
Barriers to Entrepreneurship in Low-income Households in the UK: a scoping review

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Abstract

Background: Low-income households within the UK represent a unique sector, one that is traditionally unrepresented in entrepreneurship and business ownership research.

Objective: This scoping review will be conducted to explore the barriers to engaging in entrepreneurial activity for low-income households within the UK.

Eligibility criteria: The literature search will focus predominantly on original research papers and review articles, including pre-prints, written in English, and published from 2000 onwards; abstract-only papers and opinion articles were excluded.

Sources of evidence: A search of EconLit, Business Source Complete (EBSCOhost), Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, Sociology Database (ProQuest), PsycInfo (OvidSp) and Social Science Citation Index (Web of Science) databases will be undertaken, in addition to a comprehensive journal search using Scopus and a manual search of relevant 'grey literature'.

Methods: Studies will be identified and selected based on eligibility criteria fulfilment and subsequent screening of the abstract text to determine their relevance. The following data will be extracted: year of publication, country of origin, study aims, definition of entrepreneurship, population studied, sample size, methodology, intervention/comparator details, barriers identified, outcome measures, other relevant key findings, and any solutions posited.

Keywords

Britain; business; disadvantaged; enterprise; limitations

Introduction

The definition of 'entrepreneurship' is contested; however, it is generally accepted that entrepreneurial activity involves seeking opportunities for the implementation of new ideas and creative solutions, and includes an element of risk-taking, often through the investment of financial or human capital (Kobia and Sikalieh, 2010). Entrepreneurship is not exclusive to business ownership and can take place in many contexts, including organisations and institutions (Kuratko, 2011), and within communities. In our scoping review, we will focus on entrepreneurial activities within small enterprises (Audretsch, 2012). This can include traditional for-profit enterprises, such as local businesses and self-employment (Audretsch, 2012), as well as social enterprises, including community projects, social enterprises and non-profit organisations (e.g. charities) (Saebi et al., 2019).

There has been a plethora of research on the barriers to entrepreneurship in low or low–middle income status countries, and in non-disadvantaged Western populations, but the barriers to entrepreneurial activity in adults from low-income households within the UK, and the potential solutions, are less well understood. However, there are some notable exceptions; some studies have investigated how entrepreneurship can improve the lives of those living in deprivation. For instance, studies conducted by Williams et al. (2020), and Thompson et al. (2012), found that access to social capital is associated with entrepreneurial activities in deprived communities. However, Smith et al. (2019), and Williams and Huggins (2013), showed that schemes to encourage entrepreneurial pursuits in low-income communities can entrench socio-economic inequalities due to the precarity of self-employment in the UK. Nonetheless, there has been no attempt to critically review the range of evidence in relation to the engagement in entrepreneurial activities by individuals from low-income households in the UK. This is despite significant policy interventions by the UK government designed to support the unemployed to start enterprises (Smith et al., 2019).

Low-income populations within the UK represent a unique sector, and findings from other populations, for which there are fundamental differences in terms of social status, history, local industry, culture, attitudes, values, beliefs and so on, related to wealth and geographical location, may not be comparable. Those living in deprived communities, both in the UK and further afield, typically experience a range of additional obstacles, such as a lack of money, time, facilities (including access to technology), support, skills or experience, as well as social exclusion. Such individuals are often ignored in business support schemes. They may also face other challenges, such as caring responsibilities, and mental or physical health issues. Uncertainty about the future and the fear of failure may be too great to risk. The lack of role models, low self-esteem, and ingrained beliefs about prospects and potential, which can limit individuals' aspirations, may prevent any consideration of entrepreneurial activities. Nevertheless, entrepreneurship can offer a way out of poverty in developed economies, especially if the appropriate support is provided (Morris et al., 2020).

This scoping review will be conducted to explore the potential barriers to engaging in entrepreneurial activity for low-income households within the UK. Our scoping review intends to bring these findings together in a novel manner, to provide a more holistic understanding of what we know and what is lacking, in order to inform a research agenda. The review will also be carried out as a precursor to original research on these said barriers, as identified by individuals from low-income households within United Kingdom, determined via focus groups and interviews. The data obtained from this scoping review will provide useful insights on the limitations to entrepreneurship (and possible benefits, such as greater connectedness and lower competition) faced by low-income households in United Kingdom, with its specific culture and industrial history. These findings are, in full or in part, likely to be generalisable to similar other Western countries. The scoping review may also aid our understanding of policies and interventions that have been employed in other contexts and which may be applicable to our population of interest. A preliminary search of Scopus was conducted, and no current or underway systematic reviews or scoping reviews on the topic were identified.

Objectives

The objective of this scoping review is to identify previous studies that have investigated barriers to entrepreneurial activity in adults from low-income households within the UK, to determine the challenges and possible solutions specific to this population. It will not address barriers identified in non-UK countries or non-disadvantaged populations.

Methods

The scoping review will be conducted and reported in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses methodology extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR), as reported by (Tricco et al., 2018).

Eligibility criteria

The literature search will focus on studies that have examined barriers to entrepreneurial activity in adults from low-income households within the UK; it will not include research on non-UK countries or non-disadvantaged populations. The search will focus predominantly on original research papers and review articles, including pre-prints, written in the English language, and published from 2000 onwards; abstract-only papers, book chapters, books, conference papers, newspaper articles, and opinion articles will be excluded.

This scoping review will consider all kinds of quantitative studies. Qualitative studies will also be considered that focus on qualitative data including, but not limited to, designs such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, qualitative description, action research and feminist research. In addition, systematic reviews that meet the inclusion criteria will also be considered, depending on the research question.

Information sources

A search of the EconLit, Business Source Complete (EBSCOhost), Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, Sociology Database (ProQuest), PsycInfo, Social Policy and Practice (OvidSp) and Social Science Citation Index (Web of Science) databases will be undertaken, in addition to a comprehensive journal search using Scopus. This will be supplemented by a manual search of potentially relevant 'grey literature' (e.g., reports, working papers, government documents, white papers and evaluations) for additional insights. The latter will be identified via a number of routes; for example, using alternative search engines (e.g., Google Scholar), targeting relevant organisations (e.g., FSB, Gov.uk, Office for National Statistics, National Housing Federation,

Local Enterprise Partnerships, Tenant Participation Advisory Service, HACT), searching grey literature databases (e.g., Open Grey, National Grey Literature Collection), browsing potentially relevant surveys (e.g., Poverty and Social Exclusion surveys, Breadline Britain surveys, Opportunity for All reports, and Social Exclusion Unit reports), and subsequent to consultation with other researchers and experts in this field.

Potentially relevant articles will be identified using the following search string (example for Scopus provided as an appendix), to detect papers with key search terms contained in the titles, abstracts and keywords:

("Entrepreneur*" OR "SME" OR "business" OR "enterprise" OR "social enterprise" OR "startup" OR "start-up" OR "self-employed" OR "freelance" OR "founder" OR "charit*" OR "community group" OR "community interest company" OR "makerspace" OR "hackerspace" OR "co-operative" OR "cooperative" OR "capital") AND

("barrier" OR "challenge" OR "limitation" OR "difficult*" OR "problem" OR "prevent" OR "restrict*") AND

("low-income" OR "underserved" OR "marginalis*" OR "marginaliz*" OR "low income" OR "depriv*" OR "inequality" OR "disadvantaged" OR "class" OR "exclusion" OR "poverty" OR "underprivileged" OR "under-privileged" OR "low socioeconomic status" OR "low socio-economic status" OR "coastal" OR "social mobility" OR "education" OR "social housing") AND

("UK" OR "United Kingdom" OR "England" OR "English" OR "Wales" OR "Welsh" OR "Scotland" OR "Scottish" OR "Northern Ireland" OR "Northern Irish" OR "Britain" OR "British")

The reference lists of all relevant sources of evidence will be inspected for additional potentially relevant articles. The abstracts of each identified manuscript will be screened by two researchers, to determine the papers' relevance and suitability for inclusion in the review.

The following data will be extracted: year of publication, country of origin, study aims, definition of entrepreneurship, population studied, sample size, methodology, intervention/comparator details, barriers identified, outcome measures, other relevant key findings, and any solutions posited. The data will initially be charted in an Excel spreadsheet,

with each variable assessed and corroborated by at least two researchers for each paper identified.

Study/Source of Evidence selection

Following the search, all identified citations will be collated and uploaded into EndNote 21 (Clarivate Analytics, PA, USA) and duplicates removed. Article titles and abstracts will be screened by at least two researchers for assessment against the eligibility criteria for the review. Potentially relevant sources will be retrieved in full and assessed in detail against the eligibility criteria by two or more researchers. Reasons for the exclusion of sources of evidence that do not meet the eligibility criteria, at the time of the full text search, will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer/s. The results of the search and the study inclusion process will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a PRISMA flow diagram. Each stage of the screening process (title-abstract and full text) will be piloted to ensure consistency between reviewers.

Data Extraction

Data will be extracted from papers included in the scoping review by two or more independent reviewers using a data extraction tool developed by the reviewers. The data extracted will include specific details about the participants, concept, context, study methods and key findings relevant to the review question/s, including year of publication, country of origin, study aims, definition of entrepreneurship, population studied, sample size, methodology, intervention/comparator details, barriers identified, outcome measures, other relevant key findings, and any solutions posited.

A draft extraction form is provided (see Appendix 2). The draft data extraction tool will be modified and revised as necessary during the process of extracting data from each included evidence source. Modifications will be detailed in the scoping review.

Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer/s. If appropriate, authors of papers will be contacted to request missing or additional data, where required.

Data Analysis and Presentation

An overview of the included studies will be presented, including number of included studies per year and broad discipline (e.g. social policy or politics). Once that data has been extracted from the included studies, they will be synthesised into a thematic, narrative analysis to give an overview of the literature, including by highlighting potential knowledge gaps.

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Search strategy (Scopus)

TITLE-ABS-KEY("Entrepreneur*" OR "SME" OR "business" OR "enterprise" OR "social enterprise" OR "startup" OR "start-up" OR "self-employed" OR "freelance" OR "founder" OR "charit*" OR "community group" OR "community interest company" OR "makerspace" OR "hackerspace" OR "co-operative" OR "cooperative" OR "capital") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("barrier" OR "challenge" OR "limitation" OR "difficult*" OR "problem" OR "prevent" OR "restrict*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("low-income" OR "underserved" OR "marginalis*" OR "marginaliz*" OR "low income" OR "depriv*" OR "inequality" OR "disadvantaged" OR "class" OR "exclusion" OR "poverty" OR "underprivileged" OR "under-privileged" OR "low socioeconomic status" OR "low socio-economic status" OR "coastal" OR "social mobility" OR "education" OR "social housing") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("UK" OR "United Kingdom" OR "England" OR "English" OR "Wales" OR "Welsh" OR "Scotland" OR "Scottish" OR "Northern Ireland" OR "Northern Irish" OR "Britain" OR "British")

Appendix II: Data extraction instrument

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Search Term	
Title	
Author	
Year of Publication	
Publication	
Country of origin	

Study aims	
Definition of ENT	
Population	
Sample size	
Methods	
Intervention/comparator	
Barriers	
Outcome measures	
Other findings	
Solutions	