

Exploring factors affecting Entrepreneurial attitude of University Students

Abstract

Aim: Explore and analyse the factors affecting entrepreneurial attitude of university students

Research Design: Ex-post facto research design

Sample: Post graduate and Doctoral scholars of University

Methodology: A structured questionnaire was developed and applied as data collection tool to 751 students for this study.

Results: Respondents generally exhibit a high need for achievement (83.25%) characterized by strong planning, resilience, willingness to sacrifice for goals, and openness to innovation. Variations in responses, particularly regarding problem-solving abilities, highlight areas where some respondents might benefit from additional support or training. Notable percentage of undecided respondents regarding the intention to start a company (34.00%) indicates that while there is a strong inclination towards entrepreneurship, some respondents may still be weighing their options or facing uncertainties.

Key words: Students, Entrepreneurship, Need for achievement, Self-efficacy, Entrepreneurial Intention, Attitude.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely regarded as a key driver of economic development and innovation, making it a critical area of focus within higher education. University students, often seen as potential future entrepreneurs, form a significant group whose entrepreneurial attitudes are shaped by various internal and external factors. Understanding these factors is essential in promoting entrepreneurial activity, as attitudes toward entrepreneurship are strong predictors of entrepreneurial intentions and behavior (Liñán & Chen, 2009).

The entrepreneurial attitude of students is influenced by several factors, including personal traits such as risk-taking propensity, self-efficacy, and creativity (Kolvereid, 1996). Beyond individual characteristics, environmental factors like family background, access to financial resources, and entrepreneurial education play crucial roles. Exposure to entrepreneurship education, in particular, has been shown to positively affect students' attitudes and intentions toward entrepreneurship by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge (Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006).

Additionally, social influences, such as peer networks and societal norms, have been found to shape students' entrepreneurial intentions (Turker & Selcuk, 2009). The broader economic environment and institutional support systems within universities also contribute to shaping entrepreneurial attitudes. According to Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are key determinants of entrepreneurial intentions, further highlighting the importance of both individual and contextual factors.

By examining these influencing factors, universities and policymakers can create targeted interventions to foster a more entrepreneurial mindset among students. Enhancing the entrepreneurial attitude of university students is not only crucial for the students themselves but also for the broader economy, as they represent the next generation of innovators and business leaders.

Statement of the problem

The study aimed to explore and analyse the factors affecting entrepreneurial attitude of the University students.

Specifically, this study has the following questions:

What is the level of entrepreneurial attitude in terms of?

- Need for achievement
- Self-efficacy level of entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurial Intention
- Attitude towards Entrepreneurship

Studying entrepreneurial attitudes helps in nurturing critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills among students, preparing them for diverse career paths. Keeping in mind the study was undertaken with the following objective.

1. To explore and analyze the factors affecting entrepreneurial attitude of university students.

Methodology

An Ex-post facto research, was employed for this study since the aim is to describe and analyze the entrepreneurial attitude of the postgraduate students. Having no control over the variables stands as the main characteristic of Ex-post facto and it reports what has happened or what is happening. A structured questionnaire was developed and applied as data collection tool for this study. Pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the Questionnaire. Questionnaire has been sent to Post graduate and Doctoral scholars. The entire population of 751 students was taken as the sample for the study.

Result and Discussions

The factors influencing entrepreneurial attitude are analyzed and results are presented below.

Table 1. Need for achievement (n=751)

S. No.	Statement	Responses									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	I will plan my daily schedule as target to attain my final goal	137	34.25	200	50.00	51	12.75	9	2.25	3	0.75
2	Though I fail, I won't quit	173	43.25	167	41.75	39	9.75	15	3.75	6	1.50
3	I will sacrifice little happiness to achieve my goal	167	41.75	166	41.50	40	10.00	24	6.00	3	0.75
4	I am not bold enough to face the difficulties that arise in managing my enterprise or start-up	45	11.25	112	28.00	73	18.25	88	22.00	82	20.50
5	I will adopt new ideas and be unique.	212	53.00	161	40.25	21	5.25	6	1.50	0	0.00

According to Zhao *et al.* (2005), people having higher risk propensity will be more confident confronting risky situations and viewing uncertain circumstances as less risky than other individuals. The provided data highlights respondents' attitudes towards various aspects of the need for achievement. This psychological trait reflects an individual's drive to achieve goals and their persistence in the face of challenges. The responses to each statement are categorized into five levels: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Statement Analysis

1. **Planning Daily Schedules as Targets to Attain Final Goals**
 - A significant majority of respondents (84.25%) either strongly agree (34.25%) or agree (50.00%) with the importance of planning their daily schedules as targets to attain their final goals. This suggests that most respondents recognize the value of structured planning in achieving long-term objectives. Only a small fraction (3.00%) disagrees or strongly disagrees, indicating minimal opposition to this structured approach.
2. **Persistence Despite Failure**
 - A notable 85.00% of respondents either strongly agree (43.25%) or agree (41.75%) that they will not quit despite experiencing failure. This high level of agreement indicates a strong resilience and determination among the respondents. Only 5.25% disagree or strongly disagree, reflecting a minor portion of respondents who may struggle with persistence in the face of setbacks.
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3. **Sacrificing Small Happiness for Goal Achievement**

- Similarly, 83.25% of respondents either strongly agree (41.75%) or agree (41.50%) with the idea of sacrificing small pleasures to achieve their goals. This demonstrates a widespread willingness to forego immediate gratification for long-term success. A small percentage (6.75%) disagrees or strongly disagrees, suggesting that most respondents prioritize their goals over short-term happiness.
4. **Facing Difficulties in Managing Enterprises or Start-ups**
- Responses to this statement are more varied, with only 39.25% agreeing (28.00%) or strongly agreeing (11.25%) that they are not bold enough to face difficulties in managing enterprises or start-ups. In contrast, 42.50% disagree (22.00%) or strongly disagree (20.50%) with this statement, indicating a significant portion of respondents feel confident in their ability to handle challenges. Additionally, 18.25% are undecided, reflecting some uncertainty among respondents about their boldness in entrepreneurial ventures.
5. **Adopting New Ideas and Being Unique**
- An overwhelming majority of respondents (93.25%) either strongly agree (53.00%) or agree (40.25%) with the importance of adopting new ideas and being unique. This suggests that innovation and uniqueness are highly valued among respondents. No respondents strongly disagree, and only a minimal percentage (1.50%) disagree, indicating broad support for creativity and innovation.

The data indicates that respondents generally exhibit a high need for achievement, characterized by strong planning, resilience, willingness to sacrifice for goals, and openness to innovation. However, there is some variation in confidence levels regarding facing entrepreneurial challenges, with a notable minority expressing doubt about their boldness. This information can be valuable for understanding the motivational drivers of the respondents, particularly in contexts such as education, entrepreneurship, and personal development programs. Karimi et al. (2017) stated that personality factors, including the need for achievement, risktaking and locus of control, indirectly affect the intentions towards entrepreneurship of Iranian students through the entrepreneurial attitudes and Planned Behaviour Change.

Table 2. Self-efficacy level of entrepreneurs (n=751)

S. No.	Statement	Responses									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Even if I fail in my attempt, I will try to learn from it and try different actions to overcome an obstacle	212	53.00	161	40.25	21	5.25	6	1.50	0	0.00
2	I like to pursue	143	35.75	214	53.50	28	7.00	15	3.75	0	0.00

	challenging goals										
3	I have the desire to have high earnings	195	48.75	151	37.75	54	13.50	0	0.00	0	0.00
4	I will learn new skills to satisfy the customer needs and be a best entrepreneur	179	44.75	200	50.00	18	4.50	0	0.00	3	0.75
5	I have the problem solving ability	125	31.25	172	43.00	60	15.00	24	6.00	19	4.75

The provided data examines the self-efficacy levels of entrepreneurs through their responses to various statements. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. High self-efficacy can significantly influence motivation, performance, and resilience in entrepreneurial ventures.

Statement Analysis

1. Learning from Failure and Trying Different Actions

- o A significant majority of respondents (93.25%) either strongly agree (53.00%) or agree (40.25%) that they will try to learn from their failures and take different actions to overcome obstacles. This high level of agreement indicates that most respondents possess a strong resilience and adaptive approach towards failure. Only a small fraction (1.50%) disagrees, suggesting minimal resistance to learning from setbacks.

2. Pursuing Challenging Goals

- o An overwhelming 89.25% of respondents either strongly agree (35.75%) or agree (53.50%) that they like to pursue challenging goals. This high level of agreement suggests that most respondents are motivated by and attracted to challenging objectives. A minimal percentage (3.75%) disagrees, indicating that the majority are goal-oriented and driven by challenges.

3. Desire for High Earnings

- o A substantial 86.50% of respondents either strongly agree (48.75%) or agree (37.75%) with having a desire for high earnings. This reflects a common entrepreneurial trait of striving for financial success. Interestingly, no respondents disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting that financial incentives are a significant motivating factor for all respondents. A notable portion (13.50%) is undecided, which might reflect varying levels of prioritization of financial goals among the respondents.

4. Learning New Skills to Satisfy Customer Needs

- o A considerable majority (94.75%) either strongly agree (44.75%) or agree (50.00%) with the importance of learning new skills to satisfy customer needs and becoming the best entrepreneur. This indicates a high level of commitment to continuous learning and customer satisfaction among respondents. Only a negligible percentage (0.75%) strongly disagrees, emphasizing a widespread acknowledgment of the importance of skill development.

5. Problem-Solving Ability

- A majority (74.25%) either strongly agree (31.25%) or agree (43.00%) that they have problem-solving abilities. This suggests that most respondents are confident in their capability to address and resolve issues. However, a notable 15.00% are undecided, and a combined 10.75% disagree (6.00%) or strongly disagree (4.75%), indicating that some respondents may have reservations about their problem-solving skills.

The data reveals a generally high level of self-efficacy among respondents, with strong beliefs in their ability to learn from failure, pursue challenging goals, desire high earnings, continuously learn new skills, and solve problems. These traits are essential for entrepreneurial success and suggest that the respondents are well-prepared to face the demands of entrepreneurship. However, the variations in responses, particularly regarding problem-solving abilities, highlight areas where some respondents might benefit from additional support or training. Enhancing problem-solving skills and reinforcing self-efficacy in this area could further bolster their overall entrepreneurial effectiveness.

Overall, the data underscores the importance of resilience, goal orientation, financial motivation, continuous learning, and problem-solving as key components of entrepreneurial self-efficacy among the respondents.

The results are supported with Cognitive and personality factors, such as self-efficacy, individual attitudes, desire for achievement and behavioral control, have significant influence on students' intentions towards entrepreneurship (Nasip et al. 2017; Shah and Soomro 2017; Biswas and Verma 2021).

**Table
(n=751)**

3.

Entrepreneurial

Intention

S. No.	Statement	Responses									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	I firmly intend to start a company in the future.	119	29.75	127	31.75	136	34.00	15	3.75	3	0.75
2	I am ready to strive hard to satisfy my customer needs	109	27.25	237	59.25	51	12.75	3	0.75	0	0.00
3	I will certainly adapt new ideas to be unique as an entrepreneur	155	38.75	203	50.75	39	9.75	3	0.75	0	0.00
4	To sustain among the competitors, the products should be available at reasonable price and good quality	191	47.75	188	47.00	21	5.25	0	0.00	0	0.00
5	An entrepreneur should be ready to take risks whenever necessary	197	49.25	179	44.75	24	6.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
6	There should be alternate plan to manage at the time of contingency	177	44.25	187	46.75	36	9.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
7	Customer satisfaction and company growth should be the two things on focus	185	46.25	188	47.00	24	6.00	3	0.75	0	0.00

According to Bird's model (1988), a person establishes intentions towards entrepreneurship based on both contextual and personal characteristics. The provided data presents insights into the entrepreneurial intentions of respondents by examining their agreement with various statements related to starting a company, customer satisfaction, innovation, competition, risk-taking, contingency planning, and company growth. Understanding these intentions is crucial for gauging the entrepreneurial mindset and readiness among the respondents.

Statement Analysis

1. **Intention to Start a Company**

- A combined 61.50% of respondents either strongly agree (29.75%) or agree (31.75%) with the statement that they firmly intend to start a company in the future. However, 34.00% are undecided, indicating that a significant portion is still uncertain about their entrepreneurial intentions. Only 4.50% disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting minimal outright rejection of the idea.

2. **Striving to Satisfy Customer Needs**

- A vast majority, 86.50%, either strongly agree (27.25%) or agree (59.25%) that they are ready to strive hard to satisfy customer needs. This high level of agreement underscores the importance respondents place on customer satisfaction as a core aspect of their entrepreneurial endeavors. Only a small percentage (0.75%) disagrees, reflecting broad consensus on the importance of customer-centric efforts.

3. **Adopting New Ideas for Uniqueness**

- An overwhelming 89.50% of respondents either strongly agree (38.75%) or agree (50.75%) that they will adopt new ideas to be unique as entrepreneurs. This high level of agreement suggests a strong inclination towards innovation and differentiation. Only a minimal fraction (0.75%) disagrees, indicating near-universal support for the importance of uniqueness in entrepreneurship.

4. **Reasonable Pricing and Good Quality**

- Virtually all respondents (94.75%) either strongly agree (47.75%) or agree (47.00%) that sustaining competition requires offering products at reasonable prices and good quality. This indicates a broad recognition of the fundamental principles of competitive advantage. No respondents disagreed, showing a unanimous understanding of this essential business strategy.

5. **Risk-Taking Readiness**

- A substantial 94.00% of respondents either strongly agree (49.25%) or agree (44.75%) that an entrepreneur should be ready to take risks whenever necessary. This high agreement reflects a strong acceptance of risk-taking as an inherent part of entrepreneurship. No respondents disagreed, highlighting a universal acknowledgment of the importance of risk-taking.

6. **Contingency Planning**

- Similarly, 91.00% of respondents either strongly agree (44.25%) or agree (46.75%) that there should be an alternate plan to manage contingencies. This high level of agreement suggests that most respondents recognize the importance of being prepared for unexpected challenges. None of the respondents disagreed, indicating a unanimous understanding of the need for contingency planning.

7. **Focus on Customer Satisfaction and Company Growth**

- A combined 93.25% of respondents either strongly agree (46.25%) or agree (47.00%) that customer satisfaction and company growth should be the two main focuses. This high agreement indicates that respondents prioritize these twin objectives in their entrepreneurial intentions. Only a small fraction (0.75%) disagrees, underscoring broad consensus on these priorities.

Rational Intention Theory developed by (Vroom (1964) states that conscious choice of an individual to maximize satisfaction and minimize adversity will lead to a person's behavior. The data reveals a generally strong entrepreneurial intention among respondents, with high levels of agreement on key aspects such as customer satisfaction, innovation, competitive strategy, risk-taking, contingency planning, and dual focus on customer satisfaction and company growth. These findings suggest that respondents are well-aligned with essential entrepreneurial principles and exhibit a readiness to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. Cognitive and personality factors, such as self-efficacy, individual attitudes, desire for achievement and behavioral control, have significant influence on students' intentions towards entrepreneurship (Nasip et al. 2017; Shah and Soomro 2017; Biswas and Verma 2021)

However, the notable percentage of undecided respondents regarding the intention to start a company (34.00%) indicates that while there is a strong inclination towards entrepreneurship, some respondents may still be weighing their options or facing uncertainties. Addressing these uncertainties through targeted support, education, and mentorship could help solidify their entrepreneurial intentions.

Overall, the data highlights a robust entrepreneurial spirit among respondents, characterized by a commitment to innovation, customer satisfaction, competitive strategy, risk management, and growth-oriented focus. These attributes are vital for entrepreneurial success and suggest a positive outlook for their potential entrepreneurial endeavors.

Table 4. Attitude towards Entrepreneurship (n=751)

S. No.	Statement	Response									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Becoming an entrepreneur is my aim	89	22.25	97	24.25	172	43.00	39	9.75	3	0.75
2	I can provide employment to others	112	28.00	180	45.00	96	24.00	12	3.00	0	0.00
3	I want to be a change agent in the society	110	27.50	203	50.75	72	18.00	15	3.75	0	0.00
4	I want to gain recognition and respect as an entrepreneur	106	26.50	158	39.50	118	29.50	18	4.50	0	0.00
5	I like to lead and influence others	98	24.50	212	53.00	69	17.25	18	4.50	3	0.75
6	I would like to have a balance and flexible schedule for my work and private	148	37.00	207	51.75	33	8.25	9	2.25	3	0.75

	life										
7	I am passionate about learning and like to take risks	134	33.50	209	52.25	48	12.00	9	2.25	0	0.00
8	The high employment rate has prompted me to seriously think about starting my own business	79	19.75	185	46.25	106	26.50	30	7.50	0	0.00
9	I like to achieve a higher position for myself in society	161	40.25	193	45.25	33	8.25	10	2.50	3	0.75
10	Entrepreneurship cannot be taught	91	22.75	143	35.75	93	23.25	52	13.00	21	5.25

The provided data explores respondents' attitudes towards various aspects of entrepreneurship, including their aspirations, perceived societal roles, desire for recognition, leadership tendencies, work-life balance preferences, passion for learning and risk-taking, and views on the teachability of entrepreneurship. These attitudes provide insights into the respondents' overall disposition towards entrepreneurial ventures.

Statement Analysis

1. **Becoming an Entrepreneur is My Aim**
 - Only 46.50% of respondents either strongly agree (22.25%) or agree (24.25%) that becoming an entrepreneur is their aim, while a significant 43.00% are undecided. This indicates a considerable level of uncertainty among respondents regarding entrepreneurship as a career goal. A smaller proportion (10.50%) disagrees or strongly disagrees.
2. **Providing Employment to Others**
 - A combined 73.00% of respondents either strongly agree (28.00%) or agree (45.00%) that they can provide employment to others, suggesting a strong belief in the potential impact of their entrepreneurial activities on job creation. Only 3.00% disagree, indicating minimal skepticism about this capability.
3. **Being a Change Agent in Society**
 - A substantial 78.25% of respondents either strongly agree (27.50%) or agree (50.75%) with the desire to be a change agent in society. This high level of agreement reflects a strong social motivation behind entrepreneurial intentions. Only a small fraction (3.75%) disagrees, indicating broad support for the societal impact of entrepreneurship.
4. **Gaining Recognition and Respect as an Entrepreneur**
 - A significant 66.00% of respondents either strongly agree (26.50%) or agree (39.50%) that they want to gain recognition and respect as entrepreneurs. However, a notable 29.50% are undecided, suggesting that while many value recognition, others may have different motivations or are unsure about this aspect.
5. **Leading and Influencing Others**

- A majority of respondents (77.50%) either strongly agree (24.50%) or agree (53.00%) that they like to lead and influence others, indicating a strong inclination towards leadership roles. Only a small proportion (5.25%) disagrees, reflecting widespread confidence in their leadership abilities.
6. **Balancing Work and Private Life**
 - An overwhelming 88.75% of respondents either strongly agree (37.00%) or agree (51.75%) that they would like to have a balance and flexible schedule for work and private life. This high level of agreement underscores the importance of work-life balance in their entrepreneurial aspirations. Only 3.00% disagree or strongly disagree.
 7. **Passion for Learning and Risk-Taking**
 - A significant 85.75% of respondents either strongly agree (33.50%) or agree (52.25%) that they are passionate about learning and like to take risks. This high level of agreement indicates a strong entrepreneurial mindset characterized by continuous learning and risk tolerance. None of the respondents disagrees, showing unanimous support for this attitude.
 8. **Impact of High Employment Rate on Entrepreneurial Thinking**
 - A combined 66.00% of respondents either strongly agree (19.75%) or agree (46.25%) that the high employment rate has prompted them to seriously consider starting their own business. However, 26.50% are undecided, reflecting that while economic conditions influence entrepreneurial intentions, they are not the sole driving factor.
 9. **Achieving a Higher Position in Society**
 - A majority of respondents (85.50%) either strongly agree (40.25%) or agree (45.25%) that they like to achieve a higher position for themselves in society. This high level of agreement suggests that social status and personal advancement are significant motivators. Only a small fraction (3.25%) disagrees or strongly disagrees.
 10. **Teachability of Entrepreneurship**
 - Responses to this statement are more divided, with 58.50% either strongly agreeing (22.75%) or agreeing (35.75%) that entrepreneurship cannot be taught, while 23.25% are undecided. A notable 18.25% disagree or strongly disagree, indicating differing opinions on the formal education of entrepreneurial skills.

The data indicates generally positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship among respondents, with strong inclinations towards leadership, social impact, job creation, work-life balance, learning, and risk-taking. These attitudes are crucial for fostering entrepreneurial success and indicate a robust entrepreneurial potential among the respondents. Luthje and Franke (2003) indicated that the components of personality traits, including risk-taking propensity and internal locus of control, have a significant influence on attitude towards entrepreneurship, hence indirectly impacting the intention to establish a new business.

However, the significant levels of indecision, particularly regarding the aim of becoming an entrepreneur and the teachability of entrepreneurship, highlight areas where further support, education, and encouragement might be needed to solidify entrepreneurial intentions and clarify the pathways to entrepreneurial success.

Overall, the respondents exhibit a favorable disposition towards entrepreneurship, characterized by a desire for leadership, social impact, personal advancement, and

balanced work-life integration. Addressing the uncertainties and providing targeted support could further enhance their entrepreneurial intentions and capabilities.

Conclusion

From an academic perspective, fostering an entrepreneurial attitude among agricultural students requires a multifaceted approach. Generally, a high need for achievement is characterized by strong planning, resilience, willingness to sacrifice for goals, and openness to innovation. Respondents had a high degree of self-efficacy, strongly believing in their capacity to grow from setbacks, pursue difficult objectives, aspire to high incomes, constantly pick up new abilities, and overcome issues. Respondents had a strong desire to start their own business, and they strongly agreed on several important points, including risk-taking, competitive strategy, innovation, customer satisfaction, and the need to focus on both business growth and customer satisfaction. Academics have a critical role in influencing the future of agribusiness by providing agricultural students with the essential information, skills, and mindset.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A voluminous data may give the broader perspective to this study. Comparative analysis among the different academic domain may be carried out for the detailed investigation.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

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Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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Details of the AI usage are given below:

1. chat GPT

2.-

3. -

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