

# Identification of Factors in the Creation, Establishment, and Advancement of Entrepreneurship in Active Small and Medium Enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract:-**

**Objective:** The present research aimed to identify the factors involved in the creation, establishment, and advancement of entrepreneurship in active small and medium enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone.

**Method:** Qualitative research using semi-structured interviews and a statistical population consisting of owners, managers, and entrepreneurs of active small and medium enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone with a minimum of 5 years of activity in 2022. To determine the sample, 19 managers of these companies participated in the research using snowball sampling until theoretical saturation was reached.

**Findings:** Based on the thematic analysis resulting from interviews with managers, four main factors were identified as the key themes in the form of 15 sub-themes from 53 coded sentences in the current study. These factors constitute the elements of the creation, establishment, and advancement of entrepreneurship in active small and medium enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, to establish and advance entrepreneurship in active small and medium enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone, it is necessary to pay attention to appropriate mechanisms. The allocation of material and spiritual support, along with facilitating public services, can, alongside infrastructure factors and the implementation of customs laws, contribute to the establishment and advancement of entrepreneurship in active small and medium enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship Establishment, Investors, Small and Medium Enterprises, Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone.*

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## Introduction/Problem Statement

Global economic transformations and the experiences of developed and newly industrialized countries in the past three decades have demonstrated that foreign trade can be a catalyst for development, especially in the era of knowledge and technological developments. In today's world, no country can independently produce or provide all services and goods to meet all its needs, and development without cooperation, collaboration, and support from others may not be feasible (Piri Sarmanlu, 2017, p. 101).

Economic development necessitates investment in various economic and service sectors. Without investment in projects and different areas, one cannot expect the expansion of employment, production, progress, and economic prosperity in a country (Chamani and Amini Sabeq, 2018, p. 1). Consequently, most countries worldwide are keen to attract both domestic and foreign investments for establishing businesses. One effective and suitable way to achieve this goal is by creating free trade zones to attract domestic and foreign investors and promote business development. The existence of free trade zones serves the purpose of generating higher foreign income for developing countries, creating employment opportunities, transferring technology, and attracting both domestic and foreign investors (Kamran, 2002, p. 35).

Free trade zones, with their capabilities to increase exports, generate employment, attract domestic and foreign investments in the service sector, draw in domestic and foreign tourists, and having information technology and communication infrastructures, can play a significant role in the economy of countries, especially in developing countries like Iran (Latifi and Amini Aghaei, 2006, p. 79). Free trade zones serve as a means to access global markets and leverage relative economic advantages in international commerce, thus acting as accelerators for the integration of the domestic economy (Rokn al-Din Eftekhari et al., 2009).

To achieve this, support for entrepreneurship and the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in these zones can be instrumental. Supporting SMEs is a fundamental priority in the growth and economic development of many countries and plays a primary role in the economic development of various nations.

The Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone has been operational since 2004, located on the Aras River in the border city of Jolfa. Given its proximity to the C.I.S. countries (Commonwealth of Independent States), its location within international transportation corridors (6 corridors), its presence on the Silk Road, its nearness to Turkey as the gateway to Europe, its potential for creating road and rail connections between northern Iran and the Persian Gulf in the shortest route, and the Aras River as a natural connecting factor, in addition to the support of the city of Tabriz as its main hub, tourist attractions, and information technology and communication infrastructure, it has the potential for comprehensive development and can significantly influence the establishment and advancement of businesses in the region, as well as economic entrepreneurship and both domestic and foreign investments. The existing facilities and infrastructures in Jolfa can directly affect the performance of entrepreneurs and have a significant impact on attracting investors.

Given the existing capabilities in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone and the government's priority to reduce dependence on pure play income, such as oil, it is imperative to expand investment by both the government and the private sector, especially in the service sector. If this region receives attention and support, it can have a significant impact on the area and transform it into a hub on the shores of the Caspian Sea. The Aras Free Trade Zone can serve as a starting point for the expansion of international relations in cultural, economic, and service areas (Mousavi et al., 2006).

As a result, identifying and supporting capable entrepreneurs and creating conditions for the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through the allocation of financial and moral support to these companies, as well as facilitating customs regulations by establishing a suitable platform for public services, can significantly contribute to business and economic development in this region. Therefore, managers and officials, armed with accurate and comprehensive information about the region, can consider various measures to facilitate economic activities and the rapid progress of the region by creating favorable conditions for investment in the service sector. On this basis, the aim of this research is to identify the factors involved in the creation, establishment, and advancement of entrepreneurship in active small and medium-sized enterprises in the Aras

Free Trade-Industrial Zone. The results of this research can serve as a guide for managers, planners, and active companies in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone, facilitating economic activities and promoting entrepreneurship in the region.

### Research Question

What are the factors that contribute to the creation, establishment, and advancement of entrepreneurship in active small and medium-sized enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone?

### Literature Review

Free trade zones are defined as restricted areas, whether port or non-port, that operate independently of certain national regulations. They offer advantages such as tax exemptions, profit and customs duty reductions, the absence of unnecessary currency, administrative, and regulatory formalities, as well as facilitation and acceleration of export and import processes. These zones are designed to attract foreign investments and facilitate the transfer of technology, benefiting the development of the main territory (Rostami Chelkasari, 2014, p. 1).

Key characteristics of successful free trade zones worldwide include:

1. Clarity in monetary and financial policies, export and import regulations, attracting foreign investments, ensuring these investments, and managing foreign banks and credit institutions jointly.
2. The application of the least regulations and formalities in the clearance of imported goods and determining the associated costs on a competitive scale.
3. The establishment of an effective currency system and freedom of capital inflow and outflow.
4. Rapid response to investment requests.
5. Proper geographical, natural, and economic location and the presence of abundant and cost-effective labor.
6. Access to advanced telecommunications and communication networks, port facilities, docks, and airport facilities.
7. Access to technical and engineering services.
8. Political stability and low investment risk.
9. A tendency to privatize the management of free trade zones and expand foreign investments into infrastructure, tourism, and service activities parallel to industrial investments.
10. The geographical location of the free trade zone in terms of access to surrounding markets in terms of transportation costs.
11. The availability of skilled and specialized human resources (Mousavi et al., 2006).

These key characteristics of successful free trade zones are essential considerations for understanding how to create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship and business development in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone.

An entrepreneur is an individual who establishes and manages a company for profit and growth, utilizing innovative behavior and drawing from experiences in strategic management (Fry, 1993).

Small businesses are typically privately owned enterprises, often with limited employees and low sales volume. According to the definition provided by the Iranian Statistical Center, industries with fewer than 9 employees are considered small businesses. However, businesses with fewer than 50 employees can be categorized as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Ministry of Industries and Mines and the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad also define small and medium-sized enterprises as industrial and service units (urban and rural) with fewer than 50 workers (Unido, 2004, p. 121). The most significant characteristic of these types of businesses is the utilization

of low capital and individual expertise for their establishment. This allows individuals with limited capital to start these businesses by acquiring specific individual skills (Unido, 2004).

### Research Background

Both domestic and foreign researchers have conducted various studies on the factors contributing to the creation, establishment, and development of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Iran's free trade and industrial zones. In this section, we will present the findings of research related to the subject of the current study. Gbadeyan et al. (2017) pointed out that to achieve appropriate conditions for entrepreneurship, there must be suitable cultural, social, and economically rational conditions. The government should reduce interest rates to increase the possibility of loans for entrepreneurs. They are also obligated to minimize customs and tax restrictions to create better conditions for entrepreneurs. In a related context, the results of Shakeri and Salimi's research (2019) indicated that the lack of suitable executive organizations and the absence of strong and effective executive management within the Chabahar Free Zone, with a priority coefficient of 32.0, were the most significant challenges in attracting foreign investment to the region. Lack of transparency and efficiency in some of the laws and regulations related to free zones with a priority coefficient of 25.0, the adverse effects of government policies at the macro level of society in the Chabahar Free Zone with a priority coefficient of 23.0, and the lack of infrastructure and public services with a priority coefficient of 20.0 were ranked in subsequent categories.

Radikoko et al. (2016) also demonstrated that policies set by the government lead to a reduction in the adoption of entrepreneurship by companies. Therefore, the government should change its policies to increase the establishment of entrepreneurship in Botswana's businesses. Missaoui (2020) showed in their study that individual factors and environmental infrastructure have a significant impact on individuals' entrepreneurship. Organizational factors have a moderate effect on the level of entrepreneurship. The results of Ivana's research (2020) indicated that companies with developed entrepreneurship also have a high competitive advantage. Moreover, companies where environmental changes have more influence than change and innovation within the company will have a slower entrepreneurial process and will lag behind other companies.

In this regard, Hamoud Naji (2019) classified the factors affecting the establishment and progress of entrepreneurship into three dimensions: economic (including capital, labor force, raw materials, market, and infrastructure), social factors (including professional/ethnic characteristics, family background, education, social attitudes, and cultural values), and psychological factors (including the need for achievement, respect, and motivation). Mishra et al. (2018) indicated that among the various factors influencing the progress of entrepreneurship and the development of the studied companies, family support, the individuals' previous experience, and the investments made are the most influential factors for business success.

Farzamfar and Baghfalaki (2020) showed that the purpose of establishing free zones is to increase and develop exports, create jobs, attract domestic and foreign investment, and transfer technology. It aims to increase public revenues, boost tourism, enhance the country's economic status, and benefit from a competitive economy. On this basis, conditions such as having suitable trade and professional infrastructure, open market space for entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial capacities such as skills and motivation provide a foundation for the establishment and growth of new businesses in countries. Mahdavian Ahadi (2020) demonstrated that the components of entrepreneurial orientation (pioneering, innovation, and risk-taking) have a direct and significant impact on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in the food industry. E-commerce strengthens the entrepreneurial impact on the company's performance.

Given the research literature and the results of previous studies on the subject of the current research, it should be noted that due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher did not approach the investigation with a specific theoretical framework. Instead, they relied on in-depth qualitative interviews to discover and understand the factors contributing to the creation, establishment, and development of entrepreneurship in active companies in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone. The theoretical and empirical literature on the topic served as reference frameworks.

### Scope of the Study

The research's scope encompasses active small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone in the year 1401 (Iranian calendar).

### Research Method and Tools

The research methodology employed is qualitative, using semi-structured interviews. The population consists of owners, managers, and entrepreneurs of small and medium-sized companies with both foreign and domestic investments in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone in the year 1401. The subjects in this study have at least five years of management experience.

To determine the sample, initially, active small and medium-sized companies in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone were identified. Subsequently, one of the company's managers, knowledgeable about the research topic, was chosen as the first expert. Using snowball sampling, additional individuals for interviews were gradually introduced. This process continued until 19 managers and entrepreneurs were interviewed to reach theoretical saturation.

### Data Analysis

In the current research, the "thematic analysis" method was utilized for data analysis. Following data analysis and the initial coding process, subthemes were categorized, leading to the identification of main themes.

To establish the validity of the results, a re-coding process was carried out by two experts in the field of management of companies in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone, which resulted in an 87% agreement between the two coders.

### Research Findings

**Research Question:** What are the factors contributing to the creation, establishment, and development of entrepreneurship in active small and medium-sized companies in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone?

To answer the research question, interviews were first analyzed using thematic analysis. Tables (1) to (4) provide information related to subthemes, main themes, and the factors required to design the desired framework.

Table 1. Main and sub-themes resulting from the thematic classification of the primary codes of the variable "The role of infrastructures in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" (Source: Research findings)

Frequency of respondents	Related codes resulting from the classified codes:	Sub-themes:	Main theme:
18	Identifying the climate of the region and selecting industrial and commercial activities compatible with it	Climatic conditions Ground-rail transportation	infrastructures
17	Paying attention to the climatic conditions of the region in different seasons	Air transportation	
19	Establishing the Jolfa and Nordooz border market based on the climatic conditions of the region		
19	Creating transportation and transit capacity		

Frequency of respondents	Related codes resulting from the classified codes:	Sub-themes:	Main theme:
19	Creating the necessary capacity for loading and unloading	Establishing communication bridge	
18	Creating the required capacity for warehousing goods	Sub-themes:	
19	Access to land and rail transportation systems	Climatic conditions	
19	Creating passenger and freight terminals in the transportation system	Ground-rail transportation	
19	Creating an international airport with neighboring countries	Air transportation	
17	Providing airport and transit services in transnational areas	Establishing communication bridge	
19	Access to air transportation system	Sub-themes:	
18	Creating the required capacity for loading and unloading	Climatic conditions	
18	Creating the required capacity for warehousing goods		
16	Creating a border highway	Ground-rail transportation	
19	Reopening the connecting bridge with Azerbaijan	Air transportation	
17	Eliminating visas	Establishing communication bridge	
18	Creating a suitable context for the interaction of Iranian companies with neighboring markets	Access to neighboring countries' markets	
17	Assessing the needs of neighboring countries and adapting domestic market products to meet their needs		
19	Reviving economic relations between domestic and foreign markets		

The findings from Table 1 indicate that the main theme of "The role of infrastructures in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" is the result of integrating five sub-themes of climatic conditions, ground-rail transportation, air

transportation, establishing communication bridge, and access to neighboring countries' markets extracted from 19 classified related codes resulting from 34 initial sentences.

Table 2. Main and sub-themes resulting from the thematic classification of the primary codes of the variable "The role of facilitating customs laws in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" (Source: Research findings)

Frequency of respondents	Related codes resulting from the classified codes:	Sub-themes:	Main theme
19	Lack of ambiguity in enacting customs laws for domestic and foreign investments in the free trade-industrial zone	Enacting transparent laws in the free trade-industrial zone	Enacting and implementing facilitating customs laws
19	Simplicity and flexibility of laws enacted in the free trade zone regarding domestic and foreign investment	Enacting facilitating laws in the free trade-industrial zone	
19	Enacting laws on freedom of capital and currency transfer in the free trade-industrial zone	Enacting laws based on climatic conditions in the free trade-industrial zone	
17	Relative freedom of companies to employ foreign experts in the free trade-industrial zone based on enacted laws	Sub-themes:	
19	Allocating facilitating laws for imports and exports of foreign goods		
18	Adaptation of laws enacted in the free trade-industrial zone based on the geopolitical situation and geographical location of the region	Enacting transparent laws in the free trade-industrial zone	
18	Adaptation of laws enacted in the free trade-industrial zone based on connection in waterways	Enacting facilitating laws in the free trade-industrial zone	
19	Allocating time-limited tax exemptions	Enacting laws based	

Frequency of respondents	Related codes resulting from the classified codes:	Sub-themes:	Main theme
19	Allocating exemptions from customs duties for the entry and export of raw materials, machinery and companies	on climatic conditions in the free trade-industrial zone	

The results obtained from the findings of Table 2 indicate that the main theme of "The role of enacting and implementing facilitating customs laws in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in active small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" is the result of integrating four sub-themes of enacting transparent laws in the free trade-industrial zone, enacting facilitating laws in the free trade-industrial zone, enacting laws based on climatic conditions in the free trade-industrial zone, and enacting flexible laws and customs exemptions in the free trade-industrial zone extracted from 9 classified related codes resulting from 27 initial sentences.

Table 3. Main and sub-themes resulting from the thematic classification of the primary codes of the variable "The role of access to creating a suitable context for public services in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" (Source: Research findings)

Frequency of respondents	Related codes resulting from the classified codes	Sub-themes	Main theme
18	Access to suitable land and preparing it in the free trade-industrial zone	Access to raw materials and resources in the region Access to technical facilities and services in the region Awareness of existing facilities in the region	Access to creating a suitable context for public services
19	Access to proper electricity		
17	Access to mechanized water and sewage		
17	Access to vast agricultural plains in the region		
18	Utilizing the knowledge and technology used in infrastructures to provide better services to		



Frequency of respondents	Related codes resulting from the classified codes	Sub-themes	Main theme
	owners of small and medium-sized enterprises	Sub-themes	Access to raw materials and resources in the region Access to technical facilities and services in the region Awareness of existing facilities in the region Sub-themes Access to raw materials and resources in the region
19	Utilizing various services provided in infrastructures according to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises	Access to raw materials and resources in the region	
18	Location of the region near Tabriz-Nakhchivan and Khoy international airports	Access to technical facilities and services in the region	
16	Creating sufficient security in the region to attract investment and develop the tourism industry	Awareness of existing facilities in the region	
18	Informing through advertising about the importance of modern communication infrastructures in the region	Sub-themes	
16	Informing through promoting the authentic Iranian culture in the region		
18	Focusing on equipping accommodation and tourism places near the region	Access to raw materials and resources in the region	
19	Developing welfare and service centers across the region		
19	Informing through advertising and introducing the climate of the Aras region in terms of weather, pristine forests		
18	Utilizing ancient and historical works and attractions in the region to absorb tourism and investment in the region		

The findings from Table 3 indicate that the main theme of "The role of access to creating a suitable context for public services in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" results from integrating four sub-themes of access to raw materials and resources in the region, access to technical facilities and services in the region, awareness of existing facilities in the region, and access to recreational facilities in the region of the free trade-industrial zone extracted from 14 classified related codes resulting from 47 initial sentences.

Table 4. Main and sub-themes resulting from the thematic classification of the primary codes of the variable "The role of allocating material and moral support in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" (Source: Research findings)

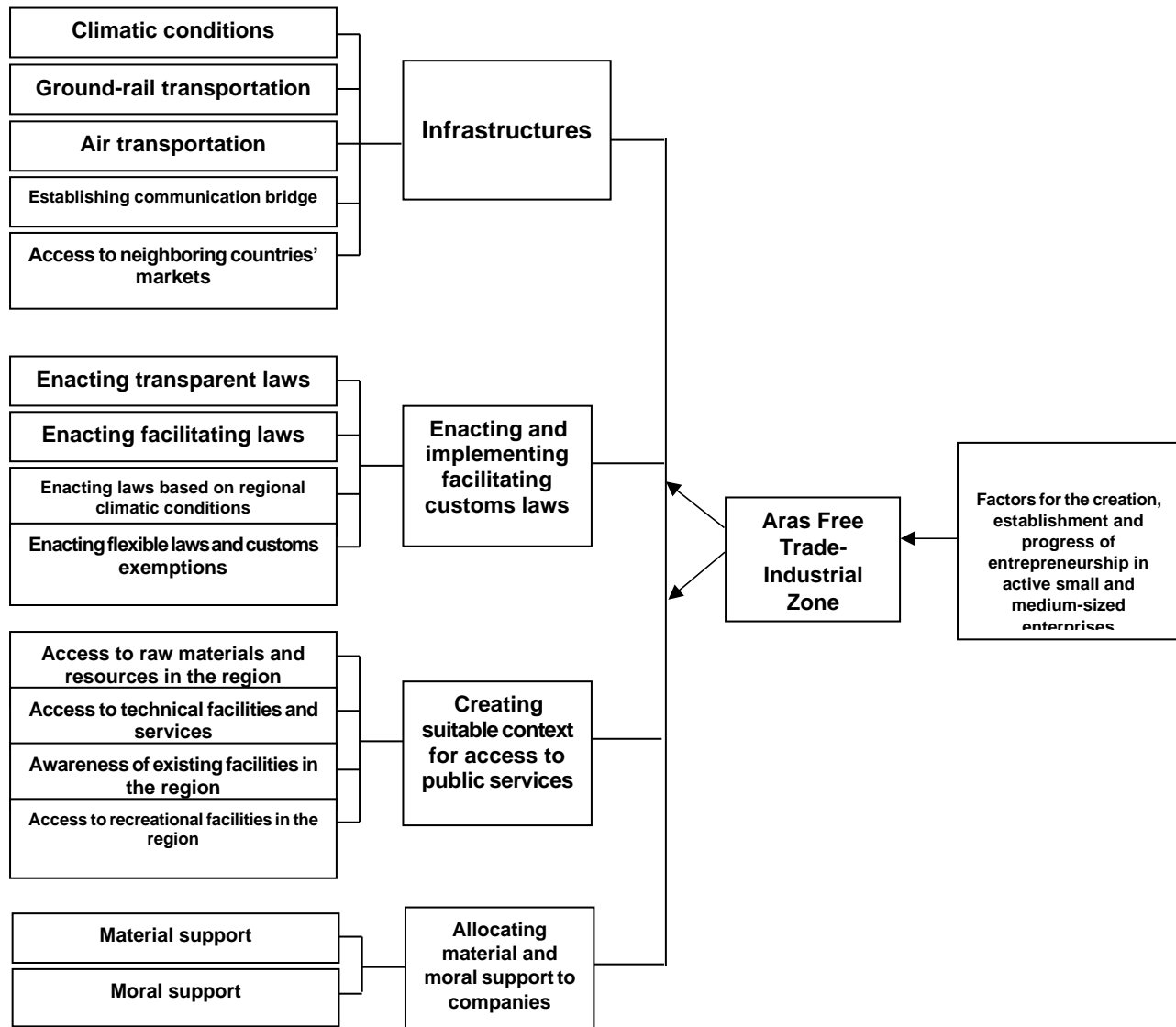
Frequency of respondents	Related codes resulting from the classified codes	Sub-themes	Main theme
17	Providing foreign exchange revenues through creating added value, regional development and deprivation alleviation	Material support	Allocating material and moral support to companies
18	Existence of facilitating conditions in various financial, monetary and proprietary domains in the region	Material support	
19	Applying gradual discounts to investors	Material support	
19	Providing part of the employer's share of insurance premiums of well-known workshops of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs units	Material support	
19	Enjoying political stability in the region	Moral support	
19	Low investment risk in the region	Moral support	
19	Freedom of banks and credit institutions activities in the region	Moral support	
17	Freedom of insurance activities in the region	Moral support	
19	Guaranteeing foreign investors' legal rights	Moral support	
19	Guaranteeing clearance of imported and exported goods	Moral support	
18	The way personnel of security, regulatory, relief, social, cultural and economic service units deal with small and medium-sized enterprises in providing proper services to investors	Moral support	

The results obtained from the findings of Table 4 indicate that the main theme of "The role of allocating material and moral support in the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone" is the result of integrating two sub-themes of material support and moral support in the free trade-industrial zone extracted from 11 classified related codes resulting from 31 initial sentences.

The findings from Tables 1 to 4 indicate; The factors for the creation, establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in active small and medium-sized enterprises in Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone include four main factors:

1. Infrastructures
2. Enacting and implementing facilitating customs laws
3. Creating suitable context for access to public services
4. Allocating material and moral support to companies

as main themes within 15 sub-themes were identified and according to Figure 1, the intended framework was designed.



## Conclusion

The present article aims to identify the factors that contribute to the establishment and progress of entrepreneurship in active small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone in the year 2022. The research results reveal that four factors, including infrastructure, customs facilitation laws and implementation, the creation of a suitable environment for accessing public services, and the allocation of material and spiritual support to companies, emerged as the primary drivers for the establishment and advancement of entrepreneurship in active SMEs in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone.

Considering that the first step in establishing and advancing entrepreneurship in active SMEs in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone is having economic capital, without which the prominent features of human resources referred to as entrepreneurs, and the geographical and environmental characteristics of the region, cannot guarantee the success of these new and emerging SMEs, financial and moral support to such companies is identified as the most crucial factor in establishing and advancing entrepreneurship. Therefore, in order to

encourage entrepreneurs and investors to engage in economic activities in this region, financial support such as applying graduated discounts or providing a portion of employer insurance fees to SMEs, allocating loans, and other banking issues, along with the provision of supply, security, rescue, and cultural services, can enhance the performance of entrepreneurs and expand their activities in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone. In this regard, Abu and Freixanet (2014) refer to financial support as a necessary aid required for initial stages of exports. Gbadeyan and colleagues (2017) also found that in order to achieve suitable entrepreneurship establishment and progress, logical economic policies must exist, with the most important being that the government must lower interest rates to increase the ability of entrepreneurs to borrow. Ultimately, it can be concluded that financial and moral support for small and medium-sized companies are the most critical factors in the economic growth and development of many countries. However, in addition to financial and moral support, the readiness of regional infrastructure, such as airports, transportation capacities, transit and cargo handling, access to land transportation systems, access to markets, and the availability of a dynamic transportation network, well-coordinated and organized in free trade zones, such as water, electricity, fuel, telephone, telegraph, and remote communications, can assist in expanding the activities of entrepreneurs and investors in small and medium-sized companies.

Creating additional infrastructure such as an international airport has a significant impact on attracting tourism and domestic and foreign investors in business creation. In this regard, Farzamfar and Baghfalaki (2020) found that conditions such as the availability of commercial and professional infrastructure and an open market space for entrepreneurs to enter are conducive to the establishment and growth of new businesses in countries. Another influential factor is the role of public service facilities. The achievement of online payment (non-face-to-face), which is a result of technological advancement, greatly facilitates this for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs can use internet systems for their daily operations, making the acceptance of this technology one of the most important public service facilities in the region.

On the other hand, completing hotels, industrial business centers, developing welfare and service centers, ensuring sufficient security in the region, promoting and disseminating Iranian and regional culture, and identifying the climate of the Aras region in terms of climate and pristine forests also affect the progress of small and medium-sized enterprises. Another factor, in addition to the three factors of providing financial and moral support to companies, infrastructure, and creating a suitable platform for public services, that plays a role in establishing, establishing, and advancing entrepreneurship in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone is the facilitative customs laws. In fact, one of the goals of free trade zones is to attract specific investments to the region. However, foreign investors are discouraged from investing in these areas due to the bureaucracy of the relevant countries. To prevent this situation and the possibility of attracting foreign investments, usually institutions are tasked with managing the free trade zone. These institutions are responsible for all government ministries, so investors deal only with a single administrative body. Incentives include various tax exemptions, repatriation of principal and interest on capital, as well as regulations regarding money, banking, insurance, and social affairs. Based on the results of this research and the findings of the mentioned studies, it can be concluded that the presence of all four factors, when combined, can have a positive role in establishing, settling, and even advancing entrepreneurship in active small and medium-sized enterprises in the Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone.

### Suggestions

In order to create, establish, and promote entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Aras Free Trade and Industrial Zone, the following suggestions can be considered:

1. The government and authorities can encourage and support investors in the Aras region by providing long-term, low-interest loans, as well as through non-financial means such as appreciation, gratitude, and encouragement. They should engage young professionals, experts, and entrepreneurs who possess high risk-taking capabilities and are equipped with modern communication and information technologies to stimulate the creation of new businesses in the region.
2. The Aras region should take steps to attract domestic and foreign investors by constructing its own highway infrastructure and upgrading the existing rail network with new and modern carriages. It should also increase the

speed of the trains and consider the renovation of the railway lines to connect to the European railway network through Turkey. Additionally, the region should work on completing its airport infrastructure.

3. To attract tourism in the Aras Free Zone, which has a significant impact on regional growth and business development, the region should provide high-speed 4G internet for free in tourism and historical sites in the region. The CEO and the board of directors of the Aras region should identify and introduce tourist areas and the regional climate, pristine forests, and historical sites.

4. Ultimately, it is recommended that all executives and managers in the Aras region prioritize customer and entrepreneur satisfaction. They should be attentive to fulfilling the expectations of business owners, both in verbal communication during face-to-face meetings and in delivering services. Furthermore, they should focus on customer and entrepreneur satisfaction and take it as a top priority.

5. In addition, by simplifying customs laws and regulations in the Aras Free Zone and eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy, the region should pay attention to the precise behavior of entrepreneurs and business owners in their dealings.

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