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Enabling Sme Partnership Formation through Com-b Based Training

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Abstract

Partnerships are widely recognized as a strategic advantage for businesses. However, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) fail to engage in partnerships despite their benefits. Key barriers include a lack of awareness and difficulty in accessing essential information. This study examines the impact of partnership training on behavioral changes related to partnerships among SMEs. A holistic training program, based on the COM-B framework (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation - Behavior), was designed and implemented as part of an experimental research design involving a randomized controlled trial (RCT). The training was delivered to a randomly selected treatment group, while a control group received no intervention. The treated group consisted of 73 SME owners or managers holding strategic authority, whereas the control group consisted of 141. Results indicate a positive effect on SMEs' partnership formation, increased partnership knowledge, improved partnership implementation, and better partner(s) identification. Although the perceived importance of partnership is not statistically different from the control group, it shows improvement compared to the pre-treatment baseline. These findings provide empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of behaviorally grounded training programs in enabling partnerships among SMEs, thereby contributing to the academic literature on adult learning and behavior change, as well as informing practical policymaking on SME development.

Keywords: Behavioral, Holistic, Rct, Small-Business, Strategy