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Assessing the entrepreneurial motivation and intention among undergraduate agriculture and horticulture students of Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship in agriculture is becoming an essential part of the path to boosting innovation, job creation and local self-sufficiency. This study focused on what drives undergraduate students of agriculture and horticulture at Annamalai University to think about entrepreneurship as a career option. It focused on key aspects like their mindset, intention, self-confidence, individual traits and external challenges. A total of 110 students took part in this research by answering a structured questionnaire, which was in Google Form format and the responses were studied using basic statistical tools. Results showed that students generally had a fair level of interest and motivation in entrepreneurship. Confidence in their own abilities (mean = 2.71) was the strongest factor, showing they believe they can manage business hurdles. But problems like not enough funds, lack of business guidance and unpredictable markets (mean = 2.69) still hold many backs. Their general attitude (mean = 2.63) and personal background (mean = 2.59) also had an impact, though not as much. Even though the students have a positive view of business ventures, they often find it difficult to take the first step due to outside limitations. The results highlight and hint at the urgent need for colleges to provide better entrepreneurship courses, practical mentoring and stronger links with industry and funding bodies. A solid support system with training, hands-on exposure and government assistance can play a prominent role in helping young people succeed in agribusiness. This research points to the value of building a nurturing environment to grow future agripreneurs, which can spark rural growth and long-term change.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial motivation, self-efficacy, agripreneurship, entrepreneurship education, rural innovation, agriculture students, youth entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has become a driving engine for economic progress and development, rural upliftment and job generation across many fields, including farming (Kuratko, 2023) [4]. In India, agripreneurship plays a vital role in reshaping agriculture by introducing new technology and methods that leads to creating rural job opportunities and boosting local livelihoods. Around 45.50% of the workforce in India involved in farming and 18.30% of GDP coming from agriculture, the sector remains central to the country's economy (Ministry of Finance, 2024) [7]. Yet, many hurdles like price swings, uncertain weather and falling youth interest pose serious threats to its long-term growth. Promoting business ideas among students studying agriculture and horticulture can spark new hope for the sector's future. Currently, India is home to more than 7,000 agritech startups, with initiatives like RKVY-RAFTAAR already backing over 1,700 of these ventures (PIB, 2024). In Tamil Nadu alone, 137 startups have received state help and the government has earmarked ₹10 crore in the 2024 - 25 budget to develop agribusiness talent (Tamil Nadu Budget,

2024) [14]. Now, among the fastest-growing agritech hubs, India ranks with 19 "soonicones" and 40 "minicones" shaping the landscape (Inc42, 2024) [3]. Despite this growth, many students shy away from entrepreneurship due to money worries, fear of failing and not having the right guidance (Fatoki, 2023) [2]. Personal drive, belief in their own ability and support systems all play a role in shaping whether students want to start a business (Liguori & Winkler, 2023; Obschonka *et al.*, 2023) [5, 8]. Cultural influences, parental occupation and educational background also steer their choices (Solevik, 2022) [13]. Many still see self-employment as risky or out of reach. This research focuses on uncovering what pushes or pulls agriculture and horticulture students toward entrepreneurship. Knowing what sparks their interest or holds them back will help tailor future training, mentorship programs and policy efforts that support agripreneurial thinking and action among youth.

2. Methodology

The study was taken up in Faculty of Agriculture, Annamalai University of Cuddalore District in TamilNadu.

Out of the ten faculty in Annamalai University, faculty of agriculture was selected based on the courses offered related to entrepreneurship. A sample size of 110 undergraduate students from agriculture and horticulture was selected by using random sampling technique. The entrepreneurial motivation and intension were consisting of five dimensions and they were student's entrepreneurial intensions, student's personal attribute, student's entrepreneurial attitude, student's self-efficacy and factors inhibiting student's entrepreneurship intension. The procedure was developed to measure the dimensions of entrepreneurship motivation and intension. The respondents were requested to answer each dimension in alternative response of agree, disagree and undesired. The scoring procedure was 3,2 and 1. Further, mean was worked out to make interpretations simple and easy. And also, to find out over all mean for major dimensions for clearcut understanding about entrepreneurial motivation and intension among the students of agriculture and horticulture in Annamalai University. In this study

involved no invasive procedures. Also, Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

3. Findings and discussion

1.1. Entrepreneurial motivation and intension of agricultural and horticultural undergraduate students

The objective of the investigation is to assess the entrepreneurial motivation and intension of undergraduate students from agriculture and horticulture departments. The results are obtained in this regard are presented in the table 1 to table 6.

1.1.1. Student's entrepreneurial intensions

Entrepreneurial intension refers to a student's conscious decision and plan to students' conscious decision and plan to start a new business or venture. The intension of the respondents was measured and shown in the table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial intensions (n=110)

S. No.	Entrepreneurial Intentions	Mean
1	I am willing to take risks to start my own business.	2.60
2	I believe entrepreneurship is a better career option than employment.	2.77
3	I feel confident in my ability to run a successful business.	2.68
4	I am constantly looking for new business opportunities.	2.67
5	I am determined to be self-employed in the future.	2.64
Average Mean		2.67

The results from Table 1 represents that, the entrepreneurial intensions of the students based on the mean score of five key statements. The highest average (2.77) indicates that many students considered the own business is a better alternative than serving an employer. This proposition is evidenced by their faith in their own abilities (2.68), their active pursuit of new opportunities (2.67) and their determination to be self-employed in future with mean score of 2.64. This suggests that the respondents who has self-confidence, recognize the potential benefits of entrepreneurship. The lowest score (2.60) was recorded for the willingness to take risks. This indicates a cautious attitude among respondents, that may possibly due to financial insecurity or fear of failure factors that often determine individuals from initiating new ventures. Overall, the average mean of entrepreneurial intension among

respondents is 2.67. it reveals a moderately strong entrepreneurial intention among the respondents. While the findings reveal an encouraging level of interest in entrepreneurship among respondents, it also highlights certain areas, such as risk-taking, where targeted support or training might enhance the respondents' readiness to pursue entrepreneurial careers more actively. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Doda (2021) ^[1] who also reported that similar findings in his study.

1.1.2. Student's personal attribute

The student's personal attributes are the unique characteristics, qualities and traits that define an individual student's personality, behaviour and approach to particular situations related to enterprise. The results obtained in this regard are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their personal attribute (n = 110)

S. No.	Personal Attribute	Mean
1	My academic learning has positively shaped my entrepreneurial mind-set.	2.56
2	Stories of successful entrepreneurs motivate me to pursue entrepreneurship.	2.72
3	Exposure to business case studies has increased my interest in starting a venture.	2.56
4	Government policies and incentives encourage me to consider entrepreneurship.	2.55
5	My family supports and encourages me to become an entrepreneur.	2.33
6	The lack of secure job opportunities pushes me to think about entrepreneurship.	2.60
7	I believe entrepreneurship provides more freedom and growth than employment.	2.76
8	I find the idea of being an entrepreneur highly appealing.	2.55
9	If I had sufficient funding and mentorship, I would start my own business.	2.67
Average Mean		2.59

It could be noticed from the Table 2, showed that, the personal attributes influencing students' entrepreneurial motivation and intension, with overall average mean score

of 2.59 reflects a moderate level of entrepreneurial inclination shaped by personal attributes. From the mean scores of these key statements, the highest average (2.76)

indicates that the students are strongly believed in entrepreneurship which provides greater opportunities and freedom for their growth when compared to regular jobs. This finding highlights the growing preference among students to seek autonomy, independence and professional self-determination through entrepreneurial opportunities. The second-highest score (2.72) indicates that inspirational stories of successful entrepreneurs have a motivating influence on students to pursue entrepreneurship. Availability of sufficient funding and mentorship (2.67) also got high rank, emphasizing that the financial security and proper guidance act as strong enablers in shaping students' entrepreneurial intention and motivation. The lack of secure job opportunities (2.60) drives students to consider entrepreneurship as a viable and effective alternative. Moderate influence was observed in factors such as academic learning (2.56) and exposure to business case studies (2.56). This suggests that the structured educational experiences are contributing positively towards building entrepreneurial orientation. Also, government policies and incentives (2.55) and the appeal of entrepreneurship as a career option (2.55) have played a moderate role in shaping

students' entrepreneurial intentions and motivation, indicating while policy measures and aspirational appeal are acknowledged, they may not be sufficient alone to trigger entrepreneurial action. The lowest score (2.33) was recorded for family support and encouragement, which suggests that the family influence is less significant in motivating students to pursue entrepreneurship. While the students express a strong belief in entrepreneurship as a path to freedom and growth, external factors such as limited family encouragement and reliance on funding and mentorship indicate areas where additional support mechanisms could strengthen entrepreneurial development. It denotes a moderate inclination towards entrepreneurship. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Doda (2021) ^[1] who also reported that similar findings in his study.

1.1.3. Student's entrepreneurial attitude

An entrepreneurial attitude is a mindset characterised by a student's willingness to take risks, recognize opportunities for innovation and a belief in one's ability to create and manage a business or enterprise. The attitude of the respondents was measured and shown in the table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial attitude (n=110)

S. No.	Entrepreneurial Attitude	Mean
1	I strongly believe that becoming an entrepreneur is the right career choice for me.	2.54
2	I am willing to take financial risks to establish my own business.	2.50
3	I consistently seek opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills.	2.71
4	I am confident in my ability to successfully manage a business.	2.62
5	I prefer to be self-employed rather than working for someone else.	2.67
6	I am motivated to turn innovative ideas into a profitable business.	2.72
Average Mean		2.63

Results from the Table 3 highlights that, the respondents hold a balanced and thoughtful view towards entrepreneurship. Majority of the respondents shows a strong interest in transforming innovative ideas into a profitable business (2.72) and actively look for ways to build their business skills (2.71). It indicates a forward-thinking attitude from respondents. By preferring self-employment over regular jobs (2.67) also suggests the attributes of independence and personal control of respondents. Confidence in managing a business (2.62) adds further weight to their readiness in entrepreneurship. Even though slightly lower in their willingness to face financial risks (2.50) and their belief in entrepreneurship as the best

career path (2.54) still reflects a solid base of entrepreneurial mindset among respondents. With an overall average mean of 2.63, reflects a developing but slightly firm attitude among respondents to step into the entrepreneurial space with curiosity, caution and determination. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Doda (2021) ^[1] who also reported tht similar findings in his study.

1.1.4. Student's self-efficacy

It refers to an individual or students' belief in their capacity to succeed in specific situations and achieve desired entrepreneurial goals. The data was analysed and the results are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their self-efficacy (n = 110)

S. No.	Self-efficacy	Mean
1	I have confidence in my ability to handle unexpected challenges.	2.74
2	I believe I can successfully complete difficult tasks with determination.	2.68
3	I stay motivated even when facing setbacks or failures.	2.65
4	I can effectively manage multiple responsibilities at the same time.	2.71
5	I am capable of making sound decisions under pressure.	2.61
6	I feel confident in my ability to adapt to new and complex situations.	2.70
7	I trust my problem-solving skills in both personal and professional situations.	2.73
8	I can maintain focus and productivity even in stressful conditions.	2.72
9	I am persistent in working toward my goals despite obstacles.	2.72
10	I can motivate myself to achieve my objectives without external pressure.	2.81
Average Mean		2.71

It could be noticed from the Table 4 that the majority of respondents believe in their ability to deal with difficult and uncertain situations. This could be a key part of self-efficacy. Most of the respondents feel that they can stay driven and motivated without any external pressure (2.81), which suggest their strong internal motivation. Many respondents have confidence handling unexpected challenges (2.74), trust their problem-solving skills in both personal and professional situations (2.73), believe they can stay calm and work well even under stress (2.72), persistent towards their goals (2.72) and manage several tasks at once (2.71). They are confident in their ability to adjust to new challenges (2.70), they believe in completing difficult tasks with determination (2.68). These are the key points in showing their level of self-efficacy. Despite of slightly having lower score in keep pushing through setbacks (2.65), decision-making skills under stress (2.61) still reflects a decent level of self-trust among them. With an overall mean of 2.71, the results reflect that respondents have a steady sense of personal strength and resilience, which helps them stay on track toward their entrepreneurial dreams. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Doda (2021) ^[1] who also reported that similar findings in his study

1.1.5. Factors inhibiting student's entrepreneurship intension

In this section the researcher to identify the what are all the factors inhibiting the student's entrepreneurial intensions. The relevant data regarding the factors inhibiting the student's entrepreneurial intensions were presented in table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to factors inhibiting their entrepreneurship intension (n=110)

S. No.	Factors inhibiting Entrepreneurship	Mean
1	Difficulty in accessing start-up funding.	2.75
2	Lack of mentorship and guidance from experienced entrepreneurs.	2.63
3	Fear of business failure and financial loss.	2.71
4	Inadequate entrepreneurial education and training.	2.73
5	Uncertainty in market demand and competition.	2.70
6	Difficulty in obtaining necessary licenses and permits.	2.61
7	High initial investment costs and operational expenses.	2.69
8	Lack of networking opportunities with potential investors.	2.68
9	Cultural and societal pressure to pursue stable employment.	2.73
10	Limited access to technological resources and infrastructure.	2.68
11	Difficulty in balancing entrepreneurship with personal responsibilities.	2.66
Average Mean		2.69

The data observed from the Table 5 reveals that, the several barriers which making it tough for respondents to move forward with their entrepreneurial goals. The biggest factor which inhibits entrepreneurial intension and motivation among most of the respondents are seems to be getting start-up money (2.75), which clearly states that the financial support is a major concern. Majority of respondents also feel that they don't get enough proper education related to entrepreneurship (2.73) and face cultural or family pressure

to choose safer and formal jobs than startups (2.73). These findings reveals that the limited exposure to practical knowledge about business and prevailing societal expectations, significantly hinder entrepreneurship, particularly in environments where formal employment is considered to be more safe and secure or respectable. Worries about failing or losing money (2.71) and not knowing if the market is ready for their ideas (2.70), add to their hesitation. High initial investment costs and expenses received a mean of 2.69, showing that the financial demands involved in launching and managing an enterprise are considerable obstacles. Alongside this, both lack of networking opportunities with potential investors and limited access to technological resources and infrastructure also scored 2.68, suggesting that access to support systems, both human and technical, is limited. The difficulty in balancing entrepreneurship with personal responsibilities (2.66) suggests that role strain is another barrier, particularly for an individual's managing households or other personal commitments. Lack of mentorship and guidance from experienced entrepreneurs (2.63), key factor in inhibiting entrepreneurship motivation among respondents. Guidance from experienced entrepreneurs to beginners during the early stages of business play a critical role in success. Lastly, difficulty in obtaining necessary licenses and permits scored the lowest mean of 2.61. Although relatively lower mean when compared to other factors, it still presents a bureaucratic challenge that can slow down or discourage new startups. Overall, with an average mean of 2.69, these findings reflect a combination of financial, educational, emotional, institutional and social constraints. Addressing these multifaceted challenges through supportive policies, training programs and community engagement could significantly encourage entrepreneurial participation. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Doda, 2021 ^[1] who also reported that similar findings in his study.

1.1.6. Dimension wise the student's entrepreneurial motivation and intension among the undergraduate students of agriculture and horticulture students

The relevant data regarding the dimension wise student's entrepreneurship motivation and intension among the students of agriculture and horticulture were presented in table 6.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to their dimension wise entrepreneurial motivation and intension (n=110)

S. No.	Category	Average Mean
1.	Student's entrepreneurial intensions	2.67
2.	Student's personal attribute	2.59
3.	Student's entrepreneurial attitude	2.63
4.	Student's self-efficacy	2.71
5.	Factors inhibiting student's entrepreneurship intension	2.69
Average Mean		2.65

It could be observed from Table 6 that, how different aspects shape students' drive and hurdles in becoming entrepreneurs. Among these five areas from the study, self-efficacy holds the highest mean value (2.71). This shows

student's' trust in their own capabilities, when they facing tough moments or difficult tasks. Closely behind are the inhibiting factors (2.69) and entrepreneurial intentions (2.67) of respondents, suggesting that most of the respondents are motivated to build their ventures, they still face real constraints. Entrepreneurial attitude also scores fairly high (2.63). This shows a steady leaning towards self-employment among respondents. However, personal attributes score the lowest (2.59), indicating that individual background factors like academic exposure or family influence may not be as impactful. The overall mean of 2.65 signals a generally positive but cautious mindset students are keen but still held back by gaps in support, real-world challenges and resource access. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Doda (2021) ^[1] & Sanketh (2020) ^[12] who also reported that similar findings in his study

4. Limitations and future scope

This study was more insightful and has certain limitations. It was confined to a single institution with a relatively small sample size of 110 students, which may restrict the generalization of findings to a wider student population. This analysis relied mainly on descriptive statistics such as mean scores, which, though useful for interpretation, may not capture deeper causal relationships.

5. Conclusion

Thus, findings from this study shows that the undergraduate students in agriculture and horticulture have a growing interest in starting their own businesses, driven by confidence in their abilities and a wish for independence. Even though, they face many real obstacles like difficulty in getting financial support, lack of experienced mentors and pressure to choose safer jobs. To overcome these kind of obstacles, regular training programs, engaging workshops and informative seminars from intellectuals who are successful on entrepreneurship are vital key they help students build practical knowledge, skills and courage to venture out. Moreover, government policies and support systems must be strengthened and designed to meet these young entrepreneurs' specific needs, offering financial help, guidance and infrastructure. This research plays a crucial role by uncovering the true feelings and challenges of students, paving the way for more focused actions to inspire and equip the next generation of agricultural entrepreneurs.

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