Entrepreneurial Potential of Women College Students in Tirunelveli

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship serves as a crucial engine for economic development, especially in developing nations like India. Empowering women through entrepreneurship not only enhances their socio-economic status but also contributes significantly to inclusive national growth. This study investigates the entrepreneurial potential among women college students in Tirunelveli, focusing on key traits that influence their inclination towards entrepreneurial pursuits. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 120 students across four women's colleges, representing both arts and science streams. The research examined ten entrepreneurial traits—ranging from innovation and leadership to decision-making and self-concept—using statistical tools such as weighted mean scores and one-way ANOVA. Findings indicate that, on average, both arts and science students scored above the neutral benchmark in most traits, with minor exceptions: arts students scored slightly below in risk-taking ability, while science students showed lower scores in leadership and motivational ability. The ANOVA results revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups in six out of ten entrepreneurial traits. Based on the analysis, the study recommends integrating entrepreneurship-focused programs into academic curricula, establishing institutional Entrepreneurial Cells, and promoting awareness of government schemes supporting women entrepreneurs. Overall, the study emphasizes the need for a supportive educational ecosystem that can nurture and harness the entrepreneurial potential of young women, transforming them into future change-makers.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in the economic advancement of a nation. Particularly in developing countries such as India, fostering entrepreneurship—especially among women—is essential for achieving inclusive and balanced growth through industrialization. Empowering women is a key factor in a country's socio-economic

development, and one effective way to promote such empowerment is by encouraging them to become entrepreneurs. In today's competitive environment, it is crucial to create pathways for college-going women to explore entrepreneurial opportunities.

A trait or competency can be described as a core attribute that contributes to a person's outstanding job performance. Several researchers suggest that successful entrepreneurs often share certain key characteristics. To effectively engage in entrepreneurial activities, individuals must possess specific personal attributes. While some of these traits are common, others are more unique. Those who exhibit the right combination of these traits are generally more capable of launching and sustaining entrepreneurial ventures. Every individual holds the potential for remarkable success, and the tendency to pursue entrepreneurship is influenced by various interacting elements. With this perspective, the present study explores the entrepreneurial traits among college-going women in Tirunelveli, under the title **"Entrepreneurial Potentials of Women College Students in Tirunelveli."**

2. Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of any academic program can often be gauged by the number of students who consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path. Typically, by the time students complete their undergraduate studies—around the age of 21—they are at a critical decision-making stage regarding their future careers. The academic knowledge they gain also exposes them to diverse career options in the job market. During this phase, students enhance their communication abilities, broaden their life perspectives, make independent decisions, and begin charting out their future goals with the guidance of their parents. When entrepreneurial motivation is integrated into their college education, it can spark an interest in self-employment over working under someone else for a minimal wage. Given that women naturally possess many entrepreneurial traits, they are well-suited to enter this domain. Additionally, educating them about government schemes, incentives, and subsidies aimed at promoting women entrepreneurship can further encourage their participation.

Education, at its core, is about fostering mental focus and building character, rather than merely acquiring information. It should help students shape their personalities and empower them to create opportunities by choosing fulfilling careers. Therefore, this research aims to assess the current level of entrepreneurial potential among women college students in Tirunelveli.

3. Objectives of the Study

The principal aim of the study is to evaluate the presence of entrepreneurial traits among female college students in Tirunelveli. It also seeks to provide recommendations for enhancing their entrepreneurial capabilities.

4. Methodology

This research draws upon both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data has been gathered through questionnaires administered directly to college students, while secondary data has been sourced from books, academic journals, and online platforms. Four colleges were chosen for the study: Sarah Tucker College, Sarada College for Women, Rose Mary College for Women, and Rani Anna Government College for Women. From each college, a sample comprising 20 students from arts and 10 from science disciplines was selected, making a total sample size of 120 students.

The entrepreneurial potential was assessed across ten traits, with five variables associated with each trait. Statistical techniques such as the weighted mean score and one-way ANOVA were employed for data analysis.

5. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

There is no single set of characteristics that universally defines an entrepreneur. Rather, it is the blend of various traits that provides an advantage. Entrepreneurs must have the capacity to build teams, offer direction, and inspire others. They also tend to be intelligent, dedicated, and quick to learn. This study evaluates students based on ten key entrepreneurial traits:

- Innovation and Creativity
- Perseverance and Hard Work
- Leadership and Motivational Ability
- Achievement Orientation
- Planning, Foresight, and Problem-Solving
- Interpersonal Skills
- Risk-Taking Propensity
- Decision-Making Skills
- Self-Concept
- Information-Seeking and Receptiveness to Feedback

Each trait includes five related variables. The analysis is carried out in two stages:

- A comparison of the mean scores with a defined neutral point
- Application of a one-way ANOVA to identify significant differences in the entrepreneurial potential between arts and science students

5.1 Comparison of Mean Scores with Neutral Point

Each trait, represented by five variables, is scored on a 1 to 5 scale. Thus, total scores for any trait range from 5 to 25, with a neutral midpoint of 15 (5 × 3). A mean score higher than 15 suggests a notable presence of that entrepreneurial trait among the students. Table 1 presents the mean scores of both arts and science students across the selected traits.

Table 1: Mean scores of the arts and science students on the Entrepreneurial traits

S. No	Entrepreneurial traits	Arts Students	Science students
1	Innovation and creativity	15.32	18.97
2	Perseverance and hard work	17.6	18.06
3	Leadership and motivating ability	18.72	14.93
4	Need for achievement	19.11	15.33
5	Planning, Foresighting and Problem solving	19.33	18.56
6	Interpersonal skills	19	18.18
7	Risk taking ability	14.4	17.36
8	Decision making	17.6	15.04
9	Self-Concept	18.44	15.3
10	Information seeking and receiving feedback	16.33	16.3

It is observed from Table 1 that the average scores for all entrepreneurial trait variables among arts students exceed the neutral benchmark of 15, with the exception of the variable ‘Risk-taking ability.’ This indicates that arts students generally demonstrate the presence of entrepreneurial characteristics. However, the mean score for 'Risk-taking ability' among these students stands at 14.40, which is marginally below the neutral point. Despite this, it cannot be definitively stated that this trait is entirely absent in them.

Similarly, Table 1 shows that science students also score above the neutral point on all entrepreneurial traits, except for the variable ‘Leadership and Motivating Ability.’ The average score for this trait is 14.93, which is slightly under the neutral value. Nonetheless,

this minor deviation does not necessarily imply a lack of leadership and motivational traits among science students.

When comparing the mean scores of entrepreneurial traits between arts and science students, it is found that the highest mean score among arts students (19.33) is for the trait 'Planning, Foresight, and Problem-Solving,' while science students score the highest (18.97) in the area of 'Innovation and Creativity.' The lowest average score among arts students is for 'Risk-taking Ability' (14.40), and for science students, it is 'Leadership and Motivating Ability' (14.93).

5.2 Application of Anova Test

To examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the level of entrepreneurial traits between arts and science students, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. The null hypothesis set for this analysis is: "There is no significant difference between arts and science students regarding the level of entrepreneurial traits." The outcome of the ANOVA test is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Entrepreneurial Traits of Arts and Science Students – Results of One Way ANOVA

S. No	Entrepreneurial traits	Calculated value	Table value	Result
1	Innovation and creativity	4.90	3.84	**S**
2	Perseverance and hard work	1.01	3.84	**NS**
3	Leadership and motivating ability	9.50	3.84	**S**
4	Need for achievement	6.67	3.84	**S**
5	Planning, Foresighting and Problem solving	1.65	3.84	**NS**
6	Interpersonal skills	3.67	3.84	**NS**
7	Risk taking ability	7.50	3.84	**S**
8	Decision making	4.12	3.84	**S**
9	Self-Concept	5.95	3.84	**S**
10	Information seeking and receiving feedback	1.40	3.84	**NS**

Source: Computed data [NS – Not Significant; S – Significant]

It is evident from Table 2 that the computed 'F' values for certain entrepreneurial traits—namely, Innovation and Creativity, Leadership and Motivating Ability, Need for Achievement, Risk-Taking Ability, Decision-Making, and Self-Concept—exceed the critical value at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected for these traits,

indicating a significant difference between arts and science students in the manifestation of these entrepreneurial characteristics.

Conversely, for the traits Perseverance and Hard Work, Planning, Foresight, and Problem Solving, Interpersonal Skills, and Information Seeking and Feedback Reception, the calculated 'F' values fall below the table value at the 5% significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted in these cases, suggesting no significant difference between arts and science students in relation to these particular traits.

1. Summary of Findings

The key findings derived from the study are as follows:

- The average scores for most entrepreneurial traits among both arts and science students are above the neutral value of 15, with two exceptions: *'Risk-Taking Ability'* among arts students and *'Leadership and Motivating Ability'* among science students.
- There is a statistically significant difference between arts and science students in the traits of *Innovation and Creativity, Leadership and Motivating Ability, Need for Achievement, Risk-Taking Ability, Decision-Making,* and *Self-Concept*.
- No significant variation exists between the two groups in terms of *Perseverance and Hard Work, Planning, Foresight and Problem Solving, Interpersonal Skills,* and *Information Seeking and Receiving Feedback*.

2. Suggestions

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Entrepreneurial Cells** should be established in all colleges, staffed with trained professionals to evaluate and nurture students' entrepreneurial abilities.
- **Entrepreneurship-focused courses** could be further integrated into the curriculum, particularly under initiatives like the **Naan Mudhalvan** scheme, to enhance skill development.
- Students should be **motivated to choose research topics** related to entrepreneurship, including small business management and other relevant fields, to deepen their understanding.

- **Regular Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs)** should be conducted in educational institutions to actively promote and enhance entrepreneurial skills among students.

3. Conclusion

Recognizing opportunities forms the foundation of entrepreneurial success. Education that fosters entrepreneurship offers a path to greater empowerment, independence, and social mobility. To support this, academic institutions must evolve into dynamic, results-driven environments that are committed to identifying and nurturing entrepreneurial talent within their student communities.

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