

## DISABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A BIBLIOMETRIC APPROACH

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**Abstract:** *Entrepreneurship for people with disabilities is a mechanism for their integration into society. The purpose of this research paper is to adopt a mixed methodology of literature review and bibliometric, network and content analysis based on a number of 173 papers identified on the Web of Science (WoS). The first objective considers the review of the specialized literature on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship, people with disabilities, benefits of entrepreneurship for people with disabilities, and the second objective is focused on bibliometric, network and content analysis on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship. The results obtained are represented by the construction of a research agenda in which all the stages recorded in the appearance in the specialized literature of the concept of entrepreneurship for people with disabilities are recorded, simultaneously with the evolution of the context in which people with disabilities can carry out this activity.*

**Key words:** *disability, entrepreneurship, benefits, bibliometric analysis*

**JEL:** M10, M13, M21

### 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship represents an opportunity for people with disabilities to use their time in a useful and flexible way. Owning your own business offers possibilities to demonstrate skills and talent, to apply professional experience, and to develop yourself (Lupașcu and Jelescu, 2020).

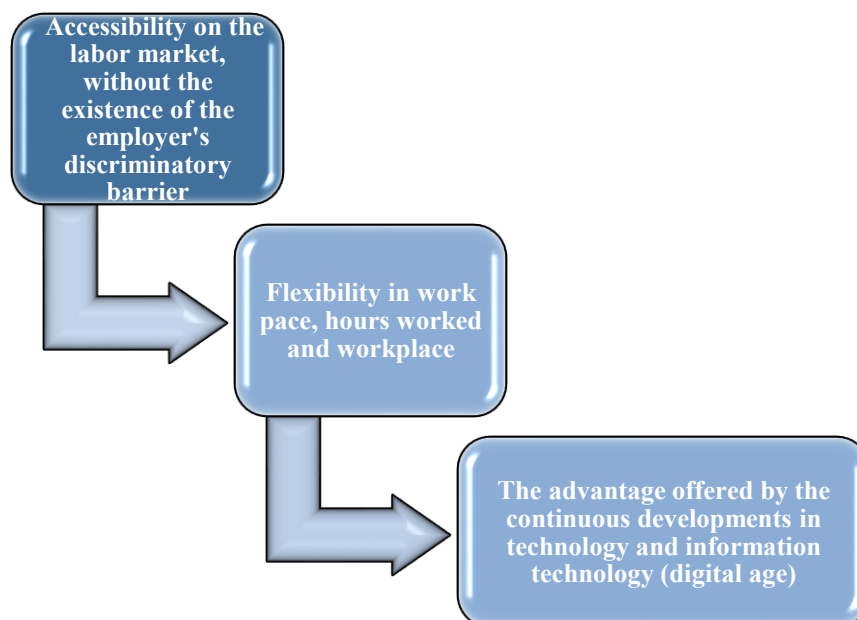
The key to relating to people with disabilities is always openness to communion, not simple compassion or pity. We are called not to look at the person exclusively through the lens of disability, forgetting that this is only a part of the whole person (Chirilă, 2010). The social representation of people with disabilities can be "expressed", "externalized" through the words used in direct discussions or when they are evoked, but it is very possible that censorship, not necessarily self-imposed, but also external, social, regarding the use of terms perceived as having a pejorative connotation, can positively influence that social representation. More precisely, someone who talks about the disabled is more likely to not value those people, while, if they designate them as people with disabilities/impairments, possibly with special needs, implicitly placing them in the human sphere, what initially can only be external and imposed has a chance to become internalized and gain the status of an element of representation (Botosineanu, 2018).

### 2. Literature review

Entrepreneurship is a process that consists of identifying and pursuing a business opportunity, with the aim of capitalizing on it. It is a process that takes place in different environments and business units that causes changes in the economic system through innovations carried out by people who capitalize on economic opportunities, creating values for both individuals and society (Lupașcu and Jelescu, 2020). People with disabilities have always existed, regardless of the historical and cultural

period, and the attitude towards this disadvantaged category has changed from marginalization and social exclusion to acceptance and community integration (Pavlencu and Revenco, 2021).

„Disability is growing in all countries. There are more than 1000 million people with disabilities throughout the world, that is, about 15% of the world's population, or one in seven people. Disabled people's entrepreneurial challenges can be financial, personal, or societal.” (Muñoz et al., 2020).



**Figure 1. Benefits of entrepreneurship for people with disabilities**

*Source: own adaptation after Halabisky (2014)*

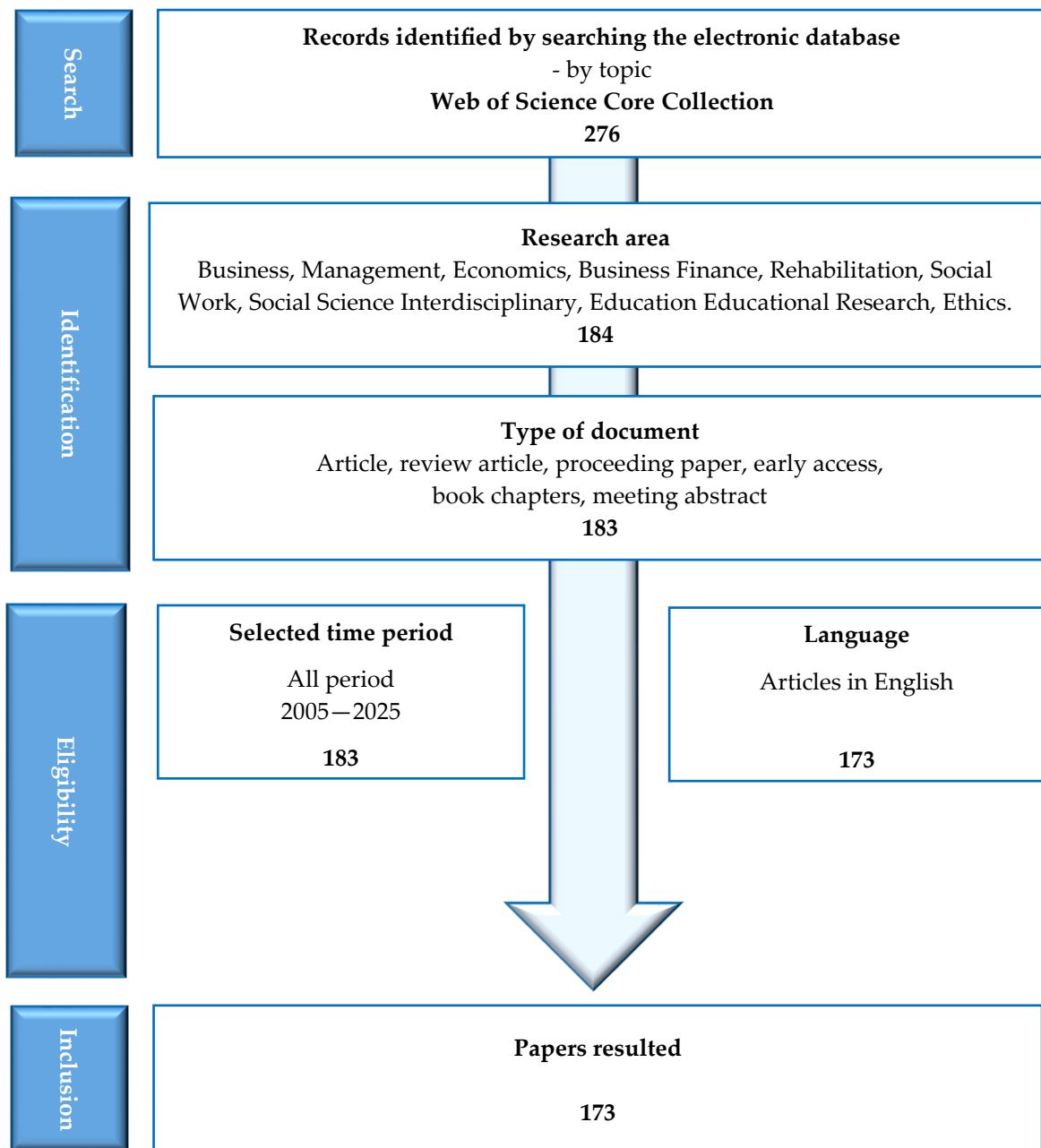
In general, people may be drawn to self-employment for a variety of reasons. While some enter the field of entrepreneurship out of necessity, others, perhaps even the majority, seek to seize an opportunity that presents itself to them in order to gain independence and autonomy, improve their work-life balance, increase their job satisfaction, and seek to obtain higher income and other material benefits (Socoliuc et al., 2019). While these reasons may have a significant influence on entrepreneurs with disabilities, this category of people may also be motivated by other factors. The factors that show the advantages of entrepreneurship for people with disabilities are presented in Figure 1.

The lives of people with disabilities reflect their adaptations to the circumstances created by society; the context for starting a business reflects interconnected factors such as family relationships and economic variables, type and severity of disability, education and professional experience, and personal contacts (Renko et al., 2016).

Entrepreneurship of people with disabilities is an emerging and thriving field with great potential for theory, policy and practice (Klangboonkrong and Baines, 2022).

### **3. Research methodology**

The research strategy was based on a main direction, namely: the direction considers the selection of research papers on the theme of disability and entrepreneurship published on the Web of Science (WoS) between 2005 and May 2025 and the performance of the bibliometric analysis. In order to perform the bibliometric analysis of the selected papers, the cluster method was used, applied with the help of the VOSviewer software version 1.6.20.



**Figure 2. Methodical selection of databases from WoS**

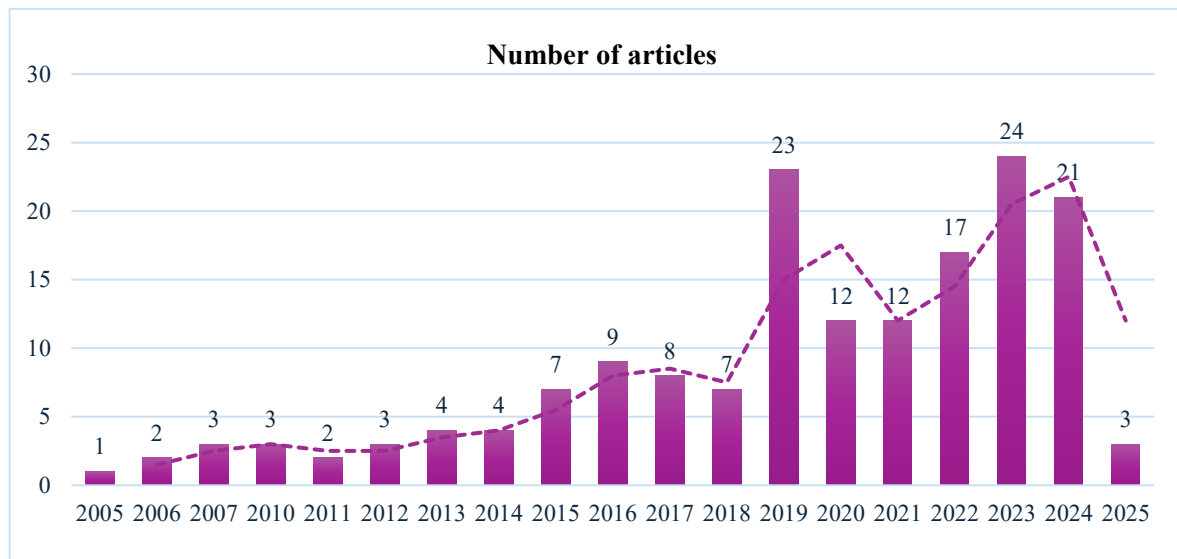
*Source: authors' own elaboration*

The stages of the research methodology can be analyzed in Figure 2, which is presented in a systematic manner. It can be seen that the methodology comprises 4 stages, all of which play an essential role in obtaining the results and the final analysis.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Exploratory Bibliographic Study

To better understand the trends in academic research over the past two decades, Figure 2 shows annual scientific publications from 2005 to 2025.



**Figure 3. Evolution of papers by year of publication on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship on WoS**

*Source: own elaboration using the WoS database*

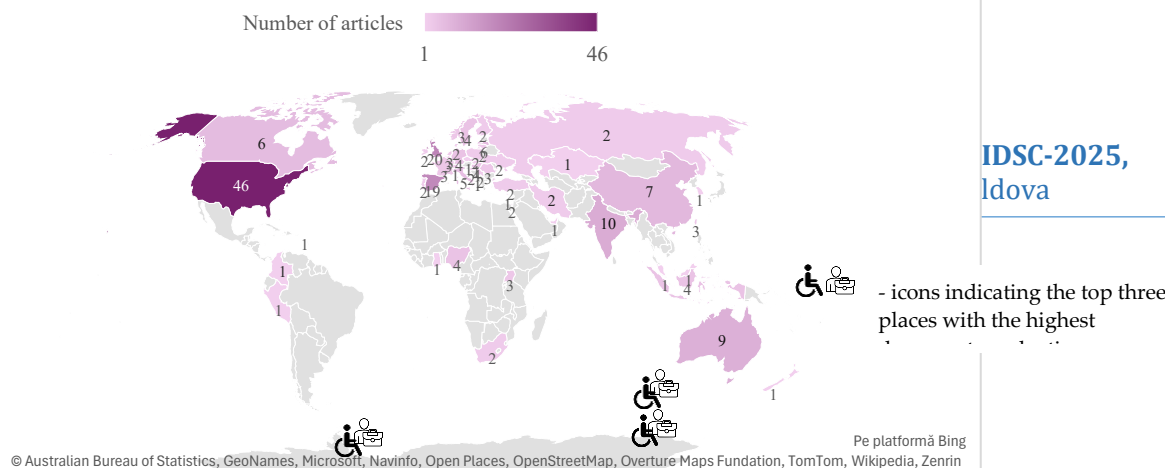
In Figure 3, we observe an upward trend in the papers published between 2005 and May 2025, with considerable growth points between 2019-2024 (the highest number of papers was recorded in 2023 – 24), and in 2025 a slight decrease is highlighted (also due to the fact that 2025 is analyzed until May); overall, it demonstrates an increased interest of researchers in this topic during the analyzed period.



**Figure 4. Top 10 most productive publication sources on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship on WoS**

*Source: own elaboration using the WoS database*

As can be seen in Figure 4, regarding the publication source on the topic of "disability and entrepreneurship", Suma de Negocios is in first place with 10 articles, and Disability Society is in second place with 9 published articles.



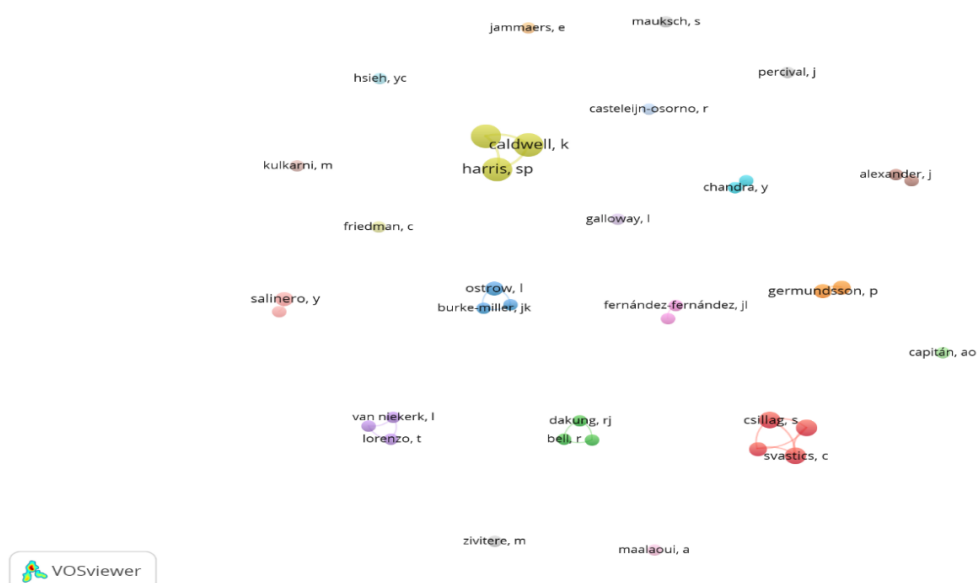
**Figure 5. Number of scientific research published globally on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship based on data provided by WoS**

*Source: authors projection with Microsoft Excel; free icons from flaticon.com (see [flaticon](https://flaticon.com))*

Regarding the analysis by country based on the WoS database, it can be seen in Figure 5 that places 1, 2 and 3 are marked in the form of icons characteristic of disability and entrepreneurship and are occupied by the USA with 46 scientific papers, the United Kingdom with 20 papers and Spain with 19 papers. It is worth noting that Romania also appears in 21st place with 3 papers, which demonstrates the fact that our country shows an interest in this topic.

Next, we will analyze the author citation network which involves counting references to identify frequently cited authors and their collaborations. This step helps identify influential researchers and their contributions.

VOSviewer is a software tool for creating and exploring maps based on network data; this software explores co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation links in one of three possible representations: network view, overlay, or density. (Arruda et al., 2022)



**Figure 6. The network of authors on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship on WoS**

*Source: own elaboration using VOSviewer software*

Based on the 173 scientific articles on the WoS platform, a number of 396 different authors emerge, but the network only shows 37 authors, namely only those who meet the established threshold (the number of scientific papers must be at least two per author). The network projected in Figure 6 represents the interconnection of researchers and collaborative efforts.

**Table 1. Top 10 worldwide cited authors on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship**

First author	Paper	Journal	Year	Total Citations
Haynie JM	Toward a Theory of Discontinuous Career Transition: Investigating Career Transitions Necessitated by Traumatic Life Events	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	2011	163
Renko M	Entrepreneurial entry by people with disabilities	<i>International Small Business Journal- Researching Entrepreneurship</i>	2018	62
Harris SP	Social entrepreneurship as an employment pathway for people with disabilities: exploring political-economic and socio-cultural factors	<i>Disability &amp; Society</i>	2014	54
Harpur P	Gig Workers with Disabilities: Opportunities, Challenges, and Regulatory Response	<i>Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation</i>	2020	51
Bakker RM	Inclusive entrepreneurship: A call for a shared theoretical conversation about unconventional entrepreneurs	<i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>	2023	46
Vardeman-Winter J	Still a lily-white field of women: The state of workforce diversity in public relations practice and research	<i>Public Relations Review</i>	2017	43
Williams J	New directions for entrepreneurship through a gender and disability lens	<i>International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior &amp; Research</i>	2019	41
Pavey B	Human capital, social capital, entrepreneurship and disability: an examination of some current educational trends in the UK	<i>Disability &amp; Society</i>	2006	33
Saxena SS	Gauging underdog entrepreneurship for disabled entrepreneurs	<i>Journal of Enterprising Communities- People and Places in the Global Economy</i>	2018	30
Martin BC	Inclusive Management Research: Persons with Disabilities and Self-Employment Activity as an Exemplar	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	2020	29

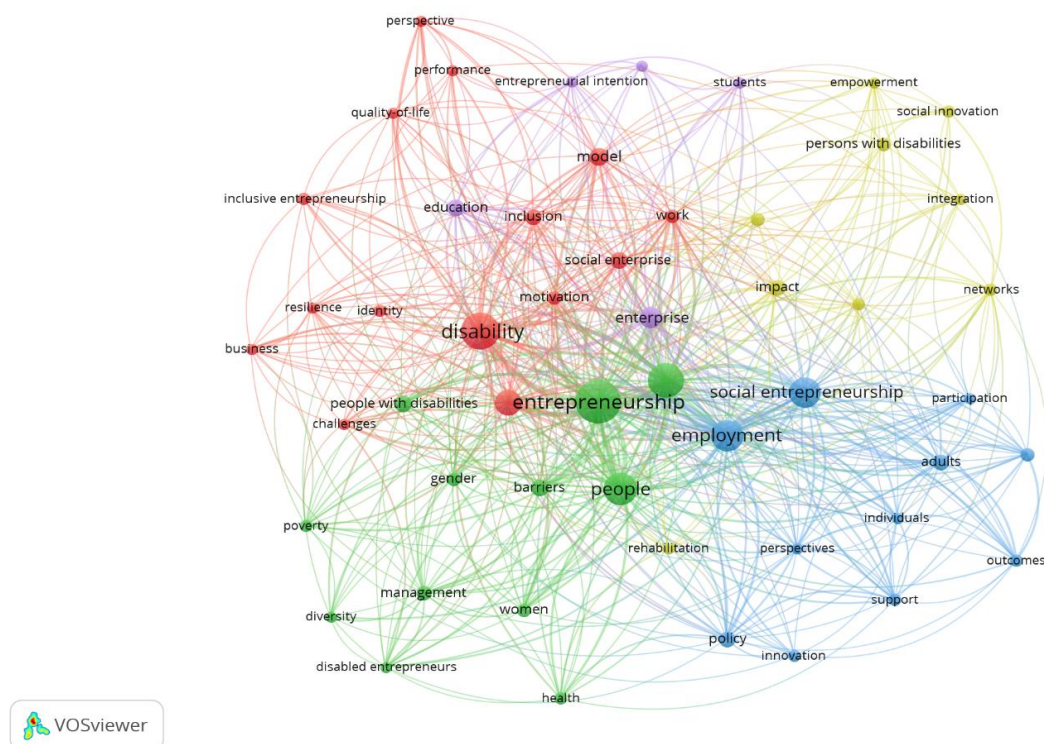
*Source: own elaboration using the WoS database*



To gain more insight, Table 1 identifies the names of the most cited researchers, mentioning the journal in which they published their research. Most of the cited papers were published in journals related to economics, management, and business, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of disability and entrepreneurship research and indicating a growing interest and research activity.

#### 4.2. Bibliometric analysis of the researched subject

To further explore the topic of disability and entrepreneurship, the keyword co-occurrence visualization, Figure 7, shows a network of interconnected terms. Each node represents a keyword, and the lines connecting them indicate the frequency with which these keywords co-occur in the analyzed documents. The size of the nodes corresponds to the frequency of the keywords, while the thickness of the lines represents the strength of the association between them.



**Figure 7. Keyword frequency network for the topic disability and entrepreneurship on WoS (2005 – May 2025)**

*Source: own elaboration using VOSviewer software*

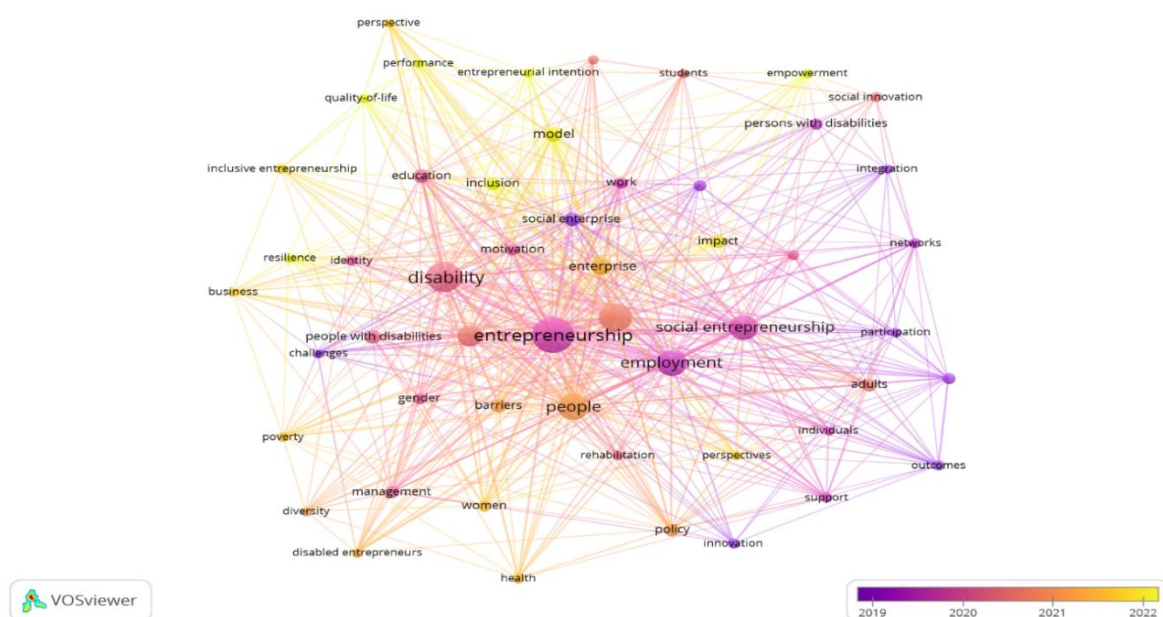
Particular care was taken to set a threshold of five occurrences for each keyword, resulting in 52 relevant terms out of 835. We chose this threshold because we wanted to capture the most relevant terms. As a result, the keywords “entrepreneurship”, “disability”, “people” and “social entrepreneurship” occupy a central position in the network, suggesting their strong association with other terms.

**Table 2. Keyword clusters for disability and entrepreneurship in VOSviewer**

Clusters	The most relevant key terms	Occurrences	Total Link Strength	Main Topic
Cluster 1 red (15 items)	business	5	24	Disability
	disability	53	178	
	inclusion	10	40	
	motivation	7	40	
	social enterprise	12	39	
Cluster 2 green (12 items)	disabled entrepreneurs	5	30	Entrepreneurship
	entrepreneurship	76	250	
	management	9	35	
	people	42	208	
	people with disabilities	12	35	
Cluster 3 blue (11 items)	employment	39	170	Social entrepreneurship
	innovation		18	
	social entrepreneurship		136	
	support		38	
			6	
Cluster 4 yellow (9 items)	empowerment	5	20	Persons with disabilities
	impact	10	34	
	integration	5	20	
	rehabilitation	5	19	
Cluster 5 purple (5 items)	education	12	50	Enterprise
	enterprise	18	91	
	entrepreneurial intention	5	23	

*Source: authors' own elaboration*

The visualization reveals the interconnections between several thematic clusters, as presented in Table 2.



**Figure 8. Co-occurrence overlay visualisation of keywords for disability and entrepreneurship**

*Source: own elaboration using VOSviewer software*



To analyze the temporal distribution of articles, the co-occurrence overlay view (Figure 8) shows the design of keywords according to the year in which they were used. The color coding of the nodes and lines indicates the temporal dimension of the co-occurrences: with older occurrences in purple, from 2019, such as "challenges", "innovation", "integration" and "social enterprise"; with pink occurrences between 2020 and 2021, "entrepreneurship", "social entrepreneurship", "management", "disability"; with more recent occurrences in orange, from 2021, "people", "barriers", "diversity", "disabled entrepreneurs"; and with yellow the most recent use of the words, from 2022, "inclusion", "quality-of-life", "resilience", "performance".

## 5. Conclusions

Disabilities vary greatly from person to person in terms of type, severity, stability, duration and time of onset. These characteristics influence the capabilities and willingness of people with disabilities to become entrepreneurs and to sustain such a status. Self-employment is considered more suitable for many people in this category, as it can offer greater flexibility in terms of workload, working hours and workplace, which can allow for better management of the disability and lifestyle.

Regarding the bibliometric analysis on the topic of disability and entrepreneurship, it can be noted that in 2023 the largest number of papers on the mentioned topic was recorded, and the countries of the USA, the United Kingdom and Spain showed the greatest interest in this topic. Most of the cited papers were published in journals related to economics, management and business, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of disability and entrepreneurship research and indicating a growing interest and research activity.

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