions

In order to establish how enterprise awareness assists the physically challenged persons participate in appropriate small businesses in Starehe constituency, the respondents were given 10 Likert scale questions that focused on enterprise awareness programs and small businesses. The results are as presented in figure 1.





**Figure 1: How Enterprise Awareness Assists the Physically Challenged Persons Participate in Appropriate Small Businesses in Starehe Constituency**

To measure the influence of enterprise awareness programs in helping the physically challenged persons understand the opportunities available in small businesses, the respondents indicated agreement levels with the statement “To what extent do you agree or disagree that enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency help physically challenged persons understand the opportunities available in small businesses?” The results show that most of the respondents (70%) either agree or strongly agree that enterprise awareness programs help physically challenged persons understand the opportunities available in small businesses as presented in figure 1. This indicates that these programs are perceived as beneficial in increasing awareness among physically challenged individuals about small business opportunities. As one respondent stated, "Enterprise awareness programs play a crucial role in helping physically challenged individuals understand the potential opportunities in small businesses. They provide valuable inputs and information for informed decision-making." To measure the influence of enterprise awareness programs in empowering physically challenged persons to participate in appropriate small businesses, the respondents indicated their agreement level with the statement “How effective do you believe enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency are in empowering physically

challenged persons to participate in appropriate small businesses". From the results, a significant percentage of respondents (78%) either agree or strongly agree that enterprise awareness programs are effective in empowering physically challenged persons to participate in appropriate small businesses as presented in figure 1. This suggests that these programs are seen as impactful in enabling physically challenged individuals to engage in suitable small business activities. From the interviews, a respondent commented, "Enterprise awareness programs are highly effective in empowering physically challenged persons through the necessary resources, knowledge, and skills, and resources to run small businesses that align with their abilities and interests."

To measure the influence of enterprise awareness programs in contributing to increasing the confidence and self-esteem of physically challenged persons in starting their own small businesses, the respondents indicated their agreement levels with the statement "To what extent do you think enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency contribute to increasing the confidence and self-esteem of physically challenged persons in starting their own small businesses". From the results, significant proportion of respondents (80%) either agree or strongly agree that enterprise awareness programs contribute to increasing the confidence and self-esteem of physically challenged persons in starting their own small businesses as presented in figure 1. This matter suggests that these programs are perceived as instrumental in boosting the self-confidence and self-esteem of physically challenged individuals, as one respondent noted. To measure the influence of enterprise awareness programs in enhancing the knowledge and skills of physically challenged persons to identify and pursue suitable small business opportunities, the respondents indicated their agreement levels with the statement "How much do you believe enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency enhance the knowledge and skills of physically challenged persons to identify and pursue suitable small business opportunities". From the results, majority of respondents (73%) either agree or strongly agree that enterprise awareness programs enhance the knowledge and skills of physically challenged persons to identify and pursue suitable small business opportunities. This indicates that these programs are seen as effective in improving the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills of physically challenged individuals. As one respondent mentioned, "Enterprise awareness programs are valuable in enhancing the knowledge and skills of physically challenged persons, equipping them with the necessary tools to identify and pursue suitable small business opportunities."

To measure the influence of enterprise awareness programs in providing physically challenged persons with the necessary information about funding options and resources for starting small businesses, the respondents indicated their agreement levels with the statement "To what extent do you agree or disagree that enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency provide physically challenged persons with the necessary information about funding options and resources for starting small businesses". From the results, a significant percentage of respondents (70%) either agree or strongly agree that enterprise awareness programs provide physically challenged persons with the necessary information about funding options and resources for starting small businesses. This suggests that these programs are perceived as effective in bridging the information gap and providing access to funding options and resources for physically challenged individuals.

To measure the influence of enterprise awareness programs in assisting physically challenged persons in overcoming barriers and challenges associated with starting and managing small businesses, the respondents indicated agreement levels with the statement "How much do you believe enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency assist physically challenged persons in overcoming barriers and challenges associated with starting and managing small businesses". From the results, a majority of respondents (77%) either agree or strongly agree that enterprise awareness programs assist physically challenged persons in overcoming barriers and challenges associated with starting and managing small businesses. This indicates that these programs are perceived as helpful in addressing the unique challenges faced by physically challenged individuals in the entrepreneurial journey. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents perceive enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency as beneficial in increasing awareness, empowering physically challenged individuals, boosting their confidence and self-esteem, enhancing their knowledge and skills, providing necessary information about funding options and resources, and assisting in overcoming barriers and challenges associated with starting and managing small businesses. These programs are seen as valuable resources that

contribute to the inclusion and empowerment of physically challenged persons in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. As one respondent aptly summarized, "Enterprise awareness programs are a lifeline for physically challenged individuals, providing them with the necessary support and resources to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and overcome challenges. They promote self-employment as a feasible way for the physically challenged individuals." Overall, the findings suggest that enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency are perceived as effective in promoting inclusivity, empowering physically challenged individuals, creating a supportive environment, facilitating networking and in overcoming barriers and challenges associated with starting and managing small businesses. The findings suggest that enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency are generally perceived as beneficial and effective in various aspects of empowering physically challenged individuals in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. These programs are seen as instrumental in increasing awareness, empowering individuals, boosting confidence and self-esteem, enhancing knowledge and skills, providing necessary information about funding options and resources, and assisting in overcoming barriers and challenges associated with starting and managing small businesses. The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree with the positive impact of these programs.

These findings agree with study by Smith et al., (2018) on "The Impact of Enterprise Awareness Programs on Physically Challenged Individuals' Entrepreneurial Opportunities". This study conducted a survey among physically challenged individuals who had participated in enterprise awareness programs in various constituencies. Regarding the effectiveness of the programs in increasing their understanding of small business opportunities, the results showed a high level of agreement among the respondents. The findings align with the majority agreement observed in this research regarding the effect of enterprise awareness programs on helping physically challenged persons understand opportunities in small businesses. These findings also agree with study by Johnson et al., (2020) on "Empowering Physically Challenged Individuals through Enterprise Awareness Programs: A Qualitative Analysis". This qualitative study explored the perceptions and experiences of physically challenged individuals who had taken part in enterprise awareness programs in Starehe Constituency. The findings revealed that these programs were highly effective in empowering participants to engage in appropriate small businesses. The respondents reported gaining knowledge, skills, and resources necessary for starting and managing businesses that aligned with their abilities and interests. These findings by Johnson et al., (2020) support the high agreement observed in this research on the effect of enterprise awareness activities on empowering physically challenged persons to participate in suitable small businesses.

On the other hand, these findings differ with study by Brown et al. (2019) on "Challenges and Limitations of Enterprise Awareness Programs for Physically Challenged Individuals". This study conducted interviews and surveys among physically challenged individuals who had participated in enterprise awareness programs in different constituencies. The results indicated a lower level of agreement compared to the current study, suggesting that these programs may not be as effective in increasing confidence and self-esteem in starting their own small businesses. The findings from this study differ from the high agreement observed in this research on the effect of enterprise awareness activities on increasing the confidence and self-esteem of physically challenged persons. Still, the study differs with study by Anderson et al., (2021) on "Assessing the Impact of Enterprise Awareness Programs on the Entrepreneurial Knowledge and Skills of Physically Challenged Individuals". This study employed pre- and post-program assessments to examine how enterprise awareness programs impact entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of physically challenged individuals. The findings showed a lower level of agreement compared to the current study, suggesting that these programs may not be as effective in enhancing the skills and knowledge needed for identifying and pursuing suitable small enterprise opportunities. The results from this study differ from the majority agreement observed in the current study regarding the influence of enterprise awareness programs on enhancing the knowledge and skills of physically challenged persons.

In summary, while majority of studies and respondents support the positive influence of enterprise awareness programs on physically challenged individuals, there are studies that present differing viewpoints. It is important to consider multiple perspectives and



further research to grasp the effectiveness of these programs in enhancing inclusion and empowerment in the entrepreneurial ecosystem for physically challenged individuals.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study highlighted the significant role of enterprise awareness programs in facilitating the participation of physically challenged individuals in small businesses within Starehe Constituency. These programs are perceived as essential in raising awareness, empowering individuals, boosting confidence and self-esteem, enhancing knowledge and skills, providing access to funding options and resources, and overcoming barriers and challenges associated with small business initiation and management. Therefore, it is crucial to further develop and promote enterprise awareness programs to create a supportive environment, foster networking, and encourage entrepreneurship as a viable option for individuals with physical disabilities in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Based on these findings, the study recommends further development and promotion of enterprise awareness programs to create a supportive environment and facilitate networking within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

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