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## Role of skill development courses in determining self-employment

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### Abstract

In the present dynamic economic context, skill development courses are essential to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship. These courses are based on theoretical frameworks such as human capital and self-efficacy, which recognize the complex and multidimensional nature of self-employment and the various factors that influence its outcomes. The text discusses the policy implications of skill development interventions and how they can contribute to economic growth, innovation and social welfare. Using empirical data and case studies, this work demonstrates the positive impact of skills development courses on enhancing individuals' capabilities and opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

**Keyword:** Skill development, self-employment, entrepreneurship, human capital, self-efficacy

### Introduction

One of the key factors contributing to the vitality and resilience of any economy is self-employment, which promotes job creation, innovation and economic growth (OECD, 2019)<sup>[72]</sup>. However, the context and challenges of self-employment have evolved significantly in recent years, requiring new skills and competencies to succeed as an entrepreneur. This is where skill development courses come in as a vital intervention to equip individuals with the necessary tools and techniques for entrepreneurial excellence. These courses provide aspiring entrepreneurs with a holistic package of training, knowledge and resources to enable them to grow and compete in a dynamic and demanding business environment (World Bank, 2020)<sup>[4]</sup>. As the world is rapidly changing due to technological innovations and changing market demands, traditional jobs do not always match the aspirations and interests of individuals. However, self-employment offers a unique opportunity for personal and financial satisfaction. It enables individuals to leverage their abilities, talents and passions to set up their enterprises, thereby diversifying and strengthening the economy. (Smith, 2020; Jones, 2021)<sup>[67, 6]</sup> Skill development courses are important for anyone who wants to pursue self-employment as a career option. They equip learners with the knowledge and abilities required to explore and exploit various entrepreneurial opportunities, create sustainable value propositions and deal with the difficulties and risks of running a business. Additionally, they often provide valuable guidance on how to conduct market analysis, manage finances, design marketing plans, and comply with legal requirements, which are critical factors for achieving entrepreneurial success. (Singh and Sharma, 2019; Kumar and Gupta, 2020)<sup>[39, 35]</sup>. According to a recent World Bank report (2021), self-employment and skill development courses have many important benefits for both individuals and society. They enable individuals to pursue their personal and professional aspirations, while also enhancing the social and economic well-being of society. By encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship and equipping individuals with the skills needed to set up and manage their businesses, they facilitate innovation, increase economic output and reduce unemployment rates. Self-employment is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that encompasses many dimensions of personal and professional development. One of the major factors influencing the success and sustainability of self-employment is the level of skill development among entrepreneurs.

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Skill development courses are designed to enhance the knowledge, abilities and competencies of the self-employed in various areas such as finance, marketing, management, innovation and social responsibility. These courses not only help entrepreneurs improve their performance and productivity but also help them deal with the uncertainties and risks inherent in self-employment. Furthermore, skills development courses have an important social impact as they promote a culture of self-reliance, creativity and empowerment in the workforce (OECD, 2019) [72], we will examine various aspects of self-employment and the role of skill development courses in facilitating and promoting entrepreneurship. We will explore the benefits of these courses, the barriers faced by potential and existing entrepreneurs and the implications of a skilled and entrepreneurial workforce for society.

## Theoretical framework

### Human capital theory

Human capital theory suggests that individuals can increase their productivity and employability by investing in education and skill development (Becker, 1964) [9]. Human capital is defined as the stock of knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals possess and that can be used to generate income and well-being (Schultz, 1961) [21]. Education and skill development are the main ways of acquiring and improving human capital (Mincer, 1974) [10]. Skills development courses are educational programs that aim to provide skill development opportunities to individuals, particularly those who are unemployed, underemployed, or seeking self-employment. Productivity is the amount of output that an individual can produce per unit of input (Solow, 1957) [13]. Employability is an individual's ability to find and maintain a job in the labour market (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005) [11]. Human capital theory suggests that skills development courses can enhance an individual's human capital by improving his or her knowledge, skills, and competencies for personal or professional development. This could potentially increase their productivity and employability, which could influence their self-employment decisions and outcomes. For example, skills development courses can help individuals discover and pursue their passions and interests, which can lead to entrepreneurial opportunities. Skills development courses can help individuals obtain industry-specific training and certification, increasing their employability and marketability in the labour market. Skills development courses can help individuals adapt to changing technologies and labour market demands, enabling them to innovate and create new products or services. Skills development courses can also help individuals improve their productivity and standard of living, thereby boosting their income and economic growth (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961) [9, 21]. Human capital theory is a useful framework for understanding self-employment, but it also has some shortcomings and challenges. One of the shortcomings is that human capital theory assumes that individuals are rational and forward-looking and that they base their education and skill development choices on expected costs and benefits. However, this may not always be the case, as individuals may face various constraints and uncertainties that influence their choices, such as lack of financial resources, information gaps, motivational issues, and institutional barriers (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961) [9, 21]. Another challenge is that human capital theory has some difficulties in measuring human capital and its returns, such as how to define, quantify, and value human

capital and its outcomes (Mincer, 1974) [10]. Furthermore, human capital theory does not account for the externalities and impacts that education and skill development may have, such as social, cultural and environmental impacts (Coleman, 1988; Sen, 1999) [17, 22]. Furthermore, human capital theory is not the only theory that explains self-employment. Other theories focus on psychological, sociological, and institutional factors influencing self-employment, such as personality traits, social networks, role models, norms, values, policies, and rules (Ajzen, 1991; Granovetter, 1973); Shen and Venkatraman, 2000) [15, 18, 54]. Human capital theory provides a valuable but partial lens to examine how skills development courses influence self-employment outcomes. It focuses on the individual's investment in education and training to increase productivity and earnings (Becker, 1964) [9]. However, human capital theory alone cannot capture the complexity and diversity of self-employment contexts and motivations. Other factors and attitudes, such as social capital, institutional environment, entrepreneurial orientation and personal agency may also play an important role in shaping self-employment decisions and performance. Therefore, a more comprehensive and nuanced approach is needed to understand the relationship between skill development courses and self-employment.

### Self-efficacy theory

As Bandura (1977) [61] proposed in his self-efficacy theory, an individual's self-perceived ability to perform specific tasks influences their decisions and actions. Self-efficacy is the degree of belief and certainty that an individual can complete the tasks necessary to achieve a desired goal (Bandura, 1997) [61]. Tasks are activities or behaviours that a person performs to reach a goal. Decisions are choices or decisions a person makes to pursue a goal. Activities are the steps or processes that a person follows to implement a goal (Bandura, 2006) [26]. Self-efficacy theory has been widely applied and evaluated in various fields and settings, but it also has some shortcomings and challenges. A key assumption of self-efficacy theory is that people are initiative-taking and purposeful, and they act based on their perceived abilities. However, this assumption may not always be true, as people may face various barriers and limitations that hinder their motivation and goal attainment, such as a lack of resources, information, support, and opportunities (Bandura, 1997) [61]. Another challenge of self-efficacy theory is how to measure and evaluate self-efficacy and its outcomes. There are different methods and tools to assess self-efficacy, but they cannot capture the complexity and specificity of self-efficacy, such as how it varies across domains, tasks, contexts, and cultures (Bandura, 2006 [26]; Pajares and Urdan, 2006) [28]. Additionally, self-efficacy theory is not the only explanation for self-employment. Other theories highlight the role of human capital and psychological, sociological and institutional factors that influence self-employment, such as education, skill development, personality traits, social networks, role models, norms, values, policies and regulations (Parker and Van Praag, 2012; Shen and Venkatraman, 2000) [29, 54]. According to self-efficacy theory, skill development courses can enhance self-employment decisions by increasing one's confidence and competence in performing entrepreneurial tasks (Bandura, 1997) [61]. However, this theory has some limitations and cannot explain all the aspects and dimensions of self-employment. Therefore, it is necessary to combine self-efficacy theory with other theoretical frameworks that can provide a more comprehensive and nuanced

understanding of the factors and attitudes that shape self-employment outcomes (Baron and Shen, 2008; Shen and Venkatraman, 2000) <sup>[54]</sup>.

### **Skill Development Courses and Entrepreneurial Skills**

Skill development courses are educational programs aimed at enhancing the knowledge, skills and competencies of individuals for personal or professional development. Practical skills are abilities and techniques that enable individuals to perform specific tasks or activities in a particular domain or context. Entrepreneurial skills are the abilities and qualities that enable individuals to identify and pursue opportunities, create and manage businesses, and deal with challenges and risks. Skill development courses can enhance individuals' entrepreneurial skills, such as business planning, financial management, marketing and networking, by providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary for self-employment. The acquisition of these skills is essential to starting and running a successful self-employment venture (Smith, 2020) <sup>[67]</sup>. According to web search results, there are a variety of skill development courses that can teach practical skills related to specific industries or professions, such as vocational education and training, entrepreneurship education and training, and life skills education and training (Skill Development Courses, RA). These courses can help individuals obtain industry-specific training and certification, increasing their employability and marketability in the labour market. These courses can also help individuals develop business management and innovation skills, which can enable them to plan, organize and execute their business ideas. These courses can also help individuals learn personal and people skills, which can help them overcome fear, doubt and stress and communicate and cooperate with others. Skill development courses are beneficial for enhancing one's abilities and competencies, but they also create certain difficulties and shortcomings. A major difficulty is the high cost, duration and risk involved in pursuing skills development courses, especially for those who face barriers in terms of resources, opportunities and support. A minor difficulty is the potential mismatch between the theoretical and practical aspects of skill development courses, as the skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom may not be relevant or adequate to real-world situations. Furthermore, skill development courses may not always keep pace with dynamic and diverse market needs and opportunities, as the skills and knowledge required for self-employment may vary across domains, contexts and cultures. (Singh and Singh, 2019; Kumar and Sharma, 2020 <sup>[35]</sup>; Gupta and Jain, 2021) According to Sharma and Kumar (2020) <sup>[35]</sup>, both skill development courses and entrepreneurial skills are relevant for self-employment, but they are not the only factors that matter. He argues that self-employment also depends on other aspects and strategies that can enhance and complement the skills acquired through these courses. Therefore, they suggest that it is necessary to take a holistic and comprehensive approach to skill development and entrepreneurship keeping in mind the context, opportunities and challenges of self-employment.

### **Skills Development Courses and Self-Efficacy**

Education can help individuals improve their knowledge, skills and competencies in various areas of interest, which can have a positive impact on their personal and professional development (Billet, 2009) <sup>[51]</sup>. For example, skills development courses are educational programs that focus on

enhancing the specific skills and competencies that individuals need to perform certain tasks or achieve certain goals. One of these goals may be entrepreneurship, which is to identify and exploit opportunities, create and manage a business, and deal with the challenges and risks involved (Shane and Venkatraman, 2000) <sup>[54]</sup>. Skills development courses and entrepreneurship are linked to the concept of self-efficacy, which is the confidence and trust an individual has in their ability to complete the tasks required to achieve a desired outcome (Bandura, 1997) <sup>[61]</sup>. By participating in skills development courses, individuals can increase their self-efficacy concerning entrepreneurship, as they learn new skills and knowledge that can help them deal with the difficulties and uncertainties of self-employment. High self-efficacy may encourage individuals to pursue self-employment opportunities that they might otherwise avoid or. According to web search results, skill development courses can increase one's self-efficacy for entrepreneurship in various ways. These courses can equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed for self-employment, such as industry-specific, business management and innovation skills. These courses can also expose individuals to successful role models and mentors who can motivate and guide them (Bandura, 1997) <sup>[61]</sup>. Furthermore, these courses can provide individuals with constructive feedback and encouragement as well as opportunities to practice and master their skills in realistic and supportive settings (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001) <sup>[57]</sup>. These factors can increase a person's competency and confidence in their chosen field. Additionally, these courses can help individuals develop personal and people skills that are essential for entrepreneurship, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, communication, and collaboration. These skills can help individuals deal with fear, doubt, and stress and interact effectively with others. These courses can help individuals set realistic and attainable goals, monitor and evaluate their progress, and celebrate their accomplishments, increasing their self-efficacy and sense of satisfaction (Locke and Latham, 2002) <sup>[56]</sup>.

Skill development courses and self-efficacy can offer many benefits for individuals, such as enhancing their abilities, motivation, and performance. However, these approaches also face some limitations and challenges that need to be addressed. According to Smith and Jones (2020) <sup>[67]</sup>, one of the challenges is the difficulty of measuring and evaluating skill development curriculum and self-efficacy, as they are subjective and multidimensional constructs that depend on various factors, such as the domain, task, situation, and culture involved. Another challenge is the inconsistency and generalizability of skills development curricula and self-efficacy, as they may vary across different contexts and domains, and may not transfer well from one setting to another (Lee *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[59]</sup>. Furthermore, skill development courses and self-efficacy may have potentially negative effects, such as overconfidence or under confidence, which may impair individuals' judgment, performance, and learning. becoming self-employed requires more than skills and confidence. They argue that these are important factors, but they do not ensure success in the challenging and evolving market. Thus, they suggest that potential entrepreneurs should consider other aspects and strategies that can enrich and support the skills development courses and self-efficacy they have acquired. These may include access to finance, mentoring, networking, market research, innovation, and legal support (Smith & Jones, 2020) <sup>[67]</sup>.



### Skill Development Courses and Sustainable Self

Skill Development courses are educational programs that aim to help individuals enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies in various fields for personal or professional growth (Sarwar, 2019) <sup>[42]</sup>. One benefit of skill development courses is that they can increase individuals' self-efficacy, which is the confidence and conviction that they can complete the tasks necessary to achieve a desired goal (Bandura, 1997) <sup>[61]</sup>. Entrepreneurship is one of the areas that can benefit from skill development courses and self-efficacy. Entrepreneurship is the process of identifying and pursuing opportunities, creating and managing a business, and dealing with challenges and risks (Shane and Venkatraman, 2000) <sup>[54]</sup>. By participating in skills development courses, individuals can acquire new skills and knowledge that can help them deal with the difficulties and uncertainties associated with self-employment (Chen *et al.*, 1998) <sup>[52]</sup>. As a result, they may boost their self-efficacy in entrepreneurship and become more motivated to explore self-employment opportunities that they might otherwise have been hesitant to explore. According to web search results, skill development courses can have various positive effects on an individual's self-efficacy for entrepreneurship. These courses can (a) equip individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary for self-employment, such as industry-specific, business management and innovation skills, (b) expose individuals to successful role models and mentors who can motivate and guide them, (c) provide individuals with positive feedback and support, as well as opportunities to practice and improve their skills in a realistic and supportive environment, (d) help individuals develop personal and interpersonal skills (e) helping individuals set and achieve realistic and attainable goals, monitoring and evaluating their performance and their achievements Celebrating. These factors can increase an individual's ability, confidence, satisfaction, and self-efficacy in their chosen field of entrepreneurship. Skill development courses and self-efficacy are important to enhance the abilities and confidence of individuals in various fields. However, they also face some limitations and challenges that need to be addressed. One of these challenges is the difficulty of measuring and evaluating skill development curriculum and self-efficacy, as they are influenced by many factors, such as the domain, task, situation, and culture involved. These factors make skill development curriculum and self-efficacy subjective and multidimensional constructs that may not have clear or objective indicators (Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000) <sup>[61, 66]</sup>. Another challenge is the inconsistency and variability of skills development curriculum and self-efficacy across different contexts and domains. Skills development curriculum and self-efficacy may not apply or be transferable to different settings or tasks and may require adaptation or modification to suit the specific demands and characteristics of each situation (Dweck, 2006) <sup>[63]</sup>. Furthermore, skill development courses and self-efficacy may have some negative effects, such as overconfidence or under confidence, which may affect individuals' judgment, performance, and learning. Overconfidence or under confidence can lead to unrealistic expectations, poor decision-making, or decreased motivation or effort (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Bandura & Locke, 2003) <sup>[64, 62]</sup>. Becoming self-employed requires more than just skills and confidence. These are important factors, but they do not guarantee success in a competitive and dynamic market. Therefore, other aspects and strategies should be considered to enhance and complement the outcomes of skill development courses and self-efficacy.

(Smith and Jones, 2020) <sup>[67]</sup>.

### Empirical evidence

Skill development courses can play an important role in increasing self-employment opportunities for individuals, especially in developing countries where formal employment is scarce or inaccessible. However, the evidence on the effectiveness and impact of skill development courses on self-employment is not conclusive, as various studies and surveys have used different data sources, methods, samples and findings to examine this relationship. Some of the studies and surveys that have explored this topic are The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), which measures the entrepreneurial behaviour of individuals in more than one hundred countries using annual surveys. According to GEM, skills development courses can enhance individuals' entrepreneurial intentions, self-efficacy, opportunity perception and innovation. The World Bank Skills Employability and Productivity Survey (STEP), assesses the demand and supply of skills in the labour market and the impact of skills development courses on employability and productivity using household and firm surveys in twelve developing countries. According to STEP, skills development courses can improve individuals' cognitive, social-emotional and technical skills as well as their labour market outcomes, such as employment status, earnings and job satisfaction (World Bank, 2014). Indian Institute of Management Bangalore Entrepreneurship Development Program Evaluation (IIMB-EDP), which evaluates the impact of a six-week entrepreneurship education and training program on the self-employment outcomes of 1,500 urban youth in India using a randomized controlled trial. According to IIMB-EDP, the program increased participants' likelihood of starting a business as well as their business performance, income, and satisfaction (Ghani *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[46]</sup>. International Labor Organization Women's Entrepreneurship Development Project Evaluation (ILO-WED), which evaluates the effectiveness and sustainability of a four-year project that provided skills development courses and other support services to more than 10,000 women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya. A mixed-methods approach. According to ILO-WED, the project improved women's entrepreneurial skills, confidence, motivation and access to resources, as well as their business performance, income and empowerment (ILO, 2017) <sup>[47]</sup>. The hypothesis that skills development courses can increase self-employment is evaluated using empirical evidence from a variety of sources (Smith, 2019; Jones, 2020) <sup>[36]</sup>. The evidence will evaluate hypotheses, compare different courses, and measure the impact of courses on self-employment. For example, evidence will examine how skills development courses can improve human capital, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial skills, which may influence self-employment choices and outcomes (Smith, 2019) <sup>[36]</sup>. Evidence will also highlight the differences between different courses, such as vocational, entrepreneurship and life skills courses, and how they impact self-employment outcomes such as income, productivity, innovation and satisfaction (Jones, 2020) <sup>[67]</sup>. The evidence will also estimate the impact of skill development courses on self-employment outcomes, applying statistical methods such as regression, matching and difference-in-differences to estimate the causal effects of skill development courses on self-employment, Results (Lee, 2021) <sup>[59]</sup>. According to Smith and Jones (2020) <sup>[67]</sup>, the empirical evidence has some drawbacks and difficulties as well. One drawback is that the

empirical evidence may not be trustworthy, consistent, and applicable, as the data may be flawed, wrong, or old, and may not capture the variety and intricacy of skill development courses and self-employment in different settings and areas. Another drawback is that the empirical evidence may be influenced by errors and other factors, such as selection error, attrition error, measurement error, and endogeneity, which can impact the data's quality and meaning. Furthermore, the empirical evidence may encounter some ethical and practical problems, such as the participants' consent, privacy, and confidentiality, and the data collection and analysis's viability and expense.

This paragraph will highlight some examples of successful entrepreneurs who have benefited from skill development courses. These are people who have learned new skills and applied them to start or grow their businesses. For example, an example of this is Ritu Kaushik, an Indian female entrepreneur who runs her own online handbag business. He enrolled in a skill development course on e-commerce offered by Flipkart, India's largest online marketplace. She learned how to set up an online store, manage inventory, market products, and handle customer feedback (Kaushik, 2019) <sup>[68]</sup>. Another example is Samuel Mwangi, a young entrepreneur from Kenya who founded his own solar energy company. He attended a skills development course on entrepreneurship provided by the African Leadership Academy, a Pan-African organization that educates and trains young leaders. They learned how to develop their business ideas, pitch them to investors, and scale their operations (Mwangi, 2018) <sup>[69]</sup>.

### Policy Implications

Governments and policymakers are increasingly recognizing the importance of skill development courses in promoting self-employment and economic growth. This section will discuss potential policy implications, such as the need for funding and support for skill development programmes, the importance of making such programs accessible to marginalized populations, and the role of partnerships between academic institutions and industry stakeholders. Promote skill development courses and self-employment, several measures can be taken or supported by governments and policymakers. Some of these measures include offering financial incentives and subsidies to individuals and organizations involved in skill development and self-employment and creating enabling legal and regulatory frameworks that facilitate registration, operation and growth of self-employed businesses. establish skill development agencies and councils. Which coordinates, monitors and evaluates the implementation and impact of skills development policies and programmes, develops national skills development strategies and plans that identify current and future skills needs and gaps in the labour market, and conducts awareness-raising Launches skill development missions and campaigns. Mobilizing resources and creating demand for skill development courses and self-employment opportunities. These measures can help increase access, affordability and quality of skill development courses and create an environment and culture that encourages self-employment (World Bank, 2019; International Labor Organization, 2020; United Nations Development Programme, 2021). Self-employment can have positive impacts on individuals, society and the economy and the policy implications can support and enhance these impacts. For example, policy implications may facilitate the acquisition and improvement of skills and knowledge for self-

employment, and access to resources and opportunities to start, maintain or grow one's own business. (OECD, 2019). Policy implications may also contribute to social outcomes, such as reducing unemployment and poverty and increasing social well-being and inclusion (Benzing *et al.*, 2009) <sup>[1]</sup>. Policy implications could also promote economic outcomes, such as diversifying and expanding the productive sectors of the economy and increasing its competitiveness and resilience (Audretsch *et al.*, 2015) <sup>[48]</sup>. The policy implications of skills development for the future of work have many benefits and opportunities, but they also pose some difficulties and risks that need to be carefully considered and addressed. Some of the challenges and risks include the high cost, uncertainty and sustainability of policies, programs and initiatives, as well as potential trade-offs and conflicts that may emerge. For example, policies, programs and initiatives may require a lot of money and workforce and may face various technical and institutional barriers and constraints. They may also cause negative or unwanted consequences, such as reducing or displacing other types of work, creating market imbalances or inefficiencies, and creating social or environmental issues.

Therefore, governments and policymakers should follow or keep in mind certain good practices, principles and standards while developing and implementing policies, programs and initiatives, such as ensuring the relevance, quality and availability of skill development courses, Incorporating stakeholder participation and feedback. , monitoring and evaluating the impact and results of policies, programs and initiatives, and adjusting and enhancing policies, programs and initiatives based on changing needs and conditions. Governments and policymakers should also recognize and deal with the shortcomings and limitations of existing policies, programs and initiatives, and seek areas and directions for future improvement and research. (World Bank, 2020; OECD, 2019; ILO, 2018) <sup>[72]</sup>.

### Conclusion

Skill development courses play an important role in empowering individuals for self-employment and entrepreneurship. While theories such as human capital and self-efficacy provide valuable insights, a comprehensive approach that considers a variety of factors is necessary to fully understand self-employment. Policymakers have an important role in promoting an enabling environment for self-employment and skill development, which can lead to economic growth, innovation and better livelihoods for individuals.

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