Research Paper: Evaluation the Rural Economic Development Emphasizing the Role of Entrepreneurship (Case Study: Chabahar City in the Southeast of Iran)

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The current research is to Evaluation the Rural Economic Development Emphasizing the role of Entrepreneurship in Chabahar.

Methods: This is an applied and descriptive-analytical study regarding objective and methodology, respectively. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire through field study. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22 and Expert Choice software.

Results: The one sample T-test showed a favorable status of economic indicators in the studied villages. According to the Pearson correlation coefficient, there was a significant positive relationship between the economic development of the villages and entrepreneurship at a significant level of 0.99. Based on the analysis by Expert Choice software, strengthening the local economy with a weight of 0.301 showed the highest level of effectiveness from entrepreneurship in the villages of Chabahar.

Conclusion: Rural entrepreneurship has a considerable effect on the economic development of rural regions through the recognition of market opportunities. Indeed, by recognizing the best strategies to use scarce resources to meet the needs of rural residents, rural entrepreneurship plays a significant role in the prosperity of the rural economy.

Keywords:

Economic development; Entrepreneurship; Rural areas; Chabahar

1. Introduction

T

oday, rural societies are faced different challenges and problems in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Studies have shown entrepreneurship and education as the influential factors of innovation, productivity, job creation, and economic and social development (Karimi & Makreet, 2020: 1). Entrepreneurship is considered a strategy for the development and welfare of countries, job creation, recognizing suitable opportunities, and increasing production since it can make in-

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Tel: +98 (915) 1982718 **E-mail:** mohamadi@pnu.ac.ir novations for the supply of new productions and services and increases job opportunities, and improve the living condition of people (Faraji et al., 2015: 91). Through diversifying production and the level of employment and business, entrepreneurship reduces inequality and economic and social gap in societies and it is a facilitating factor in achieving sustainable development (Oykuiyigun, 2015: 1230). Entrepreneurship development will also lead to job creation, production increase, the added value of villagers' products, and ultimately rural development by increasing competitiveness and stimulating innovations (Elena et al., 2015: 471-472; Harpa, 2017: 966). Recently, rural development experiences in different countries have shown that entrepreneurship development is not achieved only by capital and technology growth. Still, many factors play a role in this field. Today, the entrepreneurial spirit among villagers, including farmers, is most important for rural development (Farahani & Hajihosseini, 2014: 7). Based on the formal statistics, in developed and developing countries, small and medium-sized businesses have a significant contribution to the GDP of countries, so that in the United States, more than half of the GDPs are made by small and medium-sized businesses. So, governments and organizations pay more importance to entrepreneurship and believe that entrepreneurship is a strategy for economic prosperity (Faraji et al., 2015: 91). According to experts and specialists, in the current conditions of Iran, promoting the work culture and entrepreneurship is the best strategy for job creation and solving the problem of unemployment. Therefore, by bolding the role of economic structures, many scientists emphasize entrepreneurship as one of the main factors influencing the empowerment of different groups of society, including the youth (Ansari, 2019: 4).

Since rural development and improving rural welfare have been the main objectives for implementing the development plans and considering the significant relationship between growth and entrepreneurship, creating new employment opportunities can effectively improve villages' economic and living conditions.

Business space development is an influential factor in rural development (Davari et al., 2022: 1). There are a few studies on rural entrepreneurship in Iran. Therefore, due to the importance of entrepreneurship in rural areas of Iran, it can be discussed and investigated in the form of job creation programs and policies in a macro and indirect way (Iftikhari & Sejasi Ghedari, 2010: 118).

Meanwhile, Chabahar City in Sistan and Baluchistan province suffer from Severe poverty and deprivation especially in the rural area. The villages of this region have weaknesses such as a lack of facilities, water resources, economic poverty, weak rural management, lack of educational, health, and recreational facilities, increasing migration of villagers to the city, insecure communication routes, and lack of security. Considering the problems, emphasis on rural entrepreneurship is significant; because it can play an influential role in improving the economic and livelihood situation of villages by creating new employment and income opportunities.

Due to the conditions of Chabahar, to create a nonagricultural economy such as border markets and tourism, the villages of this region can improve the economic situation by creating entrepreneurship in the mentioned sectors.

2. Literature Review

As the smallest social unit in countries, villages are of particular importance. Efforts to reduce the issues and problems of these social units and their proper establishment in the development cycle require special attention (Gadermazi, 2019: 188). In rural areas, many economic activities have declined in recent decades, and villagers' income and employment levels have decreased compared to the country's average. Therefore, new options using local resources should be considered. In recent decades, the entrepreneurial approach has been considered as one of the rural development strategies. Theorists, planners, and executives have tried to improve entrepreneurial capacity by providing new solutions and methods and effective evaluations of policies, programs, and practices, and enable better decision-making and planning power. Today, paying attention to the entrepreneurial spirit among villagers, including farmers, is considered one of the most important solutions for rural development. Although entrepreneurship is not the only way to create employment and increase the incomes of rural people, it is the best productive strategy (Klargar & Aghai, 2014: 61). Also, due to natural and human resources, villages can become the basis for the emergence of many new and entrepreneurial professions (Chrisman et al., 2003: 8). Entrepreneurship development is considered as one of the most productive solutions for the economic, social and cultural development of deprived areas and a strategy for reducing poverty (Hosseininia & Fallahi, 2017: 22). Today, by entrepreneurship as a strategy for the development and growth of human societies, all the resources and facilities of society are spontaneously mobilized in an evolutionary process to achieve high social ideals to turn to the source of economic and social prosperity (Ansari, 2019: 104). The experience of many poor, densely populated countries, where most of their population is rural, shows that paying attention to entrepreneurship reduces the migration of rural people to cities and provides the basis for employment, welfare, and development for rural people (Zare Ahmadabadi & Arabshahi., 2011: 50). On the other hand, entrepreneurship in deprived rural areas is more complicated than developed regions due to the limited access to resources and facilities and the lack of development of social relations; therefore the effectiveness of entrepreneurship in such areas is greater (Arabioun et al., 2010: 79). In rural communities, different stratification can be entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial activities are existed at the heart of development in rural areas regardless of the many limitations of rural industrialization (Korsgaard et al., 2015: 11). Entrepreneurship as an economic development model can be effective in rural communities by increasing employment and income, improving the quality of life, and preventing migration. Also, the entrepreneurship approach attracts young people and families to rural areas and causes rural development and stability (Klargar & Aghai, 2014: 62).

In this regard, some studies have been conducted. For example, Rostami et al. (2022) analyzed the effect of factors on rural entrepreneurship in the villages of Chendar located at Savjebalagh City. They showed the high impact of entrepreneurship components on the studied villages. Jamini & Jamshidi (2021) have studied the role of effective factors on entrepreneurship development in rural areas of Oramanat, located in Kermanshah City. They found that the level of entrepreneurship indicators of the villagers is at a low level by an average of 2.453. Yazdani et al. (2018) studied the effect of innovation on rural development, emphasizing rural entrepreneurship's role in North Khorasan. They found a direct relationship between innovation and rural development. Valaei et al. (2015) analyzed the factors affecting sustainable rural development emphasizing entrepreneurship in the rural district of North Marhemat Abad -Miandoab County. The results showed that the important factors that have led to the development of entrepreneurship and rural development are economic and personal. Tabares et al. (2022) analyzed current and emerging issues in the framework of sustainable livelihoods and rural entrepreneurship. This study provides research opportunities in emerging issues related to social entrepreneurship, governance and institutions, livelihood growth, and environmental entrepreneurship to expand the boundaries of rural entrepreneurship from the framework of sustainable livelihoods. Falchetta (2021) investigated the impact of energy access, agricultural profitability, and rural development. The results showed that rural electrification should be centered on an integrated approach to increase farm productivity and profitability. Habersetzer et al. (2021) investigated the role of entrepreneurial industry experience in rural areas and the home advantage for start-up companies. They concluded that industry experience positively affects factory survival, while factory growth is more influenced by home advantage. Muñoz & Kimmitt (2019) studied the integrated framework of rural entrepreneurship and found the effective role of a developed framework on entrepreneurship in agrarian societies.

3. Methodology

This is an applied and descriptive-analytical study in terms of objectives and methodology, respectively. Data were collected using two steps: A) library and documentary method: this method was used to obtain the general basics of research, which includes definitions and key concepts, research background, research necessity, description of applications, plans, and indicators, and theoretical perspectives of research. The tools used in this step were data collection. B) Field method: this method includes preparing and formulating questionnaires and interviews, the preparation of specialized checklists, and special perceptions. In this step, data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire by the Likert scale. The statistical population consisted of the rural entrepreneurs of Chabahar villages. The samples were selected using convenience sampling [N=50]. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and its reliability was also obtained using Cronbach's alpha test of 0.88, which indicates the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS 20 software and Expert Choice software.

Chabahar is located in the southeast of Iran, at 60 degrees and 37 minutes east longitude and 25 degrees and 17 minutes north latitude. This city is bordered by Iranshahr and Nikshahr cities from the north, the Oman Sea from the south, Pakistan from the east, and Kerman and Hormozgan provinces from the west. The latest census shows Chabahar county include three districts, six rural districts, and two cities. This study was carried out in 56 villages in the central part of Chabahar City with a population of 38,268.

Table 1. Rural economy development indicators

Index	Item	Index	Item
	Increasing the entrepreneurial activities		Investing in promotional educational services
Employment	Employment of non-natives in profitable jobs created by entrepreneurs		Investing local entrepreneurs in the development of entre preneurs in the village
	Job satisfaction in the sector created by entrepreneurs		Increasing investment in the infrastructure facilities of households
	Creating job opportunities for village youth	Investment	Increasing investment in the field of entrepreneurial production activities
	Creating and developing entrepreneurship and increasing job opportunities		Increasing the risk-taking of household economic investment
	Making income for local institutions		Creating new economic institutions related to the entre- preneurial sector
	Poverty Reduction		Using entrepreneurial facilities to get loans for the household
	Increasing local business income	Facilities	Using entrepreneurial facilities to create new financial resources
In some o dovidon	Income stability		Encouraging local investors to create job opportunities
Income develop- ment	Increasing the income of the host community		Increasing goods and productions made from local source
		Strengthening the local economy	Increasing local small and medium enterprises related to entrepreneurship
	Increasing the employment rate in the entrepreneurial sector created by entrepreneurs		Increasing the local population involved in entrepreneuria business
	cincepterious		Taking measures to reduce the capital outflow from the destination as well as restricting non-local ownership

Reference: Bashirahsan & Ghorbaninejad, 2017; Roknuddin Eftekhari & Sejasi Khedari, 2010

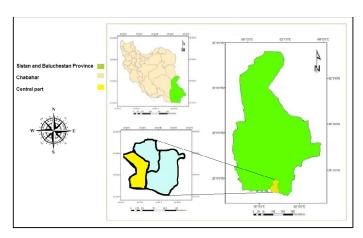


Figure 1. Study area. Reference: Authors, 2022

4. Findings

Based on the descriptivedata, out of 50 entrepreneurs 36 (72.00) subjects were male, and 14 (28.00) subjects were female. The results indicated the unequal number of male and female entrepreneurs in the rural areas of Chabahar. This means that despite rural women's employment development, their entrepreneurship is still very weak in the rural regions of Chabahar. The aver-

age age of rural entrepreneurs was 39 years. Twenty of the entrepreneurs (40/00) were engaged in a second job, and 30 (60/00) were not involved in the second job. The lack of government support in the exploitation of entrepreneurial projects and the lack of sufficient financial capital were among the most important reasons that have encouraged the villagers of these areas to have other jobs besides entrepreneurial activity.





Also, the results showed that due to the recent droughts, the activities of entrepreneurs in Chabahar villages were mainly in the field of service activities, setting up a microcredit fund for rural women, service activities such as sewing, knitting, crocheting and processing pickles, Workshops for the production of local clothes and handicrafts, baking all kinds of local and traditional sweetmeats, etc.

In the quantitative findings section of the research, before any data analysis, the normality of the economic development indicators was investigated using the Kolmogorov-Smironov test. If the significance level of the test is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the data distribution is not normal. If the significance level of the test is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the data distribution is not normal.

Since the significance level of economic development indicators is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 0.95 confidence level, and the distribution of indicators is normal (Table 2). Therefore, a parametric test (one-sample t-test) was used to check the status of economic subjects.

According to the results, the scores of the items of increasing entrepreneurial activities, employment of nonnatives in profitable jobs created by entrepreneurs, job satisfaction in the sector made by entrepreneurs, creating job opportunities for village youth, and creating and developing entrepreneurship and increasing job opportunities were 3.13, 3.11, 3.55, 3.21, 3.80, respectively. In this regard, the status of the employment index in the villages of Chabahar City was evaluated as favorable (Table 3).

The status of the items of the income development index was evaluated as favorable, with an average higher than the medium number of 3 (Table 4).

The status of the investment index was evaluated at a favorable level according to the scores of the items, including investing in promotional, educational services with a 3.17 score, investing local entrepreneurs in the development of entrepreneurs in the village with a score of 3.19, increasing investment in the infrastructure facilities of households with a score of 3.22, increasing investment in the field of entrepreneurial production activities with a score of 3.13, increasing the risk-taking of household economic investment with a score of 3.16, and Creating new financial institutions related to the entrepreneurial sector with a score of 3.11 (Table 5).

Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for economic development indicators

Indicator	Kolmogorov-Smirnov z value	sig	Result
Employment	1.123	0.144	P>0.05
Income development	1.123	0.155	P>0.05
Investment	1.224	0.144	P>0.05
Facilities	1.331	0.165	P>0.05
Strengthening the local economy	1.345	0.176	P>0.05

Reference: Research results, 2022

JSRD

Table 3. Status of items (employment index)

Items		т	Meaningful	The difference of the confidence interval is 0.95	
				Down	Тор
Increasing the entrepreneurial activities	3.13	25.321	0.000	3.31	3.14
Employment of non-natives in profitable jobs created by entrepreneurs	3.11	25.319	0.000	3.22	3.02
Job satisfaction in the sector created by entrepreneurs	3.55	25.328	0.000	3.16	3.32
Creating job opportunities for village youth	3.21	25.411	0.000	3.34	3.11
Creating and developing entrepreneurship and increasing job opportunities	3.80	25.322	0.000	3.90	3.56

Reference: Research results, 2022



Table 4. Status of items (income development index)

Items		т	Meaningful	The difference of the confidence interval is 0.95	
				Down	Тор
Making income for local institutions	3.04	25.211	0.000	3.19	2.88
Poverty Reduction	3.33	25.413	0.000	3.45	3.23
Increasing local business income	3.15	25.136	0.000	3.21	3.10
Income stability	3.11	25.112	0.000	3.19	3.02
Increasing the income of the host community	3.15	25.123	0.000	3.21	3.04
Increasing the employment rate in the entrepreneurial sector created by entrepreneurs	3.21	25.156	0.000	3.29	3.17

Reference: Research results, 2022

SRD

Table 5. Status of items (investment index)

Items	Average	т	Meaningful	The difference of the confidence interval is 0.95	
				Down	Тор
Investing in promotional, educational services	3.177	25.143	0.000	3.22	3.11
Investing local entrepreneurs in the development of entrepreneurs in the village	3.19	25.148	0.000	3.25	3.13
Increasing investment in the infrastructure facilities of households	3.22	25.158	0.000	3.30	3.18
Increasing investment in the field of entrepreneurial production activities	3.13	25.132	0.000	3.21	3.09
Increasing the risk-taking of household economic investment	3.16	25.156	0.000	3.21	3.09
Creating new economic institutions related to the entrepreneurial sector	3.11	25.113	0.000	3.19	3.03

Reference: Research results, 2022



The status of the facility index was evaluated at a favorable level. Investment indices such as using entrepreneurial facilities to get loans for the household, using entrepreneurial facilities to create new financial resources, and encouraging local investors to create job opportuni-

ties showed respectively the scores 3.18, 3.19, and 3.14. Also, the mean of strengthening the local economy was evaluated at a good level (Table 6).

Table 6. Status of items (indicators of facilities and strengthening the local economy)

Items	Average	т	Meaningful	The difference of the confi- dence interval is 0.95	
				Down	Тор
Using entrepreneurial facilities to get loans for the household	3.18	25.157	0.000	3.23	3.11
Using entrepreneurial facilities to create new financial resources	3.19	25.159	0.000	3.26	3.08
Encouraging local investors to create job opportunities	3.14	25.152	0.000	3.19	3.04
Increasing goods and productions made from local sources	3.11	25.113	0.000	3.19	3.03
Increasing local small and medium enterprises related to entrepreneurship	3.20	25.155	0.000	3.28	3.16
Increasing the local population involved in entrepreneurial business	3.00	25.012	0.000	3.11	2.89
Taking measures to reduce the capital outflow from the destination as well as restricting non-local ownership	3.11	25.112	0.000	3.25	3.00

Reference: Research results, 2022



Then, Spearman's correlation test was used to study the correlation between entrepreneurship and the economic development of Chabahar villages. The result of the Spearman test showed a significant positive relationship between all financial indexes and entrepreneurship, with a confidence level of 95%. According to Table 7, entrepreneurs have provided employment and economic development in the rural areas of Chabahar. Indeed, in a growing and dynamic economy, no restrictions can be considered for economic development regardless of employment, income and distribution, investment, facilities, and strengthening the local economy. Economic growth and development of villages are not possible without entrepreneurship. The distribution of employment among

the main sectors of economic activities depends on the parameter of employment, income level, investment, facilities, strengthening of the local economy, and long-term economic prosperity and diversification (Table 7).

The Expert Choice software was used to investigate the effectiveness of each economic indicator of entrepreneurship in the studied villages. According to Table 8 and Figure 2, out of the economic indexes, the items of strengthening the local economy, employment, income development, investment, and facilities with the scores of 0.301, 0.244, 0.213, 0.122, and 0.121 showed the highest and lowest affectability from the entrepreneurship in the rural area of Chabahar city (Table 8).

Table 7. Relationship between economic development and Entrepreneurship

Type of communication	sig	The correlation coefficient	independent variable	Economic indicators
Positive and meaningful	0.001	0.556		Employment
Positive and meaningful	0.002	0.512		Income development
Positive and meaningful	0.001	0.557	Entrepreneurship	Investment
Positive and meaningful	0.001	0.561		Facilities
Positive and meaningful	0.001	0.571		Strengthening the local economy

Reference: Research results, 2022

JSRD

Table 8. The impact of each of the economic indicators on entrepreneurship

rank	Final weight	Economic indicators
2	0.224	Employment
3	0.213	Income development
4	0.122	Investment
5	0.121	Facilities
1	0.301	Strengthening the local economy

Reference: Research results, 2022



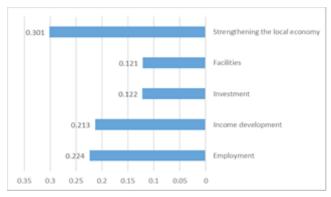


Figure 2. The impact of each of the economic indicators on entrepreneurship. Reference: Research results, 2022



5. Discussion

The solution to the challenges of rural areas, such as poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, immigration, low welfare, etc., depends on adopting new policies and strategies appropriate to the geographical conditions governing rural settlements. Referring to the research background, the promotion and development of entrepreneurship effectively solve the problems of rural communities, especially the deprived communities; this depends on the primary studies in entrepreneurship and the various factors in different geographical regions. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the rural economy's development emphasizing entrepreneurship's role (case study: Chabahar City). According to the findings, entrepreneurship is the key determinant factor key in the rural economic development of Chabahar villages. The activity of rural entrepreneurs as producers and labor generators have been considered in the economic development of the rural area in Chabahar City. Based on the results, entrepreneurship's highest and lowest effect on the economic index was observed in the items of strengthening the local economy and facilities, with scores of 0.301 and 0.121, respectively. Entrepreneurship has dramatically impacted the local economy and long-term economic vitality and diversification in the villages of Chabahar. This reduced capital outflow and restricted non-local ownership, increasing small and medium-sized enterprises in the destination and increased local goods and products. Based on the results, the facility index has the lowest level of affectability from entrepreneurship. Therefore, entrepreneurs had the most insufficient activity in the use of facilities and their distribution in the studied villages, the use of entrepreneurship facilities to receive loans, etc. for the household, encouraging local investors to create job opportunities, and the use of entrepreneurship facilities to develop new financial resources. On the other hand, one of the critical obstacles to economic development in Chabahar villages is the lack of capital. Low capital is also used for economic activities due to the lack of investment culture.

This means the lowest effect of entrepreneurs' activity in investing and capital distributing in Chabahar villages on educational, promotion, and information services, increase investment in infrastructure facilities, risk-taking, etc., compared to other indicators. By identifying market opportunities, rural entrepreneurs contributed to the economic growth and development of Chabahar rural areas. Indeed, by identifying the best way to use scarce resources to meet the demands of rural residents, they play a significant role in the economic prosperity of these areas. By innovation in entrepreneurship, the demand

and supply and consequently, employment will increase and improve people's living conditions and communities' economic development. In general, economic prosperity and development in the rural areas of Chabahar depend on entrepreneurship development. The findings of this study are following Jamini & Jamshidi (2021), Yazdani et al. (2018), Valaei et al. (2016), and Tabares et al. (2022).

Considering the results, the following suggestions were presented:

- Creating infrastructures such as electricity, water, roads, etc., for entrepreneurship fields in rural areas.
- Identifying the nature of the rural needs, which can be an incentive for innovation.
- Strengthening and training rural entrepreneurship in the economic dimension for job creation, especially in the field of tourism-related small businesses.
- Providing facilities to the villagers for the development of entrepreneurial activities.
- Emphasis on the local knowledge of villagers to create the ground for building employment.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

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