Exploring Shared Challenges of Empowered Patients and Entrepreneurs: Towards Diversity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship in Post-Crisis Contexts

Marisol Hurtado Illanes

Abstract: This practical study explores the shared challenges faced by individuals managing chronic health conditions and entrepreneurs within the context of post-crisis periods, focusing on diversity, innovation, and individual empowerment. The aim is to develop a theoretical framework elucidating the mechanisms behind these challenges and their implications for fostering diversity, social innovation, and sustainability. Methodologically, an integrative approach was employed, drawing upon insights from psychology, sociology, health management, and entrepreneurship literature to conduct a comprehensive analysis. The research utilized mixed methods, including scoping reviews and qualitative analysis of virtual communities, to uncover the dynamic mechanisms that drive empowerment. This approach not only validated the theoretical framework but also proposed practical strategies to harness diversity, innovation, and entrepreneurship in post-crisis contexts. Drawing upon Dubin’s methodology, the study structured the theoretical framework to highlight the interconnectedness of empowerment experiences within communities. The findings underscore the interconnectedness of empowerment experiences within communities and highlight the vital role of collaborative environments and support networks in promoting diversity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Ultimately, this research contributes to the development of strategies that capitalize on cultural diversities and reap the benefits of different nationalities, knowledge areas, and cultures, particularly in the aftermath of crises.

Keywords: diversity; innovation community; entrepreneurship; empowerment; COVID-19; virtual communities; digitalization; SDG; sustainable development

1. Introduction

Understanding the dynamics of personal and community empowerment is crucial across various fields, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, encompassing domains such as entrepreneurship and health. The global pandemic has significantly disrupted both personal health management and entrepreneurial activities, necessitating swift adaptation to rapidly evolving circumstances. In response, these domains are undergoing profound transformations, with empowered individuals playing pivotal roles as catalysts for change and innovation. To comprehensively assess their social impact, it is imperative to grasp both the commonalities and unique challenges they encounter within their respective domains.

Empowered individuals, including workers, demonstrate remarkable adaptability in overcoming abrupt obstacles (Bouzakhem et al. 2023). The principles of empowerment, characterized by autonomy and resilience, serve as guiding frameworks for navigating uncertainty and adversity. They form a shared foundation for empowered patients and entrepreneurs alike, aligning with sustainable development goals aimed at enhancing overall well-being and communal benefits (Nicolopoulos et al. 2017; Rashid 2019).

Recent research underscores the interconnectedness of factors shaping empowerment, emphasizing the necessity of integrated approaches (Belitski et al. 2021). Understanding...
these dynamics provides valuable insights into developing empowerment processes in
digital environments like virtual communities, thereby enriching the broader discourse
on empowerment with new avenues for diversity and innovation (Chandna and Salimath
2020; Smithson et al. 2021; Zaheer et al. 2019; Ridings and Gefen 2004; Bocquet et al.
2019). Understanding interconnected empowerment provides insights into addressing
common challenges in health management and entrepreneurship, promoting collaborative
innovation environments for transformative progress (Carayannis et al. 2022) and fostering
inclusive development (Snow et al. 2017; Frost and Massagli 2008).

A fundamental divide exists between developers and degrowthers regarding the role
of technology and entrepreneurship in society. Developers advocate for technological
advancement and private entrepreneurial initiatives as essential for empowerment, sus-
tainable development, and economic growth. Conversely, degrowthers’ caution against the
potential negative impacts of rapid technological change, advocating for public intervention
and a measured approach to ensure equitable and sustainable development. This research
integrates both perspectives, focusing on empowering individuals and communities to
advocate for their needs, crucial for reducing inequalities and promoting equitable and
sustainable development. The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) highlights the
ongoing challenges and disparities in digital access, underscoring the need for responsible
use of technology to bridge the digital divide (Wilson et al. 2019). Thus, knowledge
becomes a pivotal tool for the responsible use of technology, mitigating its adverse effects
(Sánchez-Bayón et al. 2024).

This paper seeks to address ongoing research gaps in understanding empowerment
dynamics (Rissel 1994; Fumagalli et al. 2015; Wood et al. 2021). The absence of a clear
definition complicates the comparative understanding. Fostering collaborative endeavors
in the dynamic scope of health management, entrepreneurship, and technology between
patient and entrepreneur communities is imperative, with a focus on promoting human
welfare, inclusive growth and economic advancement (Wadichar et al. 2024; Julius On-
akoya and Babatunde 2013; Fattah et al. 2021). The existing literature emphasizes how
entrepreneurship programs empower marginalized groups (Balcazar et al. 2014). This study
shifts focus towards understanding challenges hindering sustainable well-being and social
innovation, extending beyond entrepreneurship solely for environmental conservation
(Muñoz and Cohen 2018). Additionally, there’s a lack of comparative studies exploring the
characteristics of both Personal Health Management (PHM) and entrepreneurial domains.
Limited progress has been made in another approach, which explores entrepreneurial
dynamics in the development of new health services (Sindakis and Kitsios 2016). Thus,
persistent research gaps remain in addressing challenges faced by empowered individuals.

Empowerment dynamics are crucial for enhancing personal well-being and driving
social innovation. Despite their significance, current research often lacks a unified approach
to comprehensively understanding these dynamics across various domains.

Essential questions are addressed in this paper:

• What shared challenges do chronic patients and entrepreneurs encounter, and how
  are these challenges addressed to empower them?

• What are the fundamental mechanisms contributing to the empowerment of patients
  and entrepreneurs, and how do these mechanisms intersect within their communities?

This study seeks to address this gap by developing a comprehensive theoretical
framework for understanding individual empowerment mechanisms, validated through
qualitative research. Leveraging Dubin’s methodology and adopting a transdisciplinary
approach, the framework aims to enrich the literature on empowerment by illustrating how
diverse factors interconnect to strengthen individuals across different spheres (Dubin 1978).

By comprehensively exploring these shared challenges, this study not only seeks
to clarify the mechanisms of empowerment within communities but also aims to pro-
vide actionable insights for promoting diversity, social innovation, and sustainability in
practical contexts. This approach integrates insights from management sciences and indi-
vidual empowerment, advocating for interdisciplinary knowledge exchange to enhance
personal well-being and foster social innovation. Key stages such as Individual Empowerment, Engagement, Community Development, and Sustainable Practices have been highlighted (Blaique et al. 2023; Snowden et al. 2016), aligning with Sustainable Development Goals and emphasizing the importance of strategic, diverse, and collaborative approaches (Tang et al. 2021).

This research paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the theoretical background and related literature on empowerment dynamics in entrepreneurship and health. Section 3 describes the methodology used for data collection and analysis. Section 4 presents the analysis and results of the study, providing actionable insights for practitioners in health and entrepreneurship. Section 5 introduces the theoretical framework, emphasizing the integrated essence of empowerment and its various components. Section 6 discusses the implications of the results for both academic research and practical applications. Finally, Section 7 provides conclusions, acknowledges the limitations of the study, and suggests directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

Broader definitions, primarily from psychology, conceptualize empowerment as the process of enabling individuals to assert control over their lives and navigate complex circumstances, influenced by factors such as motivation, opportunities, environmental influences, and self-belief (Zimmerman 1995; Perkins and Zimmerman 1995; Lorig and Holman 2003; Rappaport 1995). These elements collectively promote psychological well-being and resilience, which are crucial for fostering sustainable well-being and social innovation (Zautra et al. 2010; Diener 2012).

2.1. Entrepreneurship Background

Entrepreneurship research underscores the pivotal role of knowledge management, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and human capital in catalyzing the success of enterprises (Belitski et al. 2021; Luthans and Ibrayeva 2006; Unger et al. 2011). These factors play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial ecosystems and fostering resilience in post-crisis contexts. The concept of Individual Empowerment is central to this exploration, emphasizing self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-determination (Maynard et al. 2012). Empowerment and entrepreneurship can mutually influence each other, creating a dynamic interplay that fosters innovation and adaptability (Henao-Zapata and Peiró 2018).

Additionally, Individual Engagement within entrepreneurial ecosystems emerges as a critical factor, with individuals actively participating in communal initiatives and contributing to collective endeavors supported by social capital and networks (Okojie et al. 2023; Stam 2015). Community Development thrives on collaboration, emphasizing collective action and its impact on infrastructure and well-being (Audretsch and Lehmann 2006).

Sustainable Practices, a key component of the entrepreneurial landscape, advocate for environmental, social, and economic sustainability by promoting responsible resource management, ethical business practices, and equitable wealth distribution, thereby fostering empowerment and collective well-being in the digital age (Belitski and Heron 2017; Acs and Sussan 2017). Supportive elements in the ecosystem, guided by social capital theory, shape its dynamics (Salimi 2022; Theodoraki et al. 2018; Mason and Brown 2014). These practices are essential for fostering long-term growth and resilience, reinforcing the importance of sustainable development in post-crisis contexts.

The key themes of empowerment and their social implications for sustainability are summarized in Table 1.
### Table 1. Key Themes of Empowerment and Social Implications for Sustainability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Key Themes</th>
<th>Relevant Theories, Models, and Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Empowerment</td>
<td>Self-efficacy, autonomy and self-determination</td>
<td>(Bandura 1997; Maynard et al. 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support and Engagement</td>
<td>Social support, active participation and engagement</td>
<td>(Cohen and Wills 1985; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human and Intellectual Capital</td>
<td>Collaboration and cooperation, collective action, knowledge-based drivers and dynamics</td>
<td>(Becker 1964; Gratton and Ghoshal 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Practices</td>
<td>Sustainable practices, opportunities, and innovation</td>
<td>(Putnam 2000; Shepherd and Patzelt 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.2. Empowerment Foundations

Empowerment foundations, including self-efficacy, social support, collaboration, and education, are fundamental to the empowerment process. These elements collectively promote autonomy, self-determination, and awareness, providing individuals with tools to navigate challenges and foster personal growth (Kabeer 1999; Cohen and Wills 1985).

##### 2.2.1. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, emphasized by Bandura’s theory, underpins individuals’ beliefs in their abilities, crucial for decision-making and resilience (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan 2017; Hood and Young 1993; Bandura 1997). It fosters perseverance, effectiveness, and well-being, shaping traits like grit and motivation, essential for success in various domains (Dweck 2006; Duckworth et al. 2007; Hemingway 2005).

##### 2.2.2. Social Support

Social support, encompassing interpersonal and community networks, influences well-being and empowerment (Bandura 2001; Thoits 2011). These connections cultivate trust, provide emotional support, and foster resilience (Aujoulat et al. 2007; Frost and Massagli 2008; Zahra and Wright 2016). Additionally, community networks foster inclusion, innovation, and social change (Castells 2000; Zheng and Walsham 2008; Cajaiba-Santana 2014; Hurtado Illanes 2019).

##### 2.2.3. Collaboration and Cooperation

Effective collaboration among community members is essential for development, leveraging diverse perspectives and resources to address challenges and achieve shared goals (Coleman 2009; Spigel 2017). These networks provide encouragement and guidance, fostering the exchange of knowledge, skills, and resources among members (Adler and Kwon 2002; Putnam 2000; Israel et al. 1994; Nowell and Boyd 2014). Collaborative spaces promote knowledge exchange and innovation, which are crucial for societal advancement (Wenger 2010; Wenger et al. 2002). The integration of collaborative efforts among stakeholders is crucial for social advancement (Pigg 2002). Recognizing individuals’ potential for innovation, inclusive environments promote empowerment by leveraging human capital (Amabile 2018).

##### 2.2.4. Education

Educational institutions foster entrepreneurship by nurturing innovation, skills, and conducive ecosystems for knowledge sharing. Knowledge and education encompass individuals’ understanding of their circumstances, options, and opportunities. Self-efficacy enhances this by promoting confidence, resilience, goal-directed behavior, and self-regulated learning (Hibbard and Greene 2013). Individuals with high self-efficacy confidently pursue their educational goals, make informed decisions, and assert their autonomy, believing in their capacity to acquire knowledge and skills (Sitaridis and Kitsios 2024).
2.3. Empowerment Factors

Empowerment factors are individual characteristics or attributes that contribute directly to an individual’s sense of empowerment. These factors provide tangible expressions of empowerment, contributing to individual success and community thriving.

2.3.1. Autonomy and Self-Determination

Autonomy provides the foundation for self-determination by granting individuals the freedom and independence to make decisions aligned with their own values and preferences (Mays et al. 2023). Self-determination, in turn, enhances autonomy by fostering a sense of agency, initiative, and personal control over one’s life circumstances (Sen 2017). Individuals who are self-determined are more likely to assert their autonomy and make choices that reflect their authentic selves (Zhang 2019; Ryan and Deci 2000).

2.3.2. Active Participation and Engagement

Social support serves as a foundational element that nurtures active participation and engagement by providing individuals with the necessary support, resources, and encouragement to take part in meaningful activities and become fully engaged in their endeavors. Social support represents networks crucial in empowering individuals and enhancing resilience, resourcefulness, and capacity for success (Cohen and Wills 1985; Holt-Lunstad et al. 2010).

2.3.3. Collective Action

Collective action mobilizes community resources to address common challenges, emphasizing equitable resource access and ensuring all community members can effectively participate in development initiatives (Bacq et al. 2022).

2.3.4. Opportunities and Innovation

Opportunities are closely intertwined with innovation, driving personal and community growth and enabling the identification and implementation of inventive solutions (Hartzler and Pratt 2011; Meshram and Rawani 2019). These elements, opportunities, and innovation synergistically act as driving factors, empowering individuals and communities to identify and seize new opportunities, implement inventive solutions, and adapt to evolving circumstances (Liguori and Winkler 2020; Teece et al. 1997; Eisenhardt and Martin 2000). Affording opportunities to community members is vital for active participation in developmental endeavors (Putnam 2000).

These foundational elements and factors facilitate understanding and address shared challenges, fostering sustainable well-being and economic advancement (Wigger and Shepherd 2020; Storper 2005).

2.4. Empowerment in Personal Health Management and Entrepreneurship

Foundational factors such as self-efficacy and social support are foundational to addressing challenges in PHM and entrepreneurship. These elements significantly influence individuals’ abilities to navigate health decisions effectively and pursue entrepreneurial ventures with confidence (Acuña Mora et al. 2022; Small et al. 2013; Korber and McNaughton 2018; Henao-Zapata and Peiró 2018). Moreover, human capital, comprising knowledge, skills, and networks, plays a vital role in this process (Becker 1964).

Empowerment promotes autonomy and personal growth, yielding improved health outcomes for patients and driving innovation and socioeconomic progress for entrepreneurs (Nambisan and Baron 2013; Anderson and Funnell 2010). Investing in empowerment supports holistic well-being and sustainable development, benefiting individuals diversity in various forms and communities alike (Gurău and Dana 2018).
2.5. Empowerment through Human Capital and Intellectual Capital

Human capital, comprising knowledge and skills, plays a crucial role in entrepreneurial ecosystems by driving innovation and economic sustainability (Becker 1964; Nambisan and Baron 2013). Investments in human capital empower individuals for informed decision-making and fuel economic growth (Schultz 1961; De Bem Machado et al. 2022). Collaboration within entrepreneurial ecosystems fosters economic growth, community engagement, and well-being (Stam 2015). Creative knowledge and intellectual capital are indispensable for successful entrepreneurship, contributing to sustainable growth and environmental preservation (Von Krogh et al. 2012).

Enhancing human and intellectual capital within entrepreneurial ecosystems is crucial for driving innovation and ensuring economic sustainability (Viedma Marti and do Rosário Cabrita 2012, 2023). Individuals acquire intellectual capital through education and experience, enabling them to significantly contribute to economic advancement. Collectively, intellectual and human capital drive innovation, collaboration, wealth creation, and knowledge generation, which is essential for sustainable development and growth (Choo and Bontis 2002; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 2009; Shane and Venkataraman 2000; Hatch and Dyer 2004; Edvinsson and Sullivan 1996; Hart and Milstein 2003; Stewart 2007).

Social innovation involves devising and implementing novel solutions to address social challenges, thus enhancing human welfare and social impact (Toivonen 2016). Understanding the themes of empowerment and their social implications is pivotal for fostering sustainable practices (Panagioti et al. 2014) and opportunities driving economic progress (Nicolopoulou et al. 2017; Shepherd and Patzelt 2011).

2.6. Empowerment Through Knowledge-Based Drivers for Diversity and Innovation

During the COVID-19 crisis, Sánchez-Bayón et al. (2022) highlight the failures and challenges faced by the Spanish healthcare system during the COVID-19 crisis. They underscore the effectiveness of involving communities in healthcare decision-making, emphasizing community empowerment, advocacy, effective engagement, and the importance of robust technological infrastructure in mitigating these challenges. This research emphasizes the importance of empowering communities to advocate for their own needs, demonstrating the superiority of this approach over relying exclusively on public interventions.

Empowerment in post-crisis contexts intersects with the digital landscape’s emphasis on cultivating diversity among participants hailing from various locales. Through knowledge-driven mechanisms, empowerment facilitates innovation by facilitating the generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, thereby empowering individuals and bolstering community resilience (Bratianu and Bejinaru 2020; Vainauskienë and Vaikienë 2021; Wenzel et al. 2020). By nurturing collaborative environments, societies can foster informed decision-making, resilience, and holistic well-being, fostering a culture of empowerment and achievement (Bolisani and Bratianu 2017).

3. Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively explore empowerment experiences among patients and entrepreneurs. The methodology integrates scoping and integrative literature reviews with exploratory qualitative research, aiming to deepen insights and rigorously develop a theoretical framework grounded in Dubin’s methodology and Transdisciplinary Research (TDR) principles. Computational analysis findings were also integrated to enhance the theoretical understanding and practical implications of empowerment dynamics across diverse contexts. This holistic approach is designed to capture nuanced insights across domains and provide a deeper understanding of empowerment dynamics.

3.1. Literature Review

Diverse literature from psychology, sociology, and entrepreneurship studies was synthesized to explore challenges comprehensively and capture nuances across domains.
Transdisciplinary Research (TDR) principles were integrated to transcend disciplinary boundaries effectively and address complex social challenges, as depicted in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Scoping Review Methodology: TDR and PRISMA Integration.]

3.1.1. Scoping Literature Review

The scoping literature review synthesized existing research on empowerment in personal health management (PHM) and entrepreneurship. Systematic searches across academic databases gathered a comprehensive body of literature, focusing primarily on English-language publications from 2010 onwards. The search strategy involved querying three prominent databases (PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus) to comprehensively gather relevant literature. Foundational works prior to 2010 were also included to ensure a thorough understanding of the theoretical framework. Thematic synthesis of research papers facilitated insights into interconnected empowerment experiences, allowing for the identification of key themes and the establishment of a theoretical foundation.

During the screening and exclusion phases, specific criteria were designed to ensure the relevance of the 83 selected studies. These criteria focused the literature review on research directly contributing to understanding empowerment in personal health management (PHM) and entrepreneurship contexts:

- **Methodology Designs**: Excluded research articles primarily focused on methodological approaches, study designs, or methodological critiques.
- **Clinical Skills and Healthcare Interventions**: Excluded studies that primarily focused on clinical skills training, medical procedures, or specific healthcare interventions unless they directly addressed empowerment in PHM or entrepreneurship.
- **Environmental Issues**: Excluded studies primarily focused on environmental conservation, climate change, or ecological sustainability unless they explicitly discussed their impact on empowerment in healthcare or entrepreneurship contexts.
- **Technological Advancements**: Excluded studies solely focused on technological innovations or advancements in healthcare or entrepreneurship unless they specifically addressed their role in empowering individuals or communities.
- **Socioeconomic Aspects**: Excluded studies primarily focused on socioeconomic factors such as poverty, inequality, or economic development unless they were directly related to empowerment in PHM or entrepreneurship.

These criteria ensured the relevance and focus of the literature review, enabling the synthesis of research that specifically contributed to understanding empowerment in PHM and entrepreneurship contexts.
3.1.2. Transdisciplinary Research (TDR)

Transdisciplinary Research (TDR) principles were integrated, adhering to PRISMA guidelines to ensure methodological rigor (Lam et al. 2021; Arksey and O’Malley 2005). While acknowledging the role of innovation and technology, the primary focus remained on individual empowerment and sustainable practices spanning management and social domains. This approach ensured that the theoretical framework was not only robust but also reflective of real-world complexities and nuances. Initially, the theoretical framework was constructed through insights drawn from psychology, sociology, health management, and entrepreneurship, guided by Dubin’s methodology (Dubin 1976). This phase established the Integrated Model for Individual Empowerment.

3.1.3. Methodological Rigor

Methodological rigor was maintained through adherence to structured frameworks and compliance with PRISMA guidelines (Levac et al. 2010; Peters et al. 2015; Arksey and O’Malley 2005). Thematic synthesis of research papers using qualitative data analysis software facilitated a deeper understanding of the research topics across diverse literature sources.

3.2. Qualitative Study

The study focused on chronic patients or caregivers from Bolivia or Spain, ensuring diverse representation in age, gender, socioeconomic status, and health conditions. A non-invasive qualitative approach was employed to validate the theoretical framework, utilizing existing community data to understand experiences within virtual patient communities. Structured online surveys and non-invasive data collection were used. Systematic data coding identified patterns and themes related to empowerment and community engagement, with efforts to achieve data saturation. The study adapted Zhang et al.’s (2017) framework and integrated Walsh and Al Achkar’s (2021) participation patterns, completing ‘lurking’ with a new code, ‘emotional engagement,’ to enhance the understanding of online patient community dynamics. Thematic and content analyses were combined to identify prevalent themes, ensuring the anonymity and privacy of participants.

3.2.1. Study Setting and Participants

The study was conducted within an existing virtual community comprising individuals managing chronic health conditions or serving as caregivers. The participant group exhibited diversity across various dimensions, including language, health status regarding chronic diseases, geographical location (with the majority residing in Bolivia or Spain), age, and likely socioeconomic background. Such diverse representation enriched the study by capturing a wide spectrum of perspectives and experiences related to managing chronic conditions within virtual communities.

3.2.2. Data Analysis

Thematic and content analysis, along with text mining facilitated by Atlas.ti 2.3 software, explored relationships, recurring patterns, and key themes within virtual communities (Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Braun and Clarke 2006). The analysis focused on two subsets: one group had access to both a virtual community and a blog (VCBA), while the other group only had access to the blog (BA). This approach allowed for a comparative assessment of the effectiveness of different online platforms for learning about disease management among chronic patients.

4. Results

4.1. Empowerment Experiences and Shared Challenges

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that empowered patients and entrepreneurs encounter similar hurdles despite operating in different spheres. This underscored how empowerment...
evolves in today’s society, providing individuals with essential resources and skills to take control of their lives (Rissel 1994; Maynard et al. 2012).

Table 2. Comparison of Entrepreneurship Perspective and Empowered Patients Perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Relevant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Role of Empowerment in Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship fosters personal growth and empowerment.</td>
<td>(Bacq et al. 2022; Balcazar et al. 2014; Henao-Zapata and Peiró 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPH</td>
<td>Role of Empowerment in PHM</td>
<td>Empowered patients take active roles in health decisions.</td>
<td>(Acuña Mora et al. 2022; Anderson and Funnell 2010; Castro et al. 2016; Lorig and Holman 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>Commonalities between Entrepreneurs and Empowered Patients</td>
<td>Both involve individuals taking control of decisions, leading to personal growth and autonomy.</td>
<td>(Bandura 1997; Bandura 2001; Sen 2017; Ryan and Deci 2000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study solidified the notion that empowerment experiences among patients EPH and entrepreneurs EE are intricately linked. Despite their distinct paths, both groups encounter comparable challenges, from navigating complex systems to managing uncertainty. Supportive environments play a crucial role in facilitating empowerment and addressing these challenges. The analysis reaffirmed the parallels between entrepreneurs and empowered patients, highlighting their shared journey toward personal growth and autonomy.

4.2. Contributions of Empowerment to Economic Progress

The findings underscored the vital role of empowerment in driving economic advancement in health decision-making and entrepreneurship (McAllister et al. 2012; Walter and Heinrichs 2015; Barker et al. 2018), as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Empowerment in PHM (EPH) and Entrepreneurship (EE) vs. Human Capital Economic Progress (HCED).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Relevant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPH</td>
<td>Role of Empowerment in Health Decision-Making</td>
<td>Empowered patients contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of health management.</td>
<td>(Acuña Mora et al. 2022; Anderson and Funnell 2010; Castro et al. 2016; Lorig and Holman 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Role of Entrepreneurship in Economic Development</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship significantly contributes to growth and development.</td>
<td>(Bacq et al. 2022; Hart and Milstein 2003; Nambisan 2017; Zahra and Wright 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonalities</td>
<td>Similarities between Empowered Patients and Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Individual-driven innovation ecosystems emphasize the transformative potential of empowered individuals in shaping the future of service delivery and driving positive outcomes for individuals and society as a whole.</td>
<td>(Barker et al. 2018; Nambisan and Baron 2013; Cajaiba-Santana 2014; Shane 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCED</td>
<td>Contributions to Economic Progress</td>
<td>Empowered patients ultimately contribute to the healthcare system’s efficiency and contribute to sustainable economic growth through improved health outcomes. Entrepreneurs drive economic growth by fostering innovation, job creation, and competitiveness.</td>
<td>(Acuña Mora et al. 2022; Anderson and Funnell 2010; Hart and Milstein 2003; Panagioti et al. 2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Establishing empowering foundations enables individuals to participate more effectively in activities, ultimately leading to significant economic implications such as increased...
productivity and prosperity (Shane and Venkataraman 2000). Entrepreneurs, through innovation and job creation, fuel economic expansion.

These insights underscored the interconnectedness between individual empowerment and economic progress, shaping contemporary societies (Schumpeter and Swedberg 2021).

Table 4 presents the comparative analysis between two perspectives: Intellectual Capital and Economic Development (ICED), in contrast to Empowerment and Personal Growth (EPG). The aim was to deepen the understanding of critical dynamics shaping social progress. While ICED emphasized the contribution of intellectual capital to economic growth at the social level, EPG focused more on individual development, encompassing psychological and social aspects. Comparing these perspectives provided insights into how investments in human capital and empowerment initiatives contributed to overall social advancement and well-being.

Table 4. Comparative Analysis of Intellectual Capital and Economic Development (ICED) vs. Human Capital and Personal Growth (EPG).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Human Capital and Personal Growth (EPG)</th>
<th>Intellectual Capital and Community Development (ICED)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Individuals gaining control over their lives and circumstances (Zimmerman 1995)</td>
<td>Empowering individuals within the community (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills and competences</td>
<td>Skills, knowledge, and abilities of individuals (Becker 1964)</td>
<td>Tangible and intangible assets contributing to intellectual wealth (Stewart 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic learning capability</td>
<td>Adaptability and capacity for acquiring new knowledge and skills (Dweck 2006)</td>
<td>Processes facilitating knowledge creation and utilization (Teece et al. 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Beliefs in one’s ability to succeed in specific situations (Bandura 1997)</td>
<td>Confidence in one’s capacity to contribute effectively (Bandura 2001; Mou and Lin 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Working together towards common goals (Wenger 2010)</td>
<td>Cooperative efforts for community advancement (Wenger et al. 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active community engagement</td>
<td>Involvement and participation in community initiatives (Small et al. 2013; Zhang 2019)</td>
<td>Participation in community decision-making processes (Snow et al. 2017; Zhang 2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive development</td>
<td>Ensuring equal opportunities for all community members (Sen 2017)</td>
<td>Ensuring participation and benefits for all members (Nowell and Boyd 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
<td>Promoting economic, social, and environmental progress (Sachs 2015)</td>
<td>Balanced progress supporting long-term well-being (Shepherd and Patzelt 2011; Zautra et al. 2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this comparison, ICED highlighted knowledge management and the leveraging of human capital and intellectual assets to drive innovation and economic growth. As well as the promotion of community well-being through sustainable development and inclusive engagement. Conversely, EPG emphasized personal empowerment, focusing on competencies, skills, and self-efficacy to pursue long-term goals. It underscored how social capital and relationships facilitate the effective navigation of entrepreneurship and growth strategies.

Both domains acknowledged the transformative role of digital technology. ICED focused on its impact on knowledge management and innovation, while EPG highlighted its role in fostering community well-being. Overall, this comparison illustrated how ICED
and EPG, while distinct, complemented each other, contributing to individual and social advancement through interconnected pathways. It reinforced the idea that empowered individuals and communities are essential for fostering innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development.

4.3. Qualitative Data Analysis

The results showed that despite diverse backgrounds, virtual community participants share common interests in empowerment, notably through information sharing and mutual support. The content analysis, represented in Table 5, Figures 2 and 3, provides further insights into the themes and dynamics within the online communities.

Additionally, the thematic analysis, presented in Table 6, highlights the prevalence of certain empowerment factors, such as strong social support and effective information.

Table 5 summarizes the results of the content analysis in this study. It utilized the features of Atlas.ti 2.3 for insight extraction. The analysis consisted of two subsets. Additionally, a word cloud in Figure 2 visually depicts commonly used words by participants of the blog support group.

Table 5. Content analysis: blog and virtual community-blog support groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blog Support</th>
<th>Virtual Community and Blog Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>information</td>
<td>group (community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health</td>
<td>faith/God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diet</td>
<td>support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treatment</td>
<td>Advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blog</td>
<td>Diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advice</td>
<td>Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care</td>
<td>treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>pain</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>situation</td>
<td>Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>therapy</td>
<td>strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>healing</td>
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<td>body</td>
<td>recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>condition</td>
<td>challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>habit</td>
<td>depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>help</td>
<td>Pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nutrition</td>
<td>Habit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>Hope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Content analysis word cloud: blog support group.
As shown in Figure 3, the most commonly used word in virtual community support is group, followed by other words related to social support dynamics, in contrast to Figure 2, where the information search showed its relevance for the group. The word cloud represents chronic patients’ experiences and highlights the significance of each word. Larger, highlighted terms indicated frequently expressed opinions, while smaller, highlighted words represented less common expressions among shared opinions. These findings showcased a strong sense of solidarity and support, irrespective of participants’ diverse nationalities and health conditions, within virtual patient communities.

Table 5 highlights the BA support group primarily focused on health, well-being, and information exchange for healthy lifestyles, emphasizing knowledge sharing and mutual support for health-related matters. “Information” (16.00%) and “Health” (14.00%) were prominent themes, signifying their focus on health management and knowledge acquisition. In contrast, the VCBA support group centered its perspective on group dynamics, offering support, faith, positivity, and discussions related to health and emotional well-being within the group context. “Group” (17.27) and “support” (4.32%) highlighted their emphasis on group dynamics and mutual support.

Table 5. The BA support group primarily focused on health, well-being, and information exchange for healthy lifestyles, emphasizing knowledge sharing and mutual support for health-related matters. “Information” (16.00%) and “Health” (14.00%) were prominent themes, signifying their focus on health management and knowledge acquisition. In contrast, the VCBA support group centered its perspective on group dynamics, offering support, faith, positivity, and discussions related to health and emotional well-being within the group context. “Group” (17.27) and “support” (4.32%) highlighted their emphasis on group dynamics and mutual support.

The analysis revealed significant patterns of resilience and adaptation within virtual patient communities, highlighting the importance of social support and collective engagement in navigating adversity. Overall, the qualitative analysis provided valuable insights into the dynamics of virtual spaces and the interactions shaping them, contributing...
to a deeper understanding of individuals’ lived experiences within online communities of patients.

Table 6 presents the thematic analysis results, revealing identified patterns in online support groups. It categorized empowerment-related topics into Empowerment Foundations and Empowerment Factors, along with their corresponding percentages. This breakdown provided valuable insights into the key aspects shaping empowerment dynamics within the examined context.

The analysis highlighted themes with percentages over 5% within each foundation or factor. In the Empowerment Foundations category, Strong social support emerged as the predominant theme, garnering the highest percentage at 7%. This underscored the crucial role of social support in fostering empowerment. Within the Empowerment Factors category, Physical and intellectual impact stood out with the highest percentage of 8%, emphasizing its significance in influencing empowerment outcomes. Additionally, Effective information demonstrated the highest overall percentage at 10%, underscoring its pivotal role across both foundations and factors. These findings shed light on the key aspects that shaped empowerment dynamics within the examined context, providing valuable insights for further exploration and analysis.

The comment Acceptance and adaptability (6%) reflected the importance of perseverance and unity in facing life’s challenges. It emphasized the need to keep moving forward despite difficulties. Decision-making (3%) highlighted changes in lifestyle habits and decision-making processes influenced by the community, suggesting that individuals made conscious choices to prioritize self-care and manage emotional triggers. Effective Information (10%) denoted that, participants appreciated the valuable information provided by the group, particularly regarding maintaining a balanced and natural diet, suggesting that the community contributed positively to participants’ knowledge and behavior regarding health-related information. Emotional Engagement (4%) indicated that the group provided emotional support and encouragement, enhancing emotional engagement and resilience among participants. These findings shed light on the key aspects that shape empowerment dynamics within the examined context, providing valuable insights for further exploration and analysis.

4.4. Qualitative Analysis: Insights from Virtual Patient Communities

The thematic analysis of the virtual community data revealed several noteworthy findings. Firstly, participants exhibited innovative attitudes, particularly demonstrated through crowdfunding actions to support fellow members facing various challenges. Secondly, there were indications of novel lifestyle changes among members, suggesting a willingness to embrace new ways of living and coping with their circumstances. Thirdly, the data showed significant changes in professional adaptation, notably in the context of teleworking, particularly among cancer survivors within the community. Lastly, there were numerous community initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration to address challenges faced by participants, showcasing a strong sense of solidarity and support irrespective of participants’ diverse nationalities and different health conditions.

Table 6 reveals the empowerment foundations and factors as follows:

1. **BA Support Group**
   - **Description:** The BA support group emphasized health, well-being, and information exchange, promoting knowledge sharing and mutual support for health-related matters.
   - **Empowerment Manifestation:** Participants exhibited increased autonomy and self-efficacy in managing health conditions, as highlighted by the prominence of themes like “Information” and “Health” in Table 6 and the word cloud in Figure 2.

2. **VCBA Support Group**
   - **Description:** The VCBA support group focused on group dynamics, providing support, faith, and discussions related to health and emotional well-being.
• Empowerment Manifestation: Strong social support and emotional engagement contributed to resilience and psychological well-being, as evidenced by themes such as “Strong social support” and “Emotional engagement” in Table 5 and the word cloud in Figure 2.

3. Empowerment Through Effective Information:
• Description: Effective information played a pivotal role in shaping empowerment dynamics within online support groups.
• Empowerment Manifestation: Access to relevant information enhances health literacy and decision-making capabilities, enabling informed choices and healthy lifestyle habits. The thematic analysis underscored the importance of “Effective information” in empowering individuals within virtual communities.

The results show that despite diverse backgrounds, virtual community participants share common interests in empowerment, notably through information sharing and mutual support. Thematic analysis revealed strong social support as a predominant theme in both the BA and VCBA support groups, highlighting its crucial role in empowerment (Table 6). Additionally, effective information exchange was prevalent, enhancing participants’ health literacy and decision-making (Table 5).

Furthermore, virtual communities serve as spaces for knowledge sharing and innovative solutions. The BA support group emphasized health and well-being, fostering autonomy and self-efficacy among participants through information exchange (Table 5). Similarly, the VCBA group focused on group dynamics, fostering resilience and psychological well-being through strong social support and emotional engagement (Table 6).

5. Theoretical Framework
The study emphasizes the integrated essence of empowerment, showcasing how various factors intersect to empower individuals across different domains, such as entrepreneurial ventures and health challenges (Acuña Mora et al. 2022; Small et al. 2013; Korber and McNaughton 2018; Rissel 1994).

5.1. Empowerment Foundations and Factors
Foundations establish the groundwork for empowerment, while factors contribute to its realization (Becker 1964), as illustrated in Table 7. Empowerment characteristics, as observable traits, reflect the outcomes of empowerment and are influenced by the interaction between factors and foundations. For instance, self-efficacy is a foundational element that influences individual empowerment (Bandura 1997), while social support acts as a crucial empowerment factor (Adler and Kwon 2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Foundation</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Empowerment (IE)</td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Autonomy and self-determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Engagement (IEG)</td>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>Active Participation and Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development (CD)</td>
<td>Collaboration and cooperation</td>
<td>Collective Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Practices (SP)</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Opportunities and innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall stages</td>
<td>Resource management</td>
<td>Access to resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall stages</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Knowledge and understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The empirical research highlights the significance of personal growth, resilience, and community support in fostering individual empowerment, according to the existing evidence (Small et al. 2013; Aujoulat et al. 2007). Furthermore, it underscores the role of empowerment factors and foundations, which include access to resources, social support, and opportunities for advancement, in shaping the context of empowerment (Korber and McNaughton 2018). The components and stages have the potential to contribute to diversity.
and innovation within empowered communities, particularly in the context of post-crisis COVID-19 recovery (Blaigue et al. 2023).

Drawing from multiple disciplines, this theoretical perspective offers a nuanced understanding of empowerment at both individual and collective levels, confirming its interconnected and multifaceted nature (Wood et al. 2021), as depicted in Figure 4.

![Empowerment Framework](image)

**Figure 4. Empowerment Framework: Enhancing Well-being for Patients and Entrepreneurs.**

### 5.2. Core Components and Stages

The core components also represent stages in a developmental process. Each component represents a key phase that contributes to the overall progression towards community empowerment and sustainability. Therefore, they can be considered both core components and stages within the process, as outlined in Table 8.

**Table 8. Empowerment Stages and SDGs.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Interrelated SDGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Empowerment (IE)</td>
<td>SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Engagement (IEG)</td>
<td>SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development (CD)</td>
<td>SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Practices (SP)</td>
<td>SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Individual Empowerment (IE):** This stage focuses on empowering individuals, enhancing their capabilities, and fostering a sense of autonomy and control over their lives.
- **Individual Engagement (IEG):** After individuals are empowered, they become actively engaged in various activities within their communities. This stage involves participation, contribution, and involvement in community initiatives and projects.
- **Community Development (CD):** As individuals engage and collaborate with one another, the community as a whole undergoes development. This stage involves collective efforts aimed at improving the well-being, infrastructure, and overall quality of life within the community.
- **Sustainable Practices (SP):** Finally, sustainable practices are implemented to ensure that the development achieved is sustainable in the long term. This stage involves adopting practices that promote environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic stability within the community.
The stages of Individual Empowerment, Individual Engagement, Community Development, and Sustainable Practices contribute to various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting economic well-being, gender equality, sustainable infrastructure, responsible consumption, and environmental conservation (McAllister et al. 2012; Walter and Heinrichs 2015; Barker et al. 2018). Empowerment stages closely intertwine with knowledge dynamics, as knowledge is essential for empowering individuals and communities (Bratianu and Bejinaru 2020; Vainauskienė and Vaitkiene 2021).

5.2.1. Individual Empowerment

The analysis reveals that individual empowerment, characterized by autonomy and self-determination, among other factors, is pivotal for fostering individuals’ sense of control and well-being. Self-efficacy, alongside psychological traits like freedom, agency, ‘grit’, and resilience, significantly contributes to individual well-being and development (Sen 2017; Luthar 2015). Additionally, empowering individuals with skills, resources, and opportunities stimulates entrepreneurship, driving economic development. Empowered individuals play a critical role in economic growth and job creation, thereby enhancing both individual well-being and social development.

- **IE-IEG:** Individual empowerment encourages individual engagement by instilling individuals with the confidence and resilience necessary to actively participate and engage meaningfully in their communities or organizations.
- **IE-CD:** Individual empowerment contributes to community development by empowering individuals to actively participate in collaborative efforts and collective action aimed at enhancing community well-being and development.
- **IE-SP:** Individual empowerment promotes sustainable practices by empowering individuals to advocate for and adopt sustainable behaviors, contributing to environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

5.2.2. Individual Engagement

Individual engagement encompasses active participation and deep involvement, reflecting individuals’ readiness to participate in meaningful activities (Hibbard and Greene 2013). Social support acts as a foundational element, fostering both active participation and engagement by providing support, resources, and encouragement (Bandura 2001; Chandna and Salimath 2020).

Engaging in personal development and entrepreneurial activities empowers individuals by providing autonomy and control over their well-being and financial destinies (Blaique et al. 2023). This empowerment fosters participation in knowledge-sharing activities and lifelong learning, enhancing individuals’ intellectual capital base (Wadichar et al. 2024; Mason and Brown 2014). Cultivating a culture of empowerment through platforms like community workshops and mentoring programs further facilitates continuous learning and knowledge exchange (Hsu and Lamb 2020).

- **IEG-IE:** Individual engagement fosters individual empowerment by providing opportunities for individuals to assert control over their lives and make informed decisions, thereby enhancing their sense of autonomy and self-determination.
- **IEG-CD:** Individual engagement contributes to community development by mobilizing individuals to collaborate and cooperate, thereby driving collective progress and addressing common challenges within communities.
- **IEG-SP:** Individual engagement encourages sustainable practices by promoting active involvement in initiatives that promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

5.2.3. Community Development

Emphasizing subjective experiences and intentional behaviors in entrepreneurship sheds light on individual perceptions and actions in shaping entrepreneurial endeavors. Strong social connections and community support drive collective progress and facili-
tate the exchange of resources among members (Hatch and Dyer 2004; Schumpeter and Swedberg 2021). Additionally, online social capital influences trust and risk perception, further enhancing community dynamics (Liguori and Winkler 2020). Collaboration among community members empowers individuals, shapes community dynamics, and fosters entrepreneurship, ultimately promoting social cohesion, well-being, and sustainable growth (Champenois et al. 2020; Dyer and Nobeoka 2000; Gallant 2003; Ramoglou et al. 2020; Holt-Lunstad et al. 2010; Bacq et al. 2022). Moreover, such networks facilitate knowledge exchange, collaboration, and collective problem-solving, leveraging the collective intellectual capital of diverse stakeholders and driving progress toward the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda (Bratianu and Bejinariu 2020; Vainauskienė and Vaitkiene 2021).

- **CD-IE**: Community development involves individual empowerment by providing opportunities for individuals to assert their autonomy and contribute to the collective progress and resilience of their communities.

- **CD-IEG**: Community development promotes individual engagement by creating environments conducive to active participation and fostering a sense of belonging and commitment among community members.

- **CD-SP**: Community development facilitates sustainable practices by establishing frameworks for collaborative action and collective problem-solving, which in turn promotes the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies and methods within communities.

5.2.4. Sustainable Practices

Empowered individuals play a crucial role in advocating for sustainable practices, which are essential for nurturing long-term community development and enhancing well-being. Communities that embrace sustainability safeguard resources protect the environment and uphold social equity, benefiting both individuals and the community as a whole. Aligned with the principles of intellectual, these practices drive initiatives fostering community development and social progress (Muñoz and Cohen 2018; Storper 2005).

Furthermore, collaboration-driven initiatives, guided by a shared vision of holistic well-being, are pivotal in promoting economic prosperity and social advancement (Choo and Bontis 2002; Viedma Martí and do Rosário Cabrita 2012; Salimi 2022). Empowerment initiatives aimed at both patients and entrepreneurs can contribute to inclusive development by ensuring marginalized groups have access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities. Inclusive development approaches, guided by empowerment principles, help bridge gaps in access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, promoting sustainable development for all.

Individual empowerment is crucial for sustainable development and growth, whether in health or entrepreneurship. Empowered patients boost healthcare efficiency and drive economic growth with better health outcomes. Similarly, entrepreneurs fuel innovation, job creation, and economic competitiveness, fostering development. The link between empowerment and economic progress highlights its transformative role in shaping societies.

- **SP-IE**: Sustainable practices enhance individual empowerment by providing opportunities for personal growth and success through the adoption of sustainable behaviors and initiatives.

- **SP-IEG**: Sustainable practices enhance individual engagement by providing meaningful opportunities for individuals to engage in activities that contribute to the well-being and sustainability of their communities.

- **SP-CD**: Sustainable practices support community development by promoting initiatives that enhance community resilience, social cohesion, and well-being, ultimately fostering long-term community development.

6. Discussion and Implications

This study elucidates the interconnectedness of empowerment experiences among patients and entrepreneurs, underlining the importance of collaborative environments and
support networks in fostering innovation and growth, particularly in COVID-19 post-crisis
(Mays et al. 2023; Blaique et al. 2023; Liguori and Winkler 2020; Smithson et al. 2021). The
implications of these findings are explored, particularly regarding shared challenges in
health management and entrepreneurship.

6.1. Understanding Empowerment Dynamics and Implications

The theoretical framework synthesizes insights from various disciplines to elucidate
the underlying mechanisms shaping the challenges individuals encounter in health man-
agement and entrepreneurship (Anderson and Funnell 2010; Rashid 2019; Bravo et al. 2015).
The results underscore the interconnected nature of empowerment experiences, emphasizing
the pivotal role of collaborative environments and support networks (Zaheer et al. 2019;
Wadichar et al. 2024; Frost and Massagli 2008). Additionally, the framework delineates key
components like individual empowerment and community development, offering insights
into their application across diverse contexts (Nicolopoulou et al. 2017; Bravo et al. 2015; Castro et al. 2016).

This study emphasizes integrated empowerment spanning both entrepreneurship
and health management, placing strong emphasis on personal growth and the crucial
role of community support. Essential stages of empowerment—Individual Empower-
ment, Engagement, Community Development, and Sustainable Practices—are identified,
aligning with Sustainable Development Goals and integrating insights from management
sciences. These stages serve as vital components facilitating both individual and collective
empowerment, offering a roadmap for fostering sustainable collaborative environments for
transformative progress and inclusive development (Smithson et al. 2021; Snow et al. 2017).

Moreover, the interconnected nature of empowerment experiences is underscored,
highlighting the pivotal role of collaborative environments and support networks (Sal-
imi 2022; Julius Onakoya and Babatunde 2013; Ramoglou et al. 2020). Additionally, the
framework delineates key components such as individual empowerment and community
development, providing valuable insights into their adaptability across diverse contexts. By
exploring the relations between empowerment stages and knowledge dynamics, the study
underscores the importance of fostering sustainable well-being and economic progress
(Okojie et al. 2023).

In summary, the theoretical framework offers a foundational understanding of em-
powerment dynamics and their broad-ranging implications, laying the groundwork for
transformative progress and inclusive development across various domains.

6.2. Synthesis of Findings

Diverse methodologies, including thematic and content analysis, reveal prevalent
themes such as self-efficacy and support within virtual communities, offering insights into
empowerment dynamics. Comparative analysis highlights shared experiences between
patients and entrepreneurs, emphasizing the role of empowerment in driving economic
advancement and social evolution.

The analysis of virtual patient communities illustrates how access to information and
supportive networks empowers individuals to make informed choices. Overall, varied
approaches explore the impact of individual empowerment on engagement, community
development, and sustainable practices.

By comparing the perspectives of entrepreneurship and patients, nuanced insights
into empowerment factors across contexts are provided (McAllister et al. 2012). Identified
shared challenges underscore the evolving nature of empowerment, emphasizing its sig-
ificance for personal development and well-being (Hartzler and Pratt 2011). Exploring
dynamics between both domains achieves a deeper understanding of empowerment pro-
cesses, highlighting its role in fostering resilience and implications for economic progress
and social innovation.

The qualitative analysis underscores support and collective engagement in virtual
patient communities, indicating how online platforms empower individuals through en-
hanced interaction and resource sharing. Cultivating environments of mutual support and learning empowers individuals to overcome barriers and foster inclusive progress (Ramoglou et al. 2020; Julius Onakoya and Babatunde 2013).

The thematic analysis further elucidates empowerment-related themes such as self-efficacy, personal control, and social support, showcasing varying emphases and perspectives within subgroups. This comprehensive approach yields valuable insights into dynamics, accentuating the transformative potential of collaboration and knowledge exchange. Additionally, platforms foster inclusiveness by transcending geographical divides, facilitating equitable access to information and support regardless of location or socioeconomic status. Collaborative endeavors and shared insights enable community members to collectively address obstacles and drive positive change within their communities.

Overall, these findings suggest that virtual communities serve as valuable platforms for individuals from diverse backgrounds to come together, share experiences, and collectively overcome challenges related to chronic health conditions. The study underscores the potential of virtual communities to foster empowerment, diversity, and innovation, ultimately contributing to the well-being of their members.

6.3. Utilization of Virtual Communities for Diversity and Innovation

Leveraging virtual communities offers a dynamic environment for fostering empowerment through the exploration of diversity and innovation, thereby contributing to inclusive and impactful outcomes with the following implications:

1. Diverse Participants: Virtual communities attract a diverse range of individuals managing chronic health conditions and involved in entrepreneurship, enhancing research diversity.
2. Innovation Hubs: Virtual communities foster creativity and innovation, enabling researchers to identify novel solutions through interactions and collaborations.
3. Intersectionality Exploration: Researchers can analyze how factors like gender, race, and socioeconomic status intersect within virtual communities, informing inclusive approaches.
4. Inclusive Empowerment Strategies: Engaging with community members allows researchers to co-create culturally sensitive interventions, ensuring they meet diverse needs.
5. Cross-disciplinary Collaboration: Virtual platforms bring together individuals with diverse expertise, fostering collaborative problem-solving and innovative ideas.
6. Cultural Competence: Researchers adopt culturally sensitive communication strategies, building trust and rapport with community members from diverse backgrounds.
7. Promotion of Inclusive Entrepreneurship: Virtual communities support underrepresented groups in entrepreneurship, enabling researchers to develop initiatives that address barriers and promote diversity.

6.4. Theoretical Implications

The theoretical framework integrates insights from personal health management and entrepreneurship literature, extending existing models of empowerment. Emphasizing foundations like self-efficacy, social support, and collaboration, this framework offers a comprehensive understanding of empowerment processes, highlighting the importance of personal growth, resilience, and community support in empowering individuals to address health challenges and pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Identifying common factors across different domains underscores the transferability of empowerment dynamics and the need for context-specific interventions.

Insights from various disciplines are integrated to uncover the mechanisms behind challenges in health management and entrepreneurship, contributing to understanding empowerment dynamics across domains. Future research could refine the framework by integrating additional theories and perspectives from diverse cultural contexts, emphasis-
ing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing complex issues related to empowerment in healthcare and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework underscores the integrative nature of empowerment. Findings illustrate a scoping approach to understanding various aspects of empowerment, enriching comprehension of it as a multifaceted concept grounded in both theoretical principles and practical applications. This integration facilitates a deeper understanding of empowerment processes, informing the development of effective interventions tailored to varied contexts (Bratianu and Bejinaru 2020; Vainauskiené and Vaitkiené 2021).

6.5. Practical Implications

The findings have implications for stakeholders involved in promoting empowerment in personal health management and entrepreneurship. Healthcare professionals can leverage virtual communities and online platforms to enhance patient engagement and provide holistic support. Similarly, policymakers and business leaders can create collaborative environments and educational initiatives to empower entrepreneurs and foster innovation. Strategies and interventions derived from the research can foster collaborative environments, enhance social support networks, and provide access to resources and education, thereby empowering individuals to overcome challenges (Frost and Massagli 2008; McAllister et al. 2012; Shepherd and Patzelt 2011; Ramoglou et al. 2020).

6.6. Implications for Intellectual Capital and Sustainable Development

The exploration of shared challenges holds significant implications for intellectual capital and development, highlighting empowerment’s critical role in facilitating individual agency, innovation, and collaboration. By investing in empowerment initiatives and fostering conducive environments for knowledge creation and sharing, societies can harness intellectual capital to address pressing sustainability challenges outlined in the 2030 Agenda (Viedma Martí and do Rosário Cabrita 2012, 2023).

6.7. Fostering Innovation, Collaborative Networks, and Inclusive Development

Empowered entrepreneurs are inclined to innovate and drive sustainable development initiatives enabled by autonomy and available resources. Creative knowledge nurtured within supportive ecosystems leads to the development of novel technologies, business models, and solutions addressing sustainability challenges (Belitski and Heron 2017; Fattah et al. 2021; Bacq et al. 2022). This research highlights the significance of collaborative environments and support networks, emphasizing the role of community dynamics. By fostering collaborative spaces, societies can leverage the collective intellectual capital of diverse stakeholders to address complex sustainability issues and advance progress toward the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, empowerment initiatives targeting both patients and entrepreneurs can foster inclusive development. By ensuring access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities for marginalized groups, societies can leverage intellectual capital for sustainable development, promoting inclusivity in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities (Hartzler and Pratt 2011; Julius Onakoya and Babatunde 2013; Nambisan and Baron 2013).

6.8. Addressing Potential Drawbacks of Empowerment Initiatives

While empowerment is often praised for its positive impacts, it’s crucial to acknowledge potential drawbacks and ensure that initiatives are effectively implemented to address them. One significant concern is the risk of widening existing disparities, which could perpetuate inequalities. Furthermore, there is a danger of overemphasizing individual empowerment at the expense of collective well-being. To mitigate these risks, empowerment initiatives should be accompanied by measures promoting equity, inclusivity, and sustainability, ensuring that their benefits are realized by all members of society.
7. Conclusions

The exploration of shared challenges among empowered patients and entrepreneurs within the context of post-crisis periods sheds light on crucial dynamics influencing diversity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. This study underscores the fundamental role of empowered patients and entrepreneurs in driving personal health management efficiency, economic growth, and social change. By exploring the intersection of empowerment and entrepreneurship, deeper insights have been gained into how these dynamics address shared challenges within health management contexts and entrepreneurial ventures. The interconnectedness of empowerment and entrepreneurship is highlighted, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts among stakeholders to facilitate social advancement and sustainable progress.

In summary, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of empowerment dynamics and their implications for social progress. Embracing collaborative approaches and informed practices can harness the full potential of empowerment to shape more resilient, innovative, and inclusive societies for the future. The findings highlight specific empowerment foundations such as self-efficacy, social support, collaboration, and cooperation, which provide individuals with frameworks to assert control over their lives and pursue their goals. Additionally, the empowerment factors of autonomy, active participation, and access to resources contribute to tangible expressions of empowerment in individuals’ behaviors and attitudes. The qualitative analysis reveals patterns of resilience and adaptation within virtual patient communities, emphasizing the importance of social support and collective engagement in navigating adversity, providing further insight into the dynamic nature of empowerment in contemporary society.

7.1. Limitations

The study acknowledges several limitations that impact the generalizability of its findings. Firstly, the research sample primarily consists of individuals engaged in online communities, which may not fully represent the broader population. Secondly, reliance on self-reported data from virtual communities introduces potential biases in the findings, necessitating careful consideration of the scope and applicability of the results.

Furthermore, the study’s cross-sectional design limits its ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Longitudinal studies are recommended to provide more robust evidence of the long-term impacts of empowerment interventions, allowing for a deeper understanding of the causal pathways involved.

Additionally, the theoretical framework developed in the study may not encompass all dimensions of empowerment in healthcare and entrepreneurship. Future research could refine the framework by integrating additional theories and perspectives, thereby enhancing its explanatory power and relevance across diverse contexts.

In conclusion, while the study offers valuable insights into the shared challenges faced by empowered individuals, further research is essential to overcome these limitations. By addressing these constraints, future studies can contribute to the development of more comprehensive and effective empowerment interventions tailored to the needs of diverse communities.

7.2. Future Research Directions

Recognizing the implications of empowerment for intellectual capital and sustainable development underscores the importance of fostering individual agency, innovation, and collaboration. Future research endeavors should delve deeper into these dimensions, exploring additional facets of empowerment in healthcare and entrepreneurship.

Longitudinal studies are warranted to investigate the long-term impacts of empowerment interventions on individual well-being. Additionally, qualitative research can provide further insights into the role of social support networks in facilitating empowerment and addressing associated challenges.
Moreover, comparative studies across diverse cultural contexts can offer valuable insights into the cultural factors influencing empowerment experiences. By examining these nuances, tailored interventions can be developed to promote empowerment and social innovation within diverse communities, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness.

Incorporating longitudinal, qualitative, and comparative approaches will provide a more comprehensive understanding of empowerment dynamics over time and across cultures. These insights will not only deepen our theoretical understanding but also inform the development of effective strategies that promote holistic well-being and economic advancement among empowered individuals and communities.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including its focus on a specific context and sample size. Therefore, future research should aim to expand its scope to encompass diverse regions and populations. By conducting expanded research, we can broaden our understanding of empowerment dynamics and facilitate innovative changes in both theory and practice in the realms of empowerment and entrepreneurship.

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