

PERCEPTION ABOUT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG THE POST GRADUATE STUDENTS OF STATE AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is a vital driver of economic growth, significantly contributing to wealth creation and employment generation. Despite initiatives from support organizations and entrepreneurship development centers, there remains considerable potential to make entrepreneurship a more attractive career option for students nationwide. For this transformation, the youth must shift from being 'job seekers' to 'job creators.' This is particularly relevant for students of Agriculture and Allied Sciences, who have ample opportunities to become "Agripreneurs" (Agri Entrepreneurs). Realizing this potential requires these students to develop a positive entrepreneurial mindset. Understanding the perception of entrepreneurship among postgraduate students is crucial for developing effective educational programs and support systems. This empirical research paper employs a descriptive cross-sectional research design, incorporating published theoretical literature and a communication approach, to examine the perception of entrepreneurship among postgraduate students in the Agriculture and Horticulture faculties at four State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) in Gujarat, India—a state renowned for its entrepreneurial spirit. Using simple random sampling, 300 postgraduate students were surveyed through a structured questionnaire. The results indicate that the surveyed students have a moderate perception of entrepreneurship.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, perception, agripreneurs, economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a process of creation and of realizing values for entrepreneurs (Morris and Jones, 1999). Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the development of economies by fostering innovation, generating employment, and creating wealth. Entrepreneurship can address the issues of unemployment both directly and indirectly. Entrepreneurship is an essential strategy to solve the problems of unemployment prevailing in India (Verma *et al.*, 2018; Devi *et al.*, 2022). Promoting entrepreneurship among youth can heal the issues of unemployment and can make students realise that there exist several alternatives to build their own destiny by opening their own entrepreneurial ventures either in the form of a Startup or any other form of business rather than seeking a decent job. The ever-growing unemployment structure of India has created an awareness among students for developing a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship (Deshmukh and Kadam, 2014, Vaishnavi *et al.*, 2023).

The literature review summarizes findings from various research studies related to this topic. It helps identify existing knowledge about the research problem and highlights areas that require further investigation. Key relevant studies

are summarized below.

Veciana *et al.* (2005) conducted a study comparing the attitudes of university students towards entrepreneurship in Catalonia and Puerto Rico. They surveyed 837 students in Catalonia and 435 in Puerto Rico. Both groups had a positive perception of the desirability of starting a new venture. However, when it came to the feasibility of creating a new company, the outlook was less optimistic. Only a small percentage of students in both regions expressed a firm intention to establish a new company. This suggests that while students see the appeal of entrepreneurship, practical challenges may impact their confidence in pursuing actual business creation. Alstete (2008) while reporting the findings of his pioneering study on aspects of entrepreneurial success noted that positive perceptions of non-monetary features of entrepreneurial activities serve as greater incentives to prospective small business starters, and success is strongly connected to thorough planning in the field. Hence, perception regarding positive and negative outcomes of entrepreneurship matter a lot in entrepreneurial intention of an individual. Kadiri and Reddy (2012) conducted a study on students' attitudes toward choosing self-employment

in agriculture as a career. The results showed that a large majority of the students held positive views and were open to the idea of pursuing self-employment in agriculture. This suggests that many students in the study expressed a favorable attitude towards considering a career path that involves working for themselves in the field of agriculture. Poura *et al.* (2013) investigated the entrepreneurial intentions of university students, specifically focusing on the perceptions of commerce students in the Tehran region. The findings revealed that factors such as gender, age, and students' majors were not significantly linked to their perception about the importance of barriers, motivations, components of an effective entrepreneurial university curriculum, and sources influencing future job choices. Setiawan (2014) concluded that a significant majority of the student participants held high and very high levels of positive perceptions toward entrepreneurship. Khuong and Nguyen (2016) conducted a study on the factors affecting entrepreneurial intention of the students of Vietnam National University: a mediation analysis of perception toward entrepreneurship. As a result, prior entrepreneurial experience, external environment, and perceived feasibility were the three independent variables that significantly affected the positive perception toward entrepreneurship and consequently, they positively affected entrepreneurship intention. Udo-Imeh *et al.* (2016) concluded that the potential impact of educational perceptions on students' entrepreneurial intentions within the engineering field. Khurshed (2017) investigated how students at the University of Central Punjab perceived entrepreneurship. The findings showed that a large number of students had a positive perception about entrepreneurship. Ghetiya *et al.* (2018) uncovered that a significant majority of students (60%) held a highly favorable perception toward establishing agro-tourism as a business enterprise. Meanwhile, 40 per cent of the students maintained a moderately favorable perception. This suggested that a considerable portion of the students expressed strong interest and positive perception about venturing into agro-tourism as an entrepreneurial endeavor. Raj and Murugan (2018) revealed that a significant number of students in the study area held favorable perception toward the concept of entrepreneurship. Ankita and Singh (2019) concluded that the students held a positive perception of entrepreneurship. Additionally, it found that these students expressed a desire to initiate their own businesses. This suggests that the majority of the students in the study exhibited a favorable attitude towards entrepreneurship and expressed an interest in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. Yunandar *et al.* (2019) discovered that the views of agricultural students on entrepreneurship were positively linked to their access to information through the internet, classroom lectures, and traditional mass media. Sharma and Bhuyan (2020) investigated the perceptions of youth regarding

the potential of choosing Agripreneurship as a career. The study uncovered that the youth showed limited interest in pursuing Agripreneurship, perceiving it as unsafe, insecure, and potentially unprofitable. Kumar *et al.* (2024) carried out study on the effectiveness of the advisory system as perceived by the students of PJTSAU," the authors explored students' perceptions regarding the advisory system in place at the university. The findings revealed that the majority of students rated the effectiveness of the system as moderate, indicating room for improvement in terms of student-advisor engagement and support.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To study the demographic characteristics of postgraduate students
- (2) To identify the perception of the post graduate students about entrepreneurship
- (3) To propose actionable recommendations for improving students' perceptions of entrepreneurship

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify the perception of entrepreneurship among postgraduate students at state agricultural universities in Gujarat. Here, the operational definitions of various constructs are as follows:

Entrepreneurial Intention: Entrepreneurial intention is the readiness to start a business, with risk-taking propensity, locus of control and attitudes toward self-employment as predictors. It is a state of mind that people wish to create a new firm or a new value driver inside existing organizations.

Students: This pertains to the Regular Full Time Post Graduate Degree pursuing students of both the years – first and second year of their post-graduation degree in agriculture and horticulture faculties of four SAUs situated at Navsari, Anand, Junagadh, and Dantiwada.

Perception: Here, perception about entrepreneurship among students refers to their interpretation, understanding, and beliefs regarding the concept of entrepreneurship.

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was used in this study to identify perception about entrepreneurship among the post graduate students of state agricultural universities of Gujarat. The study was conducted at a specific point in time, hence it is classified as cross-sectional. Primary data were collected from the students only once, underscoring the cross-sectional nature of the study.

Data Collection

- (I) **Primary data:** - The study is predominantly based on primary data. Primary data were collected from regular full time students enrolled in postgraduate programs (1st and 2nd year) in the agricultural and horticultural faculties of four SAUs located at Navsari, Anand, Junagadh, and Dantiwada.
- (II) **Secondary data:** - Secondary data were also utilized for the study, which involved an extensive literature review, analysis of annual reports from the SAUs in Gujarat, examination of previous research studies, and collection of relevant secondary data from published reports of government departments, research papers, newspapers, books, and internet sources. Secondary data were sourced from various mediums including

books, articles, journals, periodicals, other published and unpublished sources, as well as electronic databases and internet resources.

Sampling Procedure

Simple Random Sampling method, a form of probability sampling was adopted for the selection of respondents. Lottery method was utilized to ensure the random and proportionate selection of respondents from both the agriculture and horticulture faculties. For this, updated sampling frame was available, which made the task of selecting the respondents through lottery method.

In this study, 300 students were randomly selected and surveyed from four state agricultural universities in Gujarat.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of the students

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the students

(n=300)

Sr. No.	Variables	Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	215	72.00
		Female	85	28.00
2	Age of respondents	Below 20 years	0	0.00
		20-22 years	142	47.33
		23-25 years	156	52.00
		Above 25 years	02	0.67
3	Locality of the respondents	Urban	88	29.33
		Rural	212	70.67
4	Parental occupation	Farming	179	59.67
		Govt. Service	53	17.67
		Private Service	52	17.33
		Co-operative Service	03	01.00
		Self-employed	13	04.33
5	Type of family	Joint	117	39.00
		Nuclear	183	61.00
6	Annual family income	up to ₹ 1,00,000	110	36.67
		₹ 1,00,001 to ₹ 3,00,000	98	32.67
		₹ 3,00,001 to ₹ 5,00,000	46	15.33
		₹ 5,00,001 to ₹ 7,00,000	20	6.67
		Above ₹ 7,00,000	26	8.67

Based on the frequency analysis of the responses of 300 respondents, as shown in table 1, demographic characteristics of respondents – students - were classified according to their gender, age, locality, parent’s occupation, type of family, and annual family income. Out of 300 respondents, majority (72.00%) of the respondents were male and only 28.00 per cent respondents were female. Most of the respondents 52.00 per cent fell within the 23-

25 years age group. Additionally, about 47.33 per cent of respondents fell within the 20-22 years age group. Only 0.67 per cent of respondents were above 25 years old, while there were no respondents below 20 years old. The majority of the respondents belonged to the rural area 70.67 per cent and 29.33 per cent were from the urban area. The majority of respondents, comprising 59.67 per cent, reported their fathers’ occupation as falling within the ‘farming’ category.

Additionally, the percentages of respondents whose fathers were employed in government services and private sector services were nearly equal, at 17.67 per cent and 17.33 per cent respectively. A smaller proportion, 4.33 per cent, stated that their fathers were self-employed. Only 1.00 per cent of respondents reported their fathers' occupation as being in cooperative services. In the type of family, the majority of respondents belonged to nuclear families, comprising 61.00 per cent, while 39.00 per cent were from joint families. The majority of respondents, comprising 36.67 per cent, reported an annual family income of up to 1 lakh, followed by 32.67 percent with income ranging from 1,00,001 to 3 lakhs. Additionally, 15.33 percent had income between 3,00,001 to 5 lakhs, while 8.67 percent reported income above 7 lakhs. Only 6.67 percent of respondents had annual family income ranging from 5,00,001 to 7 lakhs. These findings are partially in line with the findings reported by Popescu *et al.* (2016), Kallany and Suresh (2018), Elizabeth and Santhiyavalli (2019) and Soam *et al.* (2023).

Perception of the post graduate students about entrepreneurship

Perception refers to the way sensory information is organized, interpreted and consciously experienced. In this study it is the feeling and understanding of the respondents regarding the entrepreneurship. So, in context to present study, the perception is an understanding and interpretation of respondents about entrepreneurship. Perception about entrepreneurship was measured with the help of well-structured 22 statements. These statements representing five-point continuum with a weightage of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree for positive statements and 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for negative statement respectively. The data regarding perception of respondents about entrepreneurship were collected and grouped into three categories viz., (i) Low (< Mean - SD), (ii) Medium (Mean ± SD) and (iii) High (>Mean + SD) and are presented in table 2 and figure 1.

Table: 2 Distribution of the respondents according to their perception about entrepreneurship
(n=300)

Sr. No.	Categories	Range of indices	Frequency	Percent
1	Low	< 74.84	67	22.33
2	Medium	74.84 – 90.43	194	64.67
3	High	>90.43	39	13.00
Total			300	100.00
Mean = 82.64			S.D. = 7.79	

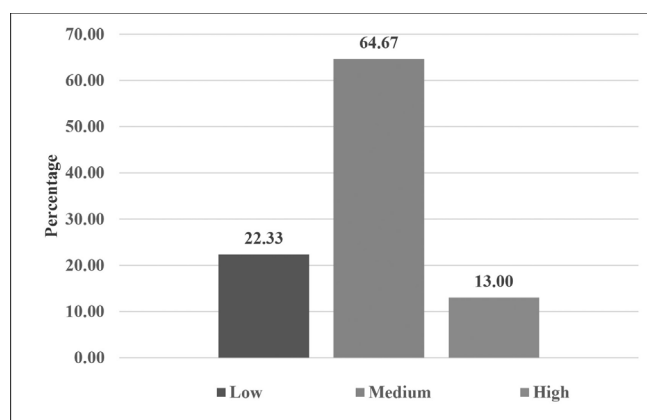


Fig. 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their perception about entrepreneurship

The data reported in table 2 and figure 1 indicate that 64.67 per cent of the students were found to have medium level perception about entrepreneurship followed by 22.33 and 13.00 per cent of them who were found to have low and high level perception about entrepreneurship, respectively.

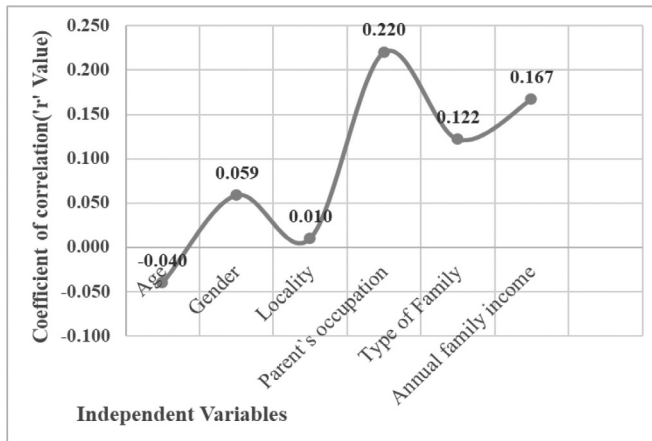
The data clearly indicates that a significant majority of respondents (77.67%) held a medium to high level of perception about entrepreneurship. This could be attributed to the respondents' higher levels of education as they are currently pursuing post-graduation degree and medium to high awareness about entrepreneurship. This finding is in contrast with the finding of Setiawan (2014).

Association between demographic characteristics of the students and their perception about entrepreneurship

It was assumed that some demographic characteristics of the students might be positively or negatively correlated with the students' perception about entrepreneurship. To test this assumption, the relationship between some important demographic characteristics of the students and their perception about entrepreneurship was found out by using correlation coefficient value. The findings are coated in table 3 and graphically presented in figure 2.

Table 3: Association between demographic characteristics of the students and their perception about entrepreneurship (n = 300)

Sr. No.	Independent variables	Coefficient of correlation ('r' value)
X ₁	Age	-0.040
X ₂	Gender	0.059
X ₃	Locality	0.010
X ₄	Parent's occupation	0.220**
X ₅	Type of Family	0.122*
X ₆	Annual family income	0.167**



The data presented in table 3 revealed that parent's occupation (0.220) and annual family income (0.167) had positive and highly significant correlation at 0.01 level of significance with the students' perception about entrepreneurship. Type of family (0.122) had positive and significant correlation at 0.05 level of significance with the students' perception about entrepreneurship. In contrast to the above results, age (-0.040) had negative and non-significant correlation with the students' perception about entrepreneurship, while gender (0.059) and locality (0.010) had non-significant correlation with the students' perception about entrepreneurship.

This finding is supported by the findings of Arora *et al.* (2013), Elizabeth and Santhiyavalli (2019), Andani and Puspitowati (2023), Caliat (2024), Danu *et al.* (2024), Chaudhary *et al.* (2023) and Jagadeeswari *et al.* (2019)

CONCLUSION

The majority of postgraduate students at state agricultural universities in Gujarat hold a positive perception of entrepreneurship, with a significant portion showing moderate to high levels of positivity. Among the surveyed students, 64.67 per cent held medium level perception of entrepreneurship, while 22.33 per cent had a low level perception and 13.00 per cent had a high level perception. Overall, 77.67 per cent of respondents exhibited either medium or high levels of perception about entrepreneurship. This inclination is likely influenced by their education levels and awareness of entrepreneurial pursuits. This positive outlook is likely due to their advanced education and increased awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Students' perception of entrepreneurship should be considered a very important result of this study. To address this, it is recommended to focus on entrepreneurship education and raising awareness

among students, particularly those with low levels of positive perception.

(2) One effective strategy is to incorporate entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum. These courses can provide students with the foundational knowledge and practical skills needed to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am honoured and grateful to the co-author for their support in writing this article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This is to declare that there is "No conflict of interest" among researchers.

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