

A Study on Entrepreneurial Skills of UG Students of SAU

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How to cite this article:

Arpita S Kandpal, Gaurav Beri, Aakansha Joshi. A Study on Entrepreneurial Skills of UG Students of SAU. Ind. J Agri Busi 2024;10(1):29-33.

Abstract

This study aims to explore the entrepreneurial skills of undergraduate students at a state agricultural university in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. Entrepreneurial skills play a vital role in identifying opportunities, acquiring resources, and taking decisive action for success. Enterprise education focuses on developing an enterprising mindset and skills across various contexts, enhancing employability and benefiting individuals, the workforce, the community, and the economy. Understanding the entrepreneurial skills of undergraduate students can provide valuable insights for improving skill levels and promoting entrepreneurship. This research investigates the socio-personal, economic, psychological, and communication characteristics of the students, as well as their risk orientation. Additionally, the study examines the relationship between independent variables, such as motivation, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intentions. The findings from this study will contribute to designing more effective entrepreneurship education programs and support systems, as well as informing government policies to encourage entrepreneurial activity among undergraduate students.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial skills; Undergraduate students; State agricultural university; Entrepreneurship education.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs are perceived as individuals with the capacity to identify and assess business

prospects, gather the required resources, exploit them, and undertake suitable measures to guarantee accomplishment (Meredith *et al.*, 1982). Enterprise involves generating and applying ideas in practical situations, combining attributes like creativity, problem solving, innovation, communication, and initiative. Enterprise education aims to develop an enterprising mindset and skills across diverse contexts. Entrepreneurship applies these behaviors, attributes, and competencies to create value in various aspects. Intrapreneurship involves applying these skills within existing organizations. Entrepreneurship education primarily focuses on the practical aspects of starting a business, often through business plan development. Learning about enterprise and entrepreneurship in higher education enhances students' employability

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Received on: 06. 11. 2023

Accepted on: 30. 12. 2023

and benefits individuals, the workforce, the community, and the economy (Knight and Yorke, 2003). Acquiring skills related to entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly valuable as traditional knowledge and disciplines lose importance (Prüfer and Prüfer, 2020). The ability to face new problems in various contexts, generate ideas, manage risk, and adapt in dynamic environments are crucial skills for individuals. Mastering these cross-cutting entrepreneurial skills will shape the future of learning, science, culture, and humanity (Laguna et al., 2020). Assessments of entrepreneurial capacity among students from different fields have provided valuable insights for improving skill levels (Liikamaa, 2015; Julian et al., 2014). Entrepreneurs require specific skills such as sales and marketing, self-motivation, financial knowledge, time management, administration, management, and technology proficiency to achieve their entrepreneurial goals (Adeyemo, 2009). These skills can be acquired through effort and time investment (Fini et al., 2009). Models and assessments have been proposed to evaluate entrepreneurial skills among undergraduate and graduate students, emphasizing the importance of both professional and personal skills (Edwards-Schachter et al., 2015). Skills models play a crucial role in analyzing the skill development of university students and are influenced by the curriculum, employment environment, and economic situation (Manresa et al., 2018; Urbano et al., 2019). Factors such as social, demographic, and economic determinants can shape an individual's entrepreneurial skills, and analyzing their impact can inform government policies (Tomy and Pardede, 2020). It's important to note that having the intention to become an entrepreneur does not necessarily mean possessing the required skills. Skills involve the incorporation and mobilization of abilities, capacities, and knowledge (Tomy and Pardede, 2020).

Entrepreneurial skills are evolving, and the development of social entrepreneurship and effective communication skills are becoming increasingly relevant (Deale, 2016; Munoz-Fernandez et al., 2016; Oktriono, 2015). The challenge in tourism education is to balance vocational skills and liberal thinking to promote deep learning and entrepreneurial skills (Jamal et al., 2011). Entrepreneurship education programs aim to enhance individual characteristics and foster an entrepreneurial culture, preparing individuals for entrepreneurship and innovation as both self-employed entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial employees (Gundry et al., 2014; Gibb, 2002). Political measures have emphasized the

importance of promoting entrepreneurial skills and investing in structures to support entrepreneurship education (European Council, 2006). In the Russian context, more attention is given to training master's degree students for entrepreneurship compared to bachelor's degree students (O'Leary, 2017). Generic skills, including entrepreneurial skills, play a vital role in personal and professional development, increasing employability and adaptability in a dynamic business environment (Bratianu and Vatamanescu, 2017; Bedwell et al., 2014; Sin et al., 2016).

In Indian context entrepreneurship refers to creating of employability so that the living standards of the people in society may improve. To promote entrepreneurship a course of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is now being introduced in the course curriculum of schools and colleges. To determine the skills of undergraduate students of an agricultural university the following research was conducted. The research aims to ask the following questions: [1] What are the entrepreneurial qualities among the undergraduate students of a state agricultural university? [2] What are the entrepreneurial skills owned by the students? [3] What is the extent of Need for achievement, Innovativeness, Decision making ability, Problem solving ability and skills management among the students?

This paper intends to present an explanatory assessment that examined the academic justification of the inclusion of entrepreneurship education, specifically, on the development of undergraduate students' entrepreneurial skills over the pedagogical approach. Based on the above-mentioned argument the following objectives were proposed for the study:

1. To access the entrepreneurial skills owned by the students.
2. To determine the extent of Need for achievement, Innovativeness, Decision making ability, Problem solving ability and skills management among the students.

Literature Review

In a study on entrepreneurial intentions concluded that Intentions are still considered as the best single predictor of human behavior (Krueger, 2008). He described and interprets the behavior of an individual as a group of the attitude towards the stimuli, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Attitude for a behavior is the reflection of an individual of his own assessment towards

that behavior for its benefit or usage. Therefore, the attitude is the individual's personal favorable or unfavorable evaluating of the intention to become an entrepreneur. **Krueger et al. (2000)** in a study stated that by understanding the gender differences, entrepreneurial intentions can be easily understandable. The gender gap in entrepreneurial attitudes in higher education has been quite extensively studied, with women demonstrating less intention to undertake entrepreneurial activity (**Einolander et al., 2020**). The age is an important aspect, with students' and entrepreneurial intentions declines as the academic cycle advances and contact with the working world approaches (**Salcedo Muñoz et al., 2018**). An entrepreneurial firm is one that "engages in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with 'proactive' innovations, beating competitors to the punch". In his view "innovativeness," "risk taking," and "proactiveness" are the key factors of entrepreneurial firms (**Miller, 1983; Covin and Slevin, 1989; Naman and Slevin, 1993**).

The need for an entrepreneur to obtain or acquire certain skills for him/her to be successful cannot be over emphasized. **Ibrahim and Lucky (2014)** in a study defined skill as the ability and capacity to do something. **Wickham (2006)** also defined skill as the knowledge that is best described by an action. The word "skill" is synonymous with any of the following words; "ability," "competence," "knack," "aptitude" and "talent" and its interpretation varies according to languages. **Adeyemo (2009)** in his study to understand the entrepreneurial skills acquisition through a case study reported that teachers who want to become entrepreneurs must possess entrepreneurial skills. In his on-view teachers with entrepreneurial skill tends to contribute more in terms of educating students on the need for them to engage in entrepreneurship irrespective of their discipline. That is to say there is a strong correlation between entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intention.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was conducted among the undergraduate students of college of Agriculture, G. B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. A well-structured interview schedule was prepared and In-depth interview along with questionnaire in electronic format i.e. google for was used as data collection tools. A sample size of 50 students

was selected randomly from all the four years of Undergraduate degree. Cross-sectional research design was used in the study to collect and analyze the data. Sample of the students was selected using probability sampling technique. The total score on each aspect of the variables was calculated and categorized into low, medium and high level of classification. The study was conducted with an aim to know the effect of education on entrepreneurial skills of the respondents. The data or information collected was analyzed using different statistical tools as mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Entrepreneurial Skills of undergraduate Agriculture Students

Characteristics Category	Frequency	Percentage
Year		
First Year	15	30.00
Second Year	18	36.00
Third Year	9	18.00
Fourth Year	8	16.00
Gender		
Male	28	56.00
Female	22	44.00
Need for Achievement		
Low (up to 10)	8	16.00
Medium (between 10 to 17)	25	50.00
high (more than 17)	17	34.00
Innovativeness		
Low (up to 5)	9	18.00
Medium (between 15 to 22)	32	64.00
high (more than 20)	9	18.00
Decision Making ability		
Low (up to 10)	13	26.00
Medium (between 10 to 17 members)	22	44.00
High (more than 17)	15	30.00
Problem solving ability		
Low (up to 12)	6	12.00
Medium (between 12 to 18)	33	66.00
High (more than 18)	11	22.00
Skills Management		
Low (up to 13)	8	16.00
Medium (between 13 to 18)	32	64.00
High (more than 18)	10	20.00

This section of the paper shows the quantitative results of the analyzed data. A total of fifty responses were collected randomly from the undergraduate students of G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and technology, Pantnagar, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. The profile characteristics of the respondents were analyzed from the perspectives of age gender and the year of graduation. The present research classified respondents on the basis of their affiliation to Need for achievement, Innovativeness, Decision making ability, Problem solving ability and skills management. The results obtained in the study are tabulated as follows:

The result in the table reflects that the majority of the responses were received from the second and first year respectively. Slightly more than half of the respondents were boys followed by the girls. **Krueger et al. (2008)** in a study stated that by understanding the gender differences, entrepreneurial intentions can be easily understandable. From the results it is evident that for about 50.00 percent of the respondents had medium level of need for achievement and 64 percent of them have medium level of innovativeness. **According to Miller (1983)** "innovativeness," "risk taking," and "proactiveness" are the key factors of entrepreneurial firms. The Table 1.0 also depicts that moderate number of undergraduate students (44%) have medium level of decision-making ability, whereas, 33 percent of the undergraduate student have medium level of problem-solving ability. When it comes to skills management around 64 percent of the respondents had medium extent of skills management. The findings of entrepreneurial skills management are in line with the study conducted by **Adeyemo (2009)** which stated that to understand the entrepreneurial skills acquisition through a case study reported that those who want to become entrepreneurs must possess entrepreneurial skills.

CONCLUSIONS

The implications of the present study can be used for policy makers and educators to add value to the entrepreneurship course syllabus within the higher education institutions. The contribution of entrepreneurship education at undergraduate level was investigated. The study reveals that the undergraduate entrepreneurship education course indeed contributed toward enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of undergraduate science, technical and vocational education.

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