



## Effect Of Socio -Psychological and Demographic Variables on The Entrepreneurial Interest of Agricultural Students

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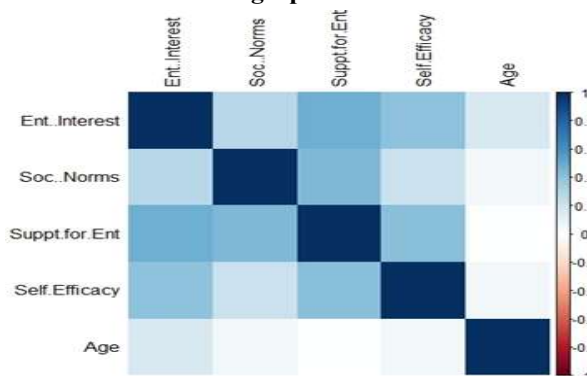
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### HIGHLIGHTS

- Entrepreneurial interest is based on support received from immediate surrounding
- Self-efficacy showcases higher capacity to act as predictor
- Age; the experience in acquiring knowledge and skill necessary to venture is crucial for developing Entrepreneurial Interest

### GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT

Relational Analysis among socio-psychological and demographic variables



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### ABSTRACT

**Context:** Entrepreneurship development is very essential for the development of the nation. The movement of entrepreneurship promotion and development in the past few decades has gone a long way providing tremendous opportunities for agricultural students by opening doors to greater self-esteem, education, and growth. This study acknowledges the vital role of University in inculcating entrepreneurial interest amongst agricultural graduates.

**Objectives:** The study aims to study the entrepreneurial interest of agricultural students and highlights the critical need for understanding how factors influence entrepreneurial interest among youth with higher education.

**Methodology:** This investigation was carried out in the state of Kerala. A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 agricultural students. The study empirically quantifies the relative influence of various factors such as social norms, support for entrepreneurship, self-efficacy, age etc. in inculcating entrepreneurial interest.

**Results and Discussion:** The results point that creation of congenial environment for entrepreneurship through policy and social reforms is equally important as self efficacy of the person to inculcate entrepreneurial culture. Furthermore, comparison of different student groups indicated that practical exposures can have more impact in developing entrepreneurial interest among the students.

**Significance:** Based on the findings of the research, one of the policy options that may be considered for the development of an entrepreneurial culture is to actively foster the entrepreneurial goals of students with relevant practical exposure and hands on training.

India, the world's second-most populous nation, is experiencing a significant demographic transition. Over half of India's population is under the age of 25 and nearly two-thirds is under 35. This demographic dividend presents a unique opportunity for economic prosperity, leveraging the energy and talents of its young population (Channal and Natikar, 2022). However, realizing this potential is challenging, particularly due to persistent unemployment among youth. The involvement of youth in creation of revenue earning assets is paramount, as they represent the future stewards of the land (Acharya *et al.*, 2024).

Entrepreneurship in its conventional view is defined as a creation of an enterprise. But in reality, it is a multifaceted phenomenon (Rehman & Elahi, 2012). By promoting economic, technological, social, and organizational development entrepreneurs have an important role in sustaining an economy. As economic agents they act to provide a wide range of economic and social benefits promoting social empowerment and economic development through job creation (Devi *et al.*, 2021; Elakkiya and Asokan, 2023), transfer of technology from the lab to market, increasing competitiveness and innovation (Dhakre, 2014). Indian economy is also shifting to a fast-paced industrial and service-oriented one from being primarily agrarian (Rathod, 2022). The growth rate of firms has been 12.2 per cent from 2014 to 2018. Hence educational sector needs to address the development of skills required to generate an entrepreneurial mindset among the youth. This would prepare future leaders for solving more complex, interlinked, and fast-changing problems (Rehman and Elahi, 2012).

With the transition from agriculture to agribusiness (Ajith, 2018), there is a need for agricultural education to respond to the requirements of employment, food security, poverty, economic growth, and the sustenance of natural resource quality (Singh, 2012). With graduates seeking white-collar jobs in government departments and not confident enough to pursue self-employment development of a more entrepreneurial mindset which translates into a sustainable enterprise should be the main objective of entrepreneurial education (Lekang *et al.*, 2016).

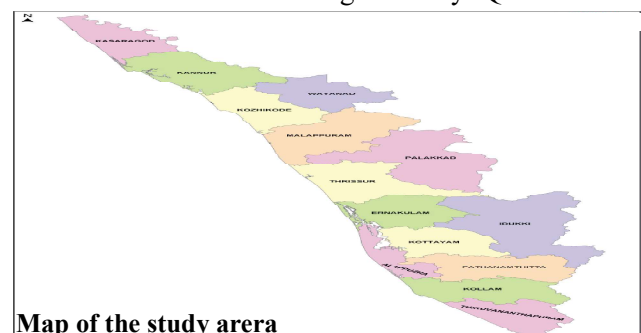
Even though it is believed that Entrepreneurial education is positively correlated with entrepreneurship intentions (Mozahem, 2021), informal institutions like family and contextual forces like social norms are critical in shaping entrepreneurship (Sinha *et al.*, 2016; Gill & Mathur, 2018). In a collective culture like Indian

families, family needs may outweigh the individual predispositions on entrepreneurship. Similarly, capital contributions from families and friends also form the basis of entrepreneurship in many cases (Baughn *et al.*, 2006). The manner in which entrepreneurship is valued in the respective cultural scenarios also influences the entrepreneurial attitude and interest of students (Karimi *et al.*, 2010).

While external factors like education, family, and society show a significant impact on entrepreneurial interest, internal cognitive factors also contribute (Maheshwari & Kha, 2022). The confidence to do a task efficiently and effectively determine the self-efficacy of the individual. This in the entrepreneurial context determines the ability of the individual to successfully create and establish a venture (Maheshwari and Kha, 2022). Even though education plays a huge role in improving self-efficacy (Mozahem, 2021), a psychological transformation mechanism was still required by students to incorporate the skills, knowledge, and experiences gained from the courses into their attitudes (Maheshwari, 2022). The resultant attitude of the students determines the effect on entrepreneurial interest. A positive attitude creates a feeling of security in entrepreneurship and a negative attitude creates the lack of the same (Maheshwari and Kha, 2022). Thus understanding the effects of such socio-psychological variables is important for creating dynamic educational content that supports entrepreneurship skill development.

## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive, quantitative research approach was adopted to assess the impact of socio-psychological and demographic variables on Entrepreneurial Interest. The researcher used a simple random sampling method to select respondents from the state of Kerala (Latitude - 8°18' and 12° 48' N · Longitude - 74° 52' and 77° 22' E). This investigation was carried out in the state of Kerala. With this strategy, every student of both third and final year has the same likelihood of being selected, and random selection ensures high validity. Questionnaire



**Table 1. Internal Consistency measure of selected variable**

Variables	$\alpha$ -value	Attributes
Entrepreneurial interest	0.740	5
Social norms	0.831	4
Support for entrepreneurship	0.829	6
Self-efficacy	0.886	16
Overall	0.911	31

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to socio-demographic attributes**

Variable	No.	%	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Age			22.06	0.981	4.46
Gender					
Male	41	23.2			
Female	136	76.8			
Family Size			4.43	1.02	23.02
Small family (<4)	116	65.5			
Large family (>4)	61	34.5			
Year of admission					
2018	93	52.5			
2019	84	47.5			

**Table 3. Correlations between socio demographic variables with dependent and independent variables**

	EI	SN	SEn	SE
Age	0.164*	0.054	0.004	0.051
Year of admission	0.230**	0.156*	0.107	0.21**
Gender	0.090	0.16*	0.179*	0.104
Family size	0.051	-0.015	0.104	-0.034

Note: Age (Continuous variable) – Pearson correlation, Year, Gender, Family size (Nominal) – Spearman correlation

EI= Entrepreneurial interest; SN= Social norms; SEn=Support for entrepreneurship; SE=Self- efficacy

**Table 4. Correlations between the Entrepreneurial Interest and independent variables**

	EI	SN	SEn	SE
Entrepreneurial interest	1			
Social norms	0.276**	1		
Support for entrepreneurship	0.482**	0.443**	1	
Self-efficacy	0.404**	0.211**	0.418**	1

**Table 5. ANOVA**

	SS	d.f.	MSS	F ratio	Significance
Regression	53.621	3	17.80	25.67	<0.01
Residual	122.38	173	0.71		
Total	176.00	176			

**surveys** were administered to 100 agricultural students presently in the third and final year of their undergraduate program during 2023-24 year. Entrepreneurial interest assessed the desirability and perceived feasibility of starting one's own business. Five Likert statements employed by Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Baughn *et al.*, 2006 measured against a five-point continuum for the variable. Perception of the society regarding the entrepreneurial activity was measured using the construct social norm with four statements. Support provided for entrepreneurial activity was assessed using six items reflecting the approval and support for entrepreneurial activity available from family and friends. Perceived self-efficacy of the students to begin a venture was also measured using sixteen statements under the construct Self-Efficacy. All these constructs were measured on a five-point continuum scale. The relationship between these constructs was analyzed using advanced techniques such as ANOVA and multiple regression. Stepwise regression analysis was done to identify appropriate independent variables for the model.

## RESULTS

*Internal consistency* : Internal consistency among variables was analyzed by using Cronbach's alpha. All the constructs were having  $\alpha$  coefficient more than 0.70 with an overall  $\alpha$  coefficient value of 0.911 (Table 1). This indicated high consistency among the variables under study.

*Socio-demographic variables* : Since all the respondents were students, Age, Gender, Family size and Year of admissions were the socio – demographic attributes measured. The descriptive statistics of these measurements were used to categorize the respondents as in Table 2. The study was conducted between two groups of students differentiated with respect to their year of admission. Around 52.5 per cent of the respondents belonged to 2018 admission indicating that they were in their senior year of UG programme compared to 47.5 per cent of the respondents who belonged to the junior year of UG programme. The results revealed that majority of the students were female (76.8%) and only 41 (23.2%) were male. With a mean age 22.06 and cumulative variance 4.46 indicated that the students under study were a homogenous population with respect to age. More than half of the respondents belonged to small families with a maximum membership of 4 (65.5%) and remaining respondents (34.5%) belonged to larger families which had a more than 4 members.

*Relational Analysis* : As depicted in Table 3, out of the selected socio-demographic variables, year of admission

**Table 6. Model coefficients**

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	1.27 e -15	0.06	2.01 e -14	1.00
Support for entrepreneurship	0.383	0.07	5.48	< 0.001
Self-efficacy	0.236	0.07	3.38	< 0.001
Age	0.151	0.06	2.37	< 0.05

**Table 7. Mean differences of selected variables among the final and third year students**

Variables	Final Year	Third Year
Entrepreneurial interest	16.97**	15.56**
Social norms	12.70*	11.73*
Support for entrepreneurship	21.69	20.83
Self-efficacy	56.96**	52.19**

and age had positive relations with the measured variables and significant relation with entrepreneurial interest. Apart from entrepreneurial interest the year of admission exhibited significant positive correlation with self-efficacy and social norms. The results also indicated that gender had positive and significant relation with variables social norms and support for entrepreneurship. All the independent variables were having positive and significant correlations with entrepreneurial interest (Table 4). The variables' support for entrepreneurship and self-efficacy exhibited a high correlation compared to social norms

Since the dependent and independent variables are significantly correlated a multiple regression equation was developed using continuous variables. Analysis of variance showed that social norms does not have significant impact on entrepreneurial interest. Thus, regression equation was developed using remaining continuous variables and the model has R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.305 and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.293.

$$\text{Entrepreneurial interest} = 1.27 \text{ e } -15 + 0.383 \times \text{support for entrepreneurship} + 0.236 \times \text{self-efficacy} + 0.151 \times \text{age}$$

A t-test was also carried out to find out the mean differences of variables for the two different batches of students. Final-year students showcased the highest mean for all measured variables. Among these, mean differences of entrepreneurial interest, social norms, and self-efficacy were found to be significant at 1 percent level of significance.

**DISCUSSION**

The results suggested that social norms such as policy reforms help create a congenial environment for agripreneurship and create interest in such activities. But the creation and sustenance of such an interest is

more based on the support received from the immediate surroundings and the self-efficacy of the person. According to Mozahem (2021) self-efficacy of the person showcases a higher capacity to act as a predictor for entrepreneurial intentions.

However, the study indicates that the support received from family and friends become crucial in nurturing efficient agri-preneurs and their interest. Especially in the case of female students as evident from correlational analysis. Past research had indicated that entrepreneurship education would have a stronger impact on entrepreneurial intention if there existed a motivation by the passionate and enthusiastic spirit of people closest to them. (Duong & Bernat, 2019; Reddy & Chandawat, 2021). The results of the study is validated by these findings.

The results of regression analysis imply that support for entrepreneurship from the society as well as family have similar impact in generating entrepreneurial interest as well as self-efficacy. So, a person with higher self-efficacy is bound to be an entrepreneur given that person gets adequate support from close ones. Such a congenial environment can only be created through social reforms for changing the existing norms. Furthermore, age indicates experience and this experience help acquire knowledge and skill necessary to venture into an own enterprise. This is in line with the findings of Reddy and Chandawat, 2021 who argues that practical oriented knowledge is conducive to start agri-entrepreneurship.

Relational analysis indicated that senior year students have more entrepreneurial interest, better self-efficacy and awareness about social norms and policy framework through experience. Estimation of mean differences of the entrepreneurial variables among the batches also indicated a clear difference. Both the third-year and final-year students of B.Sc. Agriculture had undergone EDP courses in the curriculum. However, the final-year students of B.Sc. Agriculture undergo additional courses such as Rural Agricultural Work Experience (RAWEx) and Experiential learning, which are functional in nature and horn the skillset of the students. Mozahem (2021) have also suggested that education can alter the self-perception of students related to entrepreneurship and give them the necessary social persuasion. The results which are in line with these findings suggest that effectively created educational curriculum supported by practical and experiential learning strategies help in creating the entrepreneurial mindset much required for the

## CONCLUSION

This study is intended to measure the effect of socio-psychological and demographic variables on the entrepreneurial interest of agriculture students with the help of various statistical tools implied for; the variables selected are entrepreneurial interest, social norms, support for entrepreneurship, self-efficacy and age. The study also indicates that creation of congenial environment for entrepreneurship is equally important as self-efficacy of the person to inculcate entrepreneurial culture. This congenial environment can be created through policy and social reforms. Especially support for entrepreneurship is important in the case of females.

The comparison of means pointed out that the final-year students have a favourable attitude towards the entrepreneurial development than the third-year agriculture students. The results implied that, along with the changes in curriculum providing practical exposures can have more impact in developing entrepreneurial interest among the students.

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*Data availability:* Data would be made available on request

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*Authors contribution:* First and second author is conceptualization, data collection, manuscript drafting, and analysis, third and fourth author is analysis and critical feedback.

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