



A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Community Economic Independence through Capacity-Building Training and MSME Development

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Abstract

Building community economic independence is a strategic priority for achieving inclusive and sustainable development, particularly in developing regions where access to economic resources remains unequal. This study aims to develop a conceptual framework that integrates capacity-building training and micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) development as key drivers of community economic empowerment. The research employs a qualitative approach based on systematic literature review and conceptual synthesis to identify the main variables and relationships influencing economic independence. The findings indicate that capacity-building training plays a fundamental role in enhancing entrepreneurial capacity, including knowledge, skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy. This improvement subsequently contributes to MSME development, reflected in increased productivity, innovation, business growth, and financial performance. Furthermore, the relationship between capacity building and MSME development is strengthened by mediating factors such as social capital, mentoring, and institutional support, which facilitate collaboration and resource accessibility. External factors, including government policies, access to finance, and digitalization, also influence the effectiveness of these relationships. The study concludes that community economic independence is achieved through a comprehensive and integrated process involving internal capacity development and external ecosystem support. The proposed conceptual framework provides both theoretical and practical contributions by offering a systematic approach to designing sustainable community empowerment programs.

Keywords: Community economic independence, capacity building, MSME development, social capital, institutional support

1. Introduction

Building community economic independence is a strategic agenda for promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, particularly in developing countries that still face unequal access to economic resources. In this context, the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector plays a crucial role as a primary driver of the local economy, a provider of employment, and an instrument for poverty reduction. However, this significant contribution of MSMEs is often not matched by adequate capacity among business actors, including managerial, financial, and marketing skills, thus hampering the achievement of sustainable economic independence.

Various studies indicate that limited capacity is a key challenge in MSME development. Business actors often face obstacles in financial management, marketing strategies, and adapting to dynamic market changes. Therefore, interventions in the form of capacity-building training are a relevant approach to improving the competence and competitiveness of business actors. Hasyim and Bakri (2025) emphasized that training in financial management and marketing strategies can significantly improve micro-enterprise performance and strengthen business sustainability.

Beyond individual capacity, strengthening community economic independence also requires a collective approach through community collaboration. Collaboration between MSMEs, supporting institutions, and the wider community can create a more resilient and adaptive economic ecosystem. Awaluddin et al. (2026) demonstrated that collective awareness and community synergy can strengthen socio-economic resilience, particularly in the face of external pressures such as economic crises and market disruptions.

More broadly, higher education institutions also have strategic potential as centers for MSME capacity development. Through training programs, mentoring, and knowledge transfer, universities can act as catalysts in

improving the competency of business actors. Okello et al. (2025) suggested that collaboration between financial institutions and universities in training programs can accelerate capacity building and access to financing for MSMEs.

A local wisdom-based approach is also a crucial factor in community empowerment efforts. Capacity-building strategies that integrate local values have proven more effective in increasing participation and program sustainability. Ishak (2024) emphasized that local wisdom-based empowerment not only increases economic capacity but also strengthens community identity and social cohesion. Furthermore, social capital plays a role in supporting the successful development of MSMEs. Strong trust, networks, and social norms can enhance the effectiveness of collaboration and business sustainability. Yudiastuti and Pratikto (2021) developed a conceptual framework emphasizing the importance of a system of joint responsibility and collective empowerment in improving business performance, particularly among women-owned MSMEs.

The role of facilitators and mentors is also crucial in the capacity-building process. Ongoing mentoring not only helps transfer knowledge but also strengthens motivation and strategic decision-making. Najih and Fauzan (2026) demonstrated that the presence of competent mentors can increase the effectiveness of capacity-building programs and ensure long-term business sustainability. However, challenges in developing MSMEs extend beyond capacity, including operational readiness and access to financing. Many businesses lack the necessary skills to access formal financial support. Nwani et al. (2020) developed an operational readiness assessment model that can be used as a basis for improving access to financing for MSMEs.

From a policy perspective, the local economic development framework also plays a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurial growth. Baduza (2019) demonstrated that integrated local economic development policies can improve the performance and competitiveness of small businesses, while simultaneously strengthening regional economic structures. Furthermore, network relationships among businesses are also a key factor in enhancing competitiveness. Camanzi and Giua (2020) emphasized that collaboration within business networks can foster innovation, efficiency, and strengthen competitive strategies. Therefore, the integration of capacity building, network strengthening, and MSME development is crucial in building community economic independence.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that strengthening community economic independence requires a comprehensive and integrated approach. Therefore, this study aims to develop a conceptual framework that integrates capacity building training and MSME development as the main strategy in encouraging sustainable community economic independence.

2. Literature Review

The literature on community economic empowerment positions the concept of capacity building as a key foundation for increasing individual and community independence. Capacity building focuses not only on improving technical skills but also encompasses strengthening institutions, leadership, and social networks that support sustainable development. Literature studies indicate that elements such as learning, resource mobilization, partnerships, and community participation are crucial dimensions in building comprehensive community capacity (Liberato et al., 2011). Thus, the capacity building approach is a key strategy in promoting community-based economic transformation.

In the context of economic empowerment, MSMEs are recognized as key actors in driving local economic growth and job creation. Numerous studies confirm that MSME development significantly contributes to improving community welfare, particularly in rural and developing areas. For example, Pugu et al. (2024) show that MSMEs can increase community incomes and accelerate local economic transformation through inclusive productive activities. However, this potential is often hampered by limited capacity, access to financing, and low technology utilization.

Several studies highlight that training and education are key strategies for enhancing the capacity of MSMEs. Training programs covering financial management, marketing, and the use of digital technology have been proven to increase business competitiveness and adaptability. This approach not only improves individual skills but also strengthens entrepreneurs' abilities to navigate competitive market dynamics (Judijanto & Othman, 2024). This aligns with the findings of Hasyim and Bakri (2025), who emphasized the importance of practice-based training in improving micro-enterprise performance.

Furthermore, a community-based empowerment approach is a crucial aspect in the literature on MSME development. Community empowerment emphasizes active community participation in the development process, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and program sustainability. This concept leads to increased collective community capacity to manage resources independently and sustainably (Prasetyani et al., 2022). In this regard, Awaluddin et al. (2026) emphasized that community collaboration can enhance socio-economic resilience through synergy between entrepreneurs.

The role of social capital is also a key focus in the literature review. Social capital, encompassing networks, trust, and social norms, has been shown to strengthen the sustainability of MSMEs. Through strong social relationships, entrepreneurs can gain access to information, markets, and other resources that support business growth. Luawo

(2025) demonstrated that social capital increases business resilience through collaboration and knowledge exchange mechanisms. This aligns with the conceptual framework developed by Yudiastuti and Pratikto (2021) regarding the importance of collective systems in empowering MSMEs.

Furthermore, the literature also highlights the crucial role of institutions in supporting capacity building. Universities, the government, and the private sector have strategic roles in creating a conducive ecosystem for MSME development. Okello et al. (2025) demonstrated that collaboration between educational institutions and the financial sector can increase access to training and financing for entrepreneurs. This reinforces the argument that MSME empowerment requires an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach.

Mentoring and the role of facilitators are also crucial factors in the success of capacity building programs. The literature shows that mentoring can help entrepreneurs implement the knowledge gained from training and provide strategic direction in business decision-making. Najih and Fauzan (2026) emphasize that ongoing mentoring can increase the effectiveness of empowerment programs and business sustainability.

In addition to internal aspects, external factors such as policies and the business environment also influence the success of MSME development. Supportive local economic development policies, including access to financing, conducive regulations, and infrastructure support, are crucial elements in creating a supportive environment for business growth. Baduza (2019) shows that an integrated policy framework can significantly improve entrepreneurial performance. The literature also indicates that digital technology integration is a crucial factor in the development of modern MSMEs. Utilizing digital ecosystems and technological literacy can improve market access, operational efficiency, and product innovation. Digital transformation is a relevant strategy for enhancing MSME competitiveness in the digital economy era (Jaya et al., 2025).

Conceptually, MSME development and capacity building are inseparable from a systemic approach that integrates various factors such as innovation, collaboration, leadership, and technology. A comprehensive conceptual framework is needed to understand the relationships between these variables in promoting sustainable community economic empowerment. Recent studies have shown that integrating these dimensions can produce empowerment models that are more effective and adaptive to environmental changes (Sharuddin & Roddin, 2025).

Based on this literature review, it can be concluded that increasing community economic independence through MSME development requires a holistic approach, involving capacity building, strengthening social capital, institutional support, and technology integration. Therefore, developing a conceptual framework that combines these various elements is crucial for providing theoretical and practical contributions to the field of community-based economic empowerment.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Materials

This study adopts a conceptual and qualitative approach to develop a framework for enhancing community economic independence through capacity-building training and MSME development. The primary object of this research is community-based MSME actors, particularly those operating in developing economic environments where limitations in capacity, access to resources, and institutional support are still prevalent. The focus is placed on identifying key variables that influence the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives and their impact on economic independence.

The research is situated within the broader context of community empowerment practices, with particular reference to case-based insights from developing regions. Empirical and conceptual references are drawn from previous studies conducted in various settings, including community empowerment programs, MSME development initiatives, and institutional collaboration models. These include studies on financial and marketing training for micro-entrepreneurs (Hasyim & Bakri, 2025), community-based economic resilience (Awaluddin et al., 2026), and university-led capacity-building initiatives (Okello et al., 2025).

The data used in this study are secondary data derived from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and relevant scientific publications. The data consist of theoretical constructs, empirical findings, and best practices related to MSME empowerment, capacity building, social capital, and local economic development. Supporting literature also includes studies on local wisdom-based empowerment (Ishak, 2024), social capital frameworks (Yudiastuti & Pratikto, 2021), mentoring roles (Najih & Fauzan, 2026), operational readiness (Nwani et al., 2020), and policy frameworks (Baduza, 2019).

In terms of analytical tools, this study employs qualitative content analysis and conceptual synthesis techniques. These tools are used to systematically review, compare, and integrate findings from the literature to construct a coherent conceptual framework. The analysis process is supported by thematic categorization, enabling the identification of key dimensions such as capacity building, institutional support, social capital, mentoring, and MSME development strategies.

3.2. Methods

This study employs a structured qualitative approach based on a systematic literature review and conceptual modeling to develop a comprehensive framework for enhancing community economic independence through capacity-building training and MSME development. The method is designed to ensure rigor, transparency, and logical consistency in integrating theoretical and empirical findings into a unified conceptual model.

The research process begins with problem identification, where key issues related to the low level of community economic independence and the limited capacity of MSME actors are defined. This stage establishes the research focus and determines the scope of the study by emphasizing gaps in capacity building, institutional support, and MSME sustainability. The second stage involves a comprehensive literature review, in which relevant academic sources are collected from peer-reviewed journals, books, and credible scientific databases. The selection criteria include relevance to MSME development, capacity-building strategies, and community empowerment.

The third stage is data classification and thematic categorization, where the collected literature is systematically organized into key thematic areas such as individual capacity development, social capital, institutional roles, mentoring systems, and policy support. The fourth stage involves qualitative content analysis, aimed at extracting key constructs, relationships, and influencing factors from the selected literature. This stage highlights recurring elements such as training effectiveness, collaboration, and access to resources.

The fifth stage is conceptual synthesis and model development, where the identified variables are integrated into a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationships between capacity-building training, MSME development, and community economic independence. The final stage is framework validation and refinement, ensuring logical consistency, theoretical alignment, and practical relevance of the proposed model.

The overall research procedure is illustrated in Figure 1, which presents a systematic flow of the methodological stages from problem identification to framework validation.

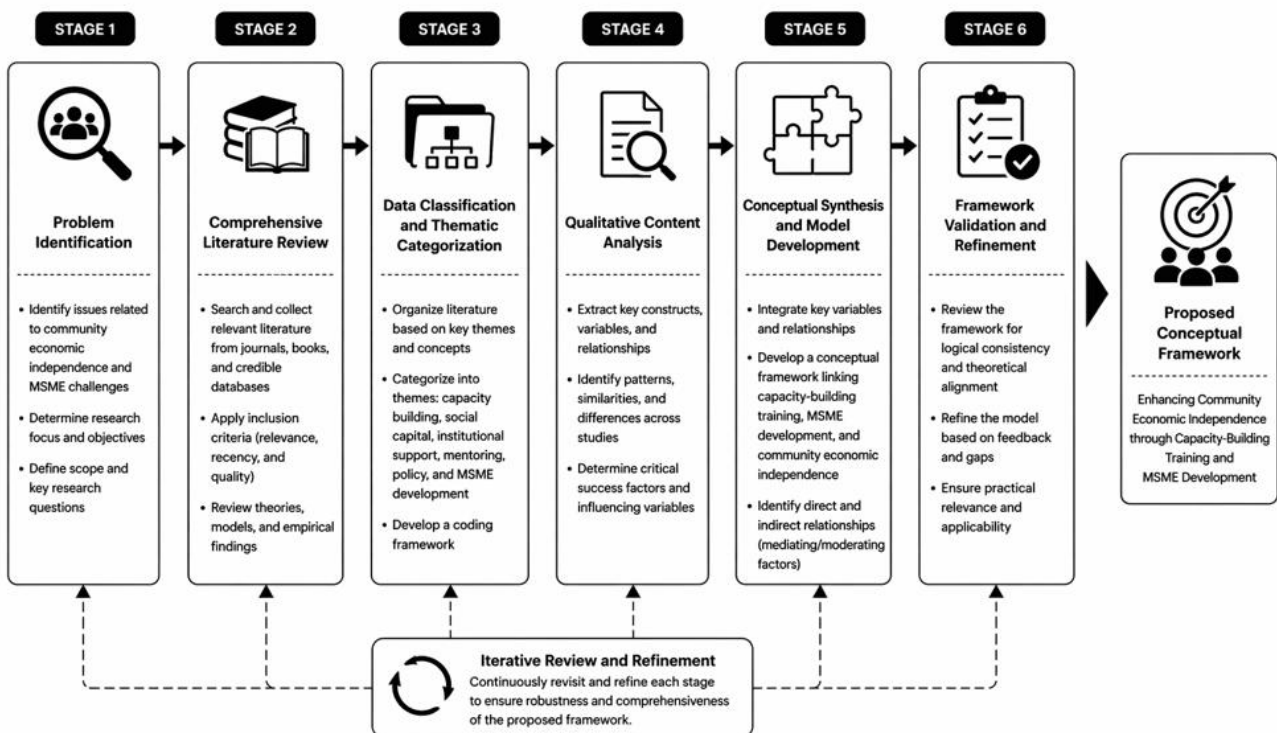


Figure 1: Research Methodology Flow Diagram

As shown in Figure 1, the research follows a sequential and interconnected process, ensuring that each stage contributes to the development of a robust and comprehensive conceptual framework. This structured methodology enhances the validity of the study and supports the formulation of a theoretically grounded model for community economic empowerment.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Impact of Capacity-Building Training on MSME Performance

The analysis shows that capacity-building training plays a fundamental role in improving MSME performance. Training encompassing financial literacy, marketing strategies, and managerial skills has been proven to increase

business productivity and operational efficiency. Empirical studies show that entrepreneurship training, access to financing, and government support simultaneously have a significant impact on MSME productivity (Siantar et al., 2025).

Furthermore, training also serves as a competency development mechanism that can bridge the skills gap between business actors and market demands. In this context, training not only improves technical capabilities but also fosters an adaptive entrepreneurial mindset. Surya et al. (2020) emphasized that training directly contributes to improving business competency and performance, making it a crucial instrument in strengthening MSME capacity. Furthermore, the integration of financial and marketing training has a synergistic impact on business growth, where sound financial management supports effective and sustainable marketing strategies (Hasyim & Bakri, 2025). Thus, capacity building can be positioned as a key factor in increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs.

4.2. The Role of Social Capital, Innovation, and Institutional Support

Research also shows that the success of MSME development is determined not only by individual capacity, but also by external factors such as social capital, innovation, and institutional support. Social capital, which encompasses networks, trust, and collaboration, has been shown to increase access to information, markets, and resources, thereby strengthening business resilience. From an innovation perspective, MSMEs with adaptive capacity and strategic flexibility tend to be more resilient in dynamic environments. Shahzad et al. (2026) demonstrated that adaptive capacity, learning integration, and strategic flexibility are key mechanisms in building MSME resilience. This confirms that innovation is not merely a supporting factor but a core element in maintaining business sustainability.

Furthermore, institutional support and public policy play a strategic role in creating a conducive ecosystem for MSME development. Strengthening institutional capacity, coordination between stakeholders, and policies supporting access to financing and training have been shown to increase the effectiveness of business development (Null & Suryani, 2024). Thus, synergy between internal and external factors is key to driving sustainable MSME growth.

4.3. Conceptual Framework for Community Economic Independence

Based on the results of the literature synthesis and analysis of the findings, this study proposes a conceptual model that integrates capacity-building training and MSME development to promote community economic independence. The proposed conceptual model is presented in Figure 2, which illustrates the relationship between inputs, processes, and outputs within the framework of community economic empowerment.

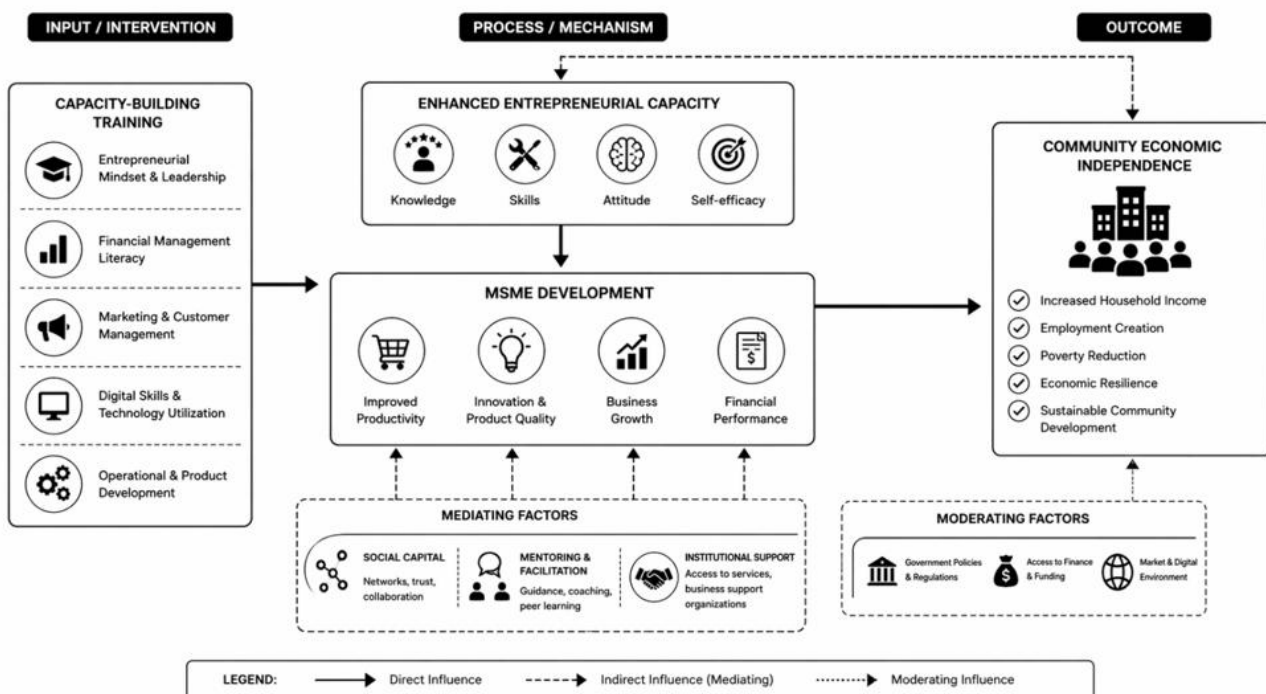


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Community Economic Independence through Capacity-Building Training and MSME Development

As shown in Figure 2, capacity-building training acts as a primary input variable encompassing several important dimensions: entrepreneurial mindset and leadership, financial management literacy, marketing and customer management, digital skills and technology utilization, and operational and product development. These dimensions

directly contribute to increasing entrepreneurial capacity, which encompasses knowledge, skills, attitude, and self-efficacy.

Furthermore, this increased entrepreneurial capacity drives MSME development, which is reflected in increased productivity, innovation and product quality, business growth, and financial performance. In this model, the relationship between capacity and MSME development is not purely linear but is strengthened by mediating factors. Furthermore, Figure 2 shows that several mediating factors play a crucial role, namely social capital, mentoring and facilitation, and institutional support. These factors enable knowledge transfer, increased collaboration, and access to services and resources that support business sustainability.

Furthermore, this model also identifies moderating factors that influence the strength of the relationships between variables, namely government policies and regulations, access to finance and funding, and the market and digital environment. These factors can strengthen or weaken the effectiveness of capacity building and MSME development programs. Ultimately, the entire process culminates in community economic independence as the primary output, characterized by increased household income, job creation, poverty reduction, economic resilience, and sustainable community development.

Overall, Figure 2 emphasizes that community economic independence is the result of a systemic interaction between training interventions, capacity building, business development, and external environmental support. This model not only provides theoretical contributions through the integration of the resource-based view and dynamic capability approaches but also offers practical implications for designing more effective and sustainable community empowerment programs.

4.4. Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce and extend existing theoretical and empirical research on community economic empowerment, particularly in the context of MSME development and capacity building. The proposed conceptual framework highlights that community economic independence is not driven by a single factor but emerges from the interaction between individual capacity, institutional support, and external environmental conditions.

From a theoretical perspective, the results are consistent with the resource-based view (RBV), which emphasizes that internal capabilities such as knowledge, skills, and competencies are critical sources of competitive advantage. The findings in Section 4.1 confirm that capacity-building training significantly enhances entrepreneurial capacity, which in turn improves MSME performance. This aligns with Hasyim and Bakri (2025), who found that financial and marketing training directly strengthens business sustainability. Similarly, Surya et al. (2020) highlighted that training contributes to improving managerial competencies and operational performance, reinforcing the importance of internal resource development.

Furthermore, the study supports the dynamic capability theory, which emphasizes the ability of firms to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure internal and external resources in response to environmental changes. The findings in Section 4.2 show that MSMEs with higher adaptive capacity, innovation, and strategic flexibility are more resilient in dynamic environments. This is consistent with Shahzad et al. (2026), who demonstrated that adaptive capacity and learning integration are key drivers of MSME resilience. Thus, capacity building should not be limited to technical skills but must also enhance adaptive and innovative capabilities.

The role of social capital identified in this study also aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of networks, trust, and collaboration in supporting MSME sustainability. Yudiastuti and Pratikto (2021) argued that collective empowerment and joint responsibility systems can enhance business performance, particularly in community-based enterprises. Similarly, Awaluddin et al. (2026) demonstrated that community collaboration strengthens socio-economic resilience. The findings of this study extend these perspectives by positioning social capital as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between capacity building and MSME development.

In addition, the importance of institutional support and mentoring highlighted in the proposed model is consistent with the literature on multi-stakeholder approaches in MSME development. Okello et al. (2025) emphasized the role of universities as hubs for capacity building, while Najih and Fauzan (2026) showed that mentoring plays a critical role in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of empowerment programs. This study confirms that institutional support and mentoring are not merely complementary factors but essential components that facilitate knowledge transfer and resource access.

The findings also support previous studies on the role of policy and external environment in shaping MSME performance. Baduza (2019) demonstrated that integrated local economic development policies can significantly improve entrepreneurial performance. Similarly, Nwani et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of operational readiness and access to financing. In this study, these factors are conceptualized as moderating variables, indicating that their presence can strengthen or weaken the effectiveness of capacity-building interventions.

Moreover, the integration of digitalization within the conceptual framework reflects recent developments in MSME research, which emphasize the importance of technology adoption in enhancing competitiveness. As noted by Jaya et al. (2025), digital transformation improves market access, operational efficiency, and innovation capacity. The present study incorporates this dimension as part of the external environment, further enriching the conceptual model.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by offering a more integrative and systemic framework that combines capacity building, MSME development, social capital, institutional support, and external environmental

factors. Unlike previous studies that often examine these elements separately, this research highlights their interdependence in achieving community economic independence.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that policymakers and practitioners should adopt a holistic approach in designing empowerment programs. Interventions should not only focus on training but also incorporate mentoring, institutional collaboration, and policy support to maximize impact. By aligning internal capacity development with external ecosystem strengthening, community-based economic empowerment initiatives can achieve more sustainable and inclusive outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This study has developed a conceptual framework for enhancing community economic independence through the integration of capacity-building training and MSME development. By employing a qualitative approach based on literature synthesis and conceptual analysis, the study identifies key variables and relationships that influence the effectiveness of community-based economic empowerment. The framework highlights that capacity-building training serves as the primary driver in improving entrepreneurial capacity, which subsequently leads to the development of MSMEs in terms of productivity, innovation, business growth, and financial performance.

The findings also demonstrate that the relationship between capacity building and MSME development is strengthened by mediating factors such as social capital, mentoring, and institutional support. These elements play a crucial role in facilitating knowledge transfer, fostering collaboration, and improving access to resources. In addition, external factors including government policies, access to finance, and digitalization act as moderating variables that influence the strength and effectiveness of empowerment initiatives.

Overall, the study concludes that community economic independence is achieved through a multidimensional and integrated process involving internal capacity enhancement and external ecosystem support. The proposed conceptual framework provides both theoretical contributions by integrating resource-based and dynamic capability perspectives, and practical implications for designing more effective and sustainable community empowerment programs. Therefore, a holistic approach that combines training, institutional collaboration, and supportive policy environments is essential to promote long-term economic independence within communities.

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