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A gender perspective study of entrepreneurial competencies of research scholars in agriculture

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Abstract

Students of agriculture can play a crucial role in changing the scenario of traditional agriculture into a commercial enterprise if developed necessary entrepreneurial competency. The study explored the level of entrepreneurial competency and its relationship with socio- academic characteristics of agricultural research scholars of Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur with a gender perspective to examine if there is a significant association between male and female research scholars in relation to their level of competency. The 118 research scholars (68 males and 50 females) studying in any year of Ph.D. in different departments were interviewed with the help of questionnaire developed by Entrepreneurship Development Institute, Ahmadabad. The major findings of the study revealed that the overall entrepreneurial competency of greater part of the respondents was high. Among different component traits of entrepreneurial competency, information-seeking behaviour, commitment to work contract and persistence were important. Socio-academic characters like academic performance, knowledge of government policies related to agriculture and attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship had positive impact and father's education, basic knowledge of communication technology and agribusiness anxiety had negative impact on possession of entrepreneurial competencies for male research scholars whereas for female research scholars, family occupation, family income and attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship had positive impact and agribusiness anxiety had negative impact.

Keywords: Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, entrepreneurial competency, gender perspective, research scholars

Introduction

Agriculture is in a unique position to provide self-employment and means of subsistence for unemployed people in India and Agribusiness is a recent addition to the world of entrepreneurs. To make agriculture more remunerative, it has been accepted as a business, that too more in rural areas, where production system operates. Entrepreneurship is now considered as a major contributor to global economic growth (McStay, 2008) [3]. The overabundance of graduate manpower in the agriculture sector, increase in unemployment in their population and the urge to shift to competitive market-based agriculture has provided a significant ground for greater exposure to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs require a variety of skills in order to successfully manage an enterprise. India being a young country constitutes a major chunk of its population be youth and to tap their full potential we need to empower our youth with the right set of entrepreneurial skills and opportunities. Wickham (2006) [8] defines skill as 'simply knowledge which is demonstrated by action', before going on to add that 'entrepreneurial performance results from a combination of industry knowledge, general managements skills and personal motivation'. However, in contrast to skills and capabilities, the 'competency approach' has emerged as an increasingly popular means of studying entrepreneurial characteristics. Man *et al.* (2002) [2] describe competencies as 'higher-level characteristics, representing the ability of the entrepreneur to perform a job role successfully'. Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) has researched to find out what attributes make an entrepreneur successful and the findings came that possession of a set of entrepreneurial competencies or characteristics is necessary for superior performance. The majority of non-business students are weak in business management and entrepreneurial competencies (Seabela and Olawale, 2014) [5].

Due to a lack of entrepreneurial competency, many agricultural students seem to be unable to reap the benefits of agro-based enterprises. Acknowledgment of these skills and competences makes entrepreneurship a teachable and learnable behaviour (Solesvik, 2013) [7]. Therefore entrepreneurial competency provides a suitable structure for subsequent research amongst students who are willing to take entrepreneurship in agriculture and allied sectors. In spite of the growing number of female entrepreneurs, the share of female entrepreneurship is still significantly low when compared to their participation rate. Published research studies of the female entrepreneur have ranged from psychological and demographic studies to perceived start-up obstacles. This prompted a series of comparative analyses of male and female entrepreneurs to determine if significant differences do exist (Sexton, 2014) [6]. The centre of the research is thus to determine the inclination of agricultural research scholars of Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur towards a set of entrepreneurial competencies developed by the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad with a gender perspective to examine if there is a significant association between male and female research scholars in relation to their level of competency.

Materials and methods

The present study was carried out on a proportional stratified random sample of total 118 research scholars, studying in the any year of PhD in different departments of Agriculture, Horticulture, Agricultural Engineering, Forestry and ABM and information was collected from them with the help of interview schedule specially designed for the study. Ex-post-facto research design is used for this study to trace out the relationship between already occurred independent variables and its probable causes. Entrepreneurship development Institute of India (EDI), Ahmadabad, in order to identify characteristics of an entrepreneur's success, conducted study under the guidance of Professor McClelland, (a well-known behavioural scientist). This was cross culturally validated and finally 13 major competencies were enumerated. These 13 competencies as suggested by McClelland formed the basis for the measurement of competencies in present investigation. The standardised list of component traits of entrepreneurial competency comprised of; initiativeness, activism, persistence, information seeking behaviour, job excellence, commitment to work contract, efficiency orientation, systematic planning orientation, problem solving, self-confidence, assertiveness, persuasion and use of influence strategies. To measure competencies, five statements were developed for each of these 13 traits. Among 5 statements one was negative and other four were positively stated. Likert type scale with very well= 5 score, well= 4 score, somewhat = 3 score, very little= 2 score and not at all= 1 score for positive statements and reverse

scoring for negative statement was used. Thus maximum score for each of these 13 traits was 25 and minimum was 5. To know overall level of entrepreneurial competency, score of each of these 13 traits, consisting of 65 statements was summed up and total score of competency was obtained. Maximum score one can get was 325 and minimum score was 65. To analyse the data mean score, chi-square, rank order correlation in addition to coefficient of correlation was worked out.

Results and discussion

The entrepreneurs are known for their special characteristics which make them entrepreneurs. An entrepreneur may not possess all the characteristics mentioned here, but may possess own set of characteristics. Realizing need to distribution of different components of entrepreneurial competency of research scholars rank-wise, information was collected and presented in Table 1.

The data depicted in Table 1 revealed the rank-wise competencies possessed by research scholars of IGKV to become an entrepreneur. Rank-wise competencies were, viz.; information-seeking behaviour (rank I), commitment to work contract (rank II), persistence (rank III), efficiency orientation (rank IV), job excellence (rank V), activism (rank VI), use of influence strategies (rank VII), planning orientation (rank VIII), self-confidence (rank IX), initiativeness (rank X), tackleness (rank XI), Persuasive (rank XII), assertiveness (rank XIII). The results are line with the findings of Bosompem (2013) [1].

A comparison with a non-parametric test, Chi-square, it was found that there was no association found among the male and female research scholars with respect to Initiatives, Activism, Information seeking behaviour, commitment to work contract, efficiency orientation, planning orientation, assertiveness and persuasion but a significant association was found among male and female research scholars with respect to persistence, job excellence, self- confidence and a highly significant association was found among them with respect to tackleness and use of influence strategies.

Table 2 distributes the respondents according to their overall entrepreneurial competency. The mean score was found to be 286.75. It is seen from the table that more than three-fourth (85.59 %) of the research scholars of IGKV possessed a high level of overall entrepreneurial competency. The gender wise findings also presented in the aforesaid table depicted that more than three-fourth (85.59 %) of the research scholars of IGKV possessed a high level of overall entrepreneurial competency. The results are line with the findings of Misal (2009) [4].

The calculated value of chi-square (χ^2) was found to be 9.443, which is more than its tabulated value (9.210) at 1 per cent level of significance which concludes that there was a highly significant difference between male and female research scholars in relation to their overall entrepreneurial competency.

Table 1: Mean value of component traits of entrepreneurial competency of research scholars

Components of Entrepreneurial Competency	Mean Score		Pooled (n=118)	Chi-square value (χ^2)	Rank
	Male (n=68)	Female (n=50)			
Initiativeness	18.65	17.64	18.15	0.04NS	X
Activism	18.69	18.02	18.36	2.98NS	VI
Persistence	19.06	18.14	18.60	10.84*	III
Information seeking behavior	19.22	19.10	19.16	3.85NS	I
Job Excellence	18.69	18.06	18.38	8.50*	V
Commitment to work	18.66	18.72	18.70	4.59NS	II
Efficiency Orientation	18.60	18.40	18.50	1.94NS	IV
Planning Orientation	18.50	17.92	18.21	4.06NS	VIII

Tackleness	18.44	17.68	18.07	9.38**	XI
Self-confidence	18.34	18.06	18.20	11.09*	IX
Assertiveness	18.25	17.04	17.66	7.78NS	XIII
Persuasion	18.50	17.24	17.87	6.15NS	XII
Use of influence strategies	19.00	17.58	18.29	13.70**	VII

NS, Non-significant, *Significant at 0.05 level of probability; **Significant at 0.01 level of probability

Table 3 depicts the relationship of socio-academic variables with entrepreneurial competency. It is observed from the table that in the case of male research scholars, variables like Academic performance (in U.G.) had a positive and highly significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency and Knowledge of government policies related to agribusiness, and attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship were found to had a positive and significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency; On the contrary, Father’s education and Basic knowledge of communication technology were found to had a negatively significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency; Agribusiness anxiety was found to had a negative and highly significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency. It was also found that Academic performance (in P.G.), Knowledge of different languages, Family size, Family background, Family occupation, Family income, Career aspiration, Risk orientation, the Perceived entrepreneurial climate of the campus, Perceived cultural climate of the campus and Perceived competitive climate of the campus, Age, Mother’s

education, Perceived academic climate of the campus did not play any significant role in increasing their degree of entrepreneurial competency.

In the case of female research scholars, Family income and Attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship was found to have a positive and significant relationship and Family occupation had a positive and highly significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency. Agribusiness anxiety was found to have a negative and highly significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency. Academic performance, Knowledge of different languages, Parents’ education, Family background, Basic knowledge of communication technology, Knowledge of government policies related to agribusiness, Risk orientation, Perceived entrepreneurial climate of the campus and Perceived academic climate of the campus, Age, Family size, Career aspiration, Perceived cultural climate in the campus and Perceived competitive climate in the campus were found to be non-significant to increase their entrepreneurial competency.

Table 2: Distribution of Research Scholars according to their Overall Entrepreneurial Competency

Overall Entrepreneurial Competency	Male Research Scholars (N = 68)		Female Research Scholars (N=50)		Total Research Scholars (N=118)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Very low	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Low	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Medium	4	5.88	13	26.00	17	14.41
High	64	94.11	37	74.00	101	85.59
Very high	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00

\bar{X} = 286.75, σ = 22.407, χ^2 = 9.443** (Significant at 1% level)

Table 3: Relationship between the profile of research scholars and their entrepreneurial competency (n=118)

Independent Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	
	Male	Female
Age	-0.143 NS	-0.112 NS
Academic performance (U.G.)	0.311**	0.119 NS
Academic performance (P.G.)	0.132 NS	0.155 NS
Knowledge of different languages	0.033 NS	0.049 NS
Family size (No. of family members)	0.089 NS	-0.169 NS
Parents’ education (Father)	-0.254*	0.180 NS
Parents’ education (Mother)	-0.186 NS	0.273 NS
Family Background	0.007 NS	0.223 NS
Family occupation	0.075 NS	0.326**
Family income	0.079 NS	0.298*
Career Aspiration	0.009 NS	-0.101 NS
Basic knowledge of communication technology	-0.263*	0.070 NS
Knowledge of Government policies and programmes related to Agribusiness	0.283*	0.149 NS
Risk orientation	0.146 NS	0.236 NS
Agribusiness anxiety	-0.353**	-0.553**
Perceived entrepreneurial climate	0.069 NS	0.065 NS
Perceived academic climate	-0.145 NS	0.019 NS
Perceived cultural climate	0.023 NS	-0.016 NS
Perceived competitive climate (for job)	0.055 NS	-0.056 NS
Perceived competitive climate (for study)	0.103 NS	-0.128 NS
Attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship	0.310*	0.291*

NS = Non-significant

**Significant at 1 per cent level of significance

*Significant at 5 per cent level of significance

Majority of male and female research scholars possessed high level of entrepreneurial competency and there was a highly significant association found between them with regard to their overall competency. Information-seeking behaviour, commitment to work contract, and persistence were the important component traits of entrepreneurial competency perceived by them. In case of male research scholars, Academic performance (in U.G.), Knowledge of government policies related to agribusiness, and attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship were found to had a positive and significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency; On the contrary, Father's education and Basic knowledge of communication technology and Agribusiness anxiety was found to had a negative and significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency whereas in case of female research scholars, Family income and Attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship and Family occupation had a positive and significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency. Agribusiness anxiety was found to have a negative and highly significant relationship with their overall entrepreneurial competency. Thus it can be suggested that provision of assurance against uncertainty and risk found in the establishment of enterprises, flexibility and ease in understanding of government policies, focusing more on practical approach and experiential learning and inclusion of extra-curricular activities related to entrepreneurship can lead to develop them as be a successful entrepreneur.

9. Website of Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India: www.ediindia.org

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