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A Study on Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation of Final Year Agriculture Students

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ABSTRACT: Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO) is a key determinant in shaping the future of agricultural graduates, particularly in fostering self-employment and agripreneurship. This study examined the entrepreneurial attitude orientation of final-year B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture students. An EAO scale consisting of 10 items was developed and administered to 137 final-year students of J.K.K. Munirajah College of Agricultural Science located at T.N. Palayam of Erode District in Tamil Nadu. The findings of the study revealed that nearly half (47.45%) of the students possessed a moderately favourable entrepreneurial attitude, followed by 34.31% with a less favourable attitude. Only 18.24% of the students exhibited a highly favourable entrepreneurial attitude orientation. The detailed analysis of the results and strategic recommendations to enhance students' entrepreneurial mindset are discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Attitude, Agricultural Students, Favourableness, Agripreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

India is predominantly an agrarian country where a majority of the rural population depends on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. As per the Agriculture Census 2015–16, more than 86% of Indian farmers are small and marginal, operating less than 2 hectares of land. However, traditional employment opportunities in agriculture are shrinking due to declining landholdings, stagnant farm incomes, and rapid mechanization. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022–23 also highlights a steady migration of rural youth from farm-based jobs to non-farm sectors. In such a scenario, promoting entrepreneurship in agriculture has emerged as a viable alternative to ensure gainful employment, economic growth, and sustainable development.

The agricultural graduates, especially final-year students of B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture, are the torchbearers of the future farming community. They are equipped with scientific knowledge and technical skills to bring innovation and value-addition into the agricultural sector. As per the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, agricultural universities are expected to play a critical role in fostering agri-entrepreneurship. However, despite being exposed to various entrepreneurial development programmes and agri-business models during their academic curriculum, only a limited number of students show serious intent to pursue entrepreneurship as a career.

The current trend reveals that most agricultural graduates still prefer government or private sector jobs over starting their own enterprises. According to a study by Manjunatha *et al*. (2021), more than 65% of agriculture students preferred secure jobs rather than entrepreneurial ventures due to fear of failure, social pressure, and limited access to financial capital.

The prevailing trend indicates a strong preference for government or private sector employment among agricultural graduates. According to Manjunatha *et al.* (2021), over 65% of agriculture students preferred secure jobs due to fear of failure, social pressure, and limited access to financial capital. Other studies have echoed similar concerns:

Singh *et al.* (2022) found that more than 60% of agricultural students exhibited a moderate level of entrepreneurial intent, with risk-taking ability and achievement motivation being the key influencing factors. However, lack of access to finance and family pressure to take up government jobs discouraged many from venturing into agribusiness.

Meena *et al.* (2023) revealed that only 25% of students showed high entrepreneurial inclination. The Experiential Learning Programme (ELP) was identified as a significant contributor in enhancing business

confidence, but limited market exposure and absence of mentoring remained challenges.

Kumar & Joshi (2021) showed that students from rural backgrounds had a lower entrepreneurial orientation compared to those from urban or semi-urban areas. The study emphasized the need for entrepreneurial education to be integrated from the early semesters, and reported that peer influence and faculty encouragement were positive enablers.

Nandini *et al.* (2020) reported that about 52% of students had a favourable attitude towards agripreneurship. However, fear of failure, low self-confidence, and uncertainty in income were major psychological deterrents. The study recommended structured mentoring and alumni interaction to build confidence.

Rajasekaran & Arul (2024) found that while 70% of students were aware of entrepreneurship schemes like Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (ACABC), only 18% considered entrepreneurship as a career path. The study highlighted that short-term field exposure through RAWE alone was insufficient, and proposed continuous incubation support and real-time business model training for impact.

Despite exposure to entrepreneurial development programmes and agri-business models during their academic curriculum, many students show limited interest in pursuing entrepreneurship as a career. The common barriers identified across these studies include fear of financial risk, lack of start-up capital, absence of role models, and inadequate experiential learning opportunities.

Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO) refers to an individual's predisposition toward entrepreneurial activities and business creation. It comprises components such as achievement motivation, innovativeness, risk-taking, and decision-making ability (Robinson *et al.,* 1991). Understanding the level of EAO among students is vital for designing effective capacity-building programmes, curriculum interventions, and incubation support mechanisms to develop future agri-preneurs.

In this backdrop, the present study was undertaken to assess the entrepreneurial attitude orientation of final-year B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture students in Tamil Nadu. It aims to classify students based on their attitude favourableness and propose strategies to strengthen entrepreneurship education and the ecosystem within agricultural universities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Tamil Nadu is one of the leading states in agricultural education in India, with numerous agricultural colleges functioning under the umbrella of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). These institutions are instrumental in nurturing skilled agricultural professionals capable of driving innovations in farming and entrepreneurship.

For this study, JKK Munirajah College of Agricultural Science, one of the private agricultural colleges affiliated with TNAU, was purposively selected. The college was chosen mainly because the researchers themselves belonged to this institution. The study focused on final-year students of B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture, as they are at the beginning of entering professional or entrepreneurial careers.

A total of 137 final-year students were selected as the sample using the census sampling technique, wherein all eligible final-year students available at the time of the study were included.

To assess the Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO) of students, a reliable and validated scale was developed based on previous studies and standard guidelines (Robinson *et al.,* 1991). The scale consisted of 10 items, including eight positive and two negative statements, covering key dimensions such as innovativeness, risk-taking ability, achievement motivation, and decision-making.

The data was collected using a five-point Likert continuum ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The scoring procedure was as follows: for positive statements, scores were assigned as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, while the scoring was reversed for negative statements.

The data collection was carried out directly from the students through a structured questionnaire, administered during classroom interactions to ensure full participation. After data collection, the responses were tabulated and subjected to percentage analysis and cumulative square root of frequency method to categorize the students into three groups based on their overall EAO scores, 1. Less Favourable Attitude, 2. Moderately Favourable Attitude and 3. Highly Favourable Attitude.

The results were then interpreted to identify the prevailing trend of entrepreneurial mindset among agriculture students and to provide insights for strengthening agri-entrepreneurial education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The attitude of students towards entrepreneurship plays a vital role in determining their willingness to take up agri-based enterprises after graduation. As defined by Thurstone (1946), an attitude is the degree of positive or negative affect associated with a psychological object such as an idea, institution, or belief system. In the context of this study, entrepreneurial attitude orientation (EAO) refers to the degree of positive or negative opinion, feeling, belief, and disposition held by final-year B.Sc. Agriculture students toward engaging in entrepreneurial ventures. The statement wise distribution of the respondents according to their attitude towards entrepreneurship was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Statement-wise distribution of the respondents according to their Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (n = 137)*

Sr. No.	Statements	SA		A		UD		DA		SDA	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	I always set goals and work hard to achieve them	62	45.26	48	35.04	13	9.49	10	7.30	4	2.91
2.	I strive to complete tasks even when they are difficult or time-consuming	55	40.15	49	35.77	18	13.14	10	7.30	5	3.65
3.	I take calculated risks after evaluating possible outcomes	41	29.93	52	37.96	24	17.52	14	10.22	6	4.38
4.	I often fear failure, even if the idea seems promising	33	24.09	47	34.31	21	15.33	25	18.25	11	8.03
5.	I think creativity is essential for success in agribusiness	70	51.09	43	31.39	10	7.30	9	6.57	5	3.65
6.	I often seek new ways to improve existing agricultural practices	58	42.34	51	37.23	15	10.95	10	7.30	3	2.18
7.	I speak clearly and confidently when presenting new ideas	39	28.47	55	40.15	20	14.60	17	12.41	6	4.38
8.	I cannot convince others to support my business idea	16	11.68	33	24.09	19	13.87	48	35.04	21	15.33
9.	I am working to gain the skills required to run a business	61	44.53	50	36.50	13	9.49	9	6.57	4	2.91
10.	I regularly attend events or programmes related to entrepreneurship	32	23.36	45	32.85	26	18.98	22	16.06	12	8.76

*SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, UD – Undecided, DA – Disagree, SDA – Strongly Disagree
*Multiple responses obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was observed from Table 1 that the statement 'I always set goals and work hard to achieve them' was strongly agreed and agreed by 45.26% and 35.04% of the students, respectively. Only 7.30% disagreed and 2.91% strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating a generally goal-oriented attitude among students. Anil Kumar & Mehul Thakkar (2024) reported strong achievement motivation among postgraduate agricultural students, emphasizing continuous improvement and perfectionism as important drivers of entrepreneurial mindset.

The statement 'I strive to complete tasks even when they are difficult or time-consuming' was agreed by 35.77% and strongly agreed by 40.15% of respondents. A small proportion (3.65%) strongly disagreed with the statement, reflecting that most students exhibit perseverance a key trait for successful entrepreneurship.

Regarding the statement 'I take calculated risks after evaluating possible outcomes,' 37.96% agreed and 29.93% strongly agreed. However, 10.22% disagreed and 4.38% strongly disagreed. This indicates that while a significant number of students are willing to take risks, a cautious attitude still prevails among some.

The statement 'I often fear failure, even if the idea seems promising' received agreement from 34.31% and strong agreement from 24.09%, indicating a noticeable fear of failure. 18.25% disagreed and 8.03% strongly disagreed. This fear of failure could act as a barrier to initiating entrepreneurial ventures.

The statement 'I think creativity is essential for success in agribusiness' saw strong agreement from 51.09% and agreement from 31.39% of the respondents, showing a strong belief in innovation as a driver of entrepreneurial success.

For the statement 'I often seek new ways to improve existing agricultural practices,' 42.34% strongly agreed and 37.23% agreed, confirming that most students were innovation-oriented. Only 2.18% strongly disagreed.

The statement 'I speak clearly and confidently when presenting new ideas' was agreed by 40.15% and strongly agreed by 28.47%, while 12.41% disagreed and 4.38% strongly disagreed, indicating that a section of students needs improvement in communication skills.

Among the negative statements, 'I cannot convince others to support my business idea' was agreed by 24.09% and strongly agreed by 11.68%, suggesting a lack of confidence in persuasion among some students. However, 35.04% disagreed and 15.33% strongly disagreed, indicating that a majority believe they can influence others positively.

The statement 'I am working to gain the skills required to run a business' had strong agreement from 44.53% and agreement from 36.50%, showing students are actively trying to enhance their entrepreneurial competence.

Lastly, the statement 'I regularly attend events or programmes related to entrepreneurship' was agreed by 32.85% and strongly agreed by 23.36%. However, 16.06% disagreed and 8.76% strongly disagreed, indicating a need for increased awareness and participation in such activities.

Out of the eight positive statements, most received high agreement, indicating a favourable outlook towards entrepreneurship. However, the two negative statements also received moderate levels of agreement, which highlights areas of concern such as fear of failure, communication confidence, and external support which must be addressed through targeted interventions like skill-building workshops, mentoring, and experiential learning.

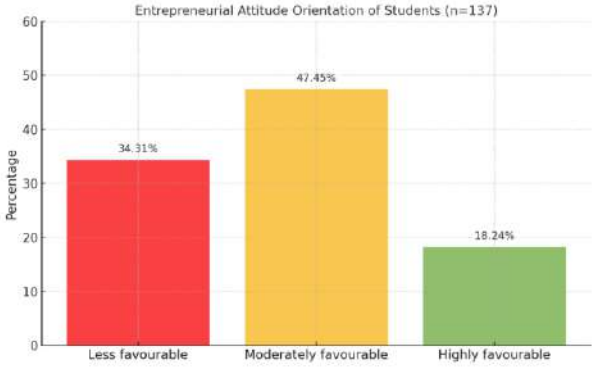
Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their overall Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (n = 137).

Sr. No.	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	Less favourable	**47**	**34.31**
2.	Moderately favourable	**65**	**47.45**
3.	Highly favourable	**25**	**18.24**
Total		**137**	**100.00**

It was observed from Table 2 that nearly half of the respondents (47.45%) were found to possess a moderately favourable entrepreneurial attitude. This indicates that most students have a positive influence of the RAWE programme in the VII semester and Experiential Learning Programme (ELP) in the VIII semester that provided them with hands-on exposure to real-life agricultural practices and enterprise management. Nagar & Kumar (2023) found that agripreneurial behaviour among rural youth was significantly influenced by education, enterprise experience, social participation, extension contact, and attitude towards agribusiness.

A considerable proportion (34.31%) of students were classified under the less favourable category, showing limited inclination towards starting their own ventures. This suggests that despite the RAWE and ELP exposure, factors such as fear of failure, lack of parental support and initial capital, social pressure to secure stable employment, and a strong preference for government jobs continue to influence the entrepreneurial attitude of these students.

Only 18.24% of the students were identified as having a highly favourable entrepreneurial attitude, reflecting a smaller yet significant segment of students who are confident, motivated, and ready to engage in entrepreneurship, potentially with minimal support.



CONCLUSIONS

From the study, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents possessed a moderately to less favourable entrepreneurial attitude orientation. This clearly indicates that while the RAWE (Rural Agricultural Work Experience) and Experiential Learning Programme (ELP) had a positive influence, their impact was not uniformly strong across all students. Many still lacked the confidence, motivation, or readiness to embark on entrepreneurial ventures despite being exposed to enterprise operations and rural realities during their academic training.

The key barriers contributing to a less favourable entrepreneurial attitude included fear of failure, lack of family support, social pressure to secure stable jobs, and a prevailing aspiration for government employment. These constraints overshadowed the benefits of experiential learning in some students. However, it was also evident that a considerable portion of students developed greater clarity about business planning, risk management, and enterprise functioning due to their hands-on experience with farmers, agribusiness models, and enterprise modules.

Entrepreneurial attitude orientation is a multi-dimensional construct influenced by achievement motivation, innovativeness, risk-taking ability, and decision-making skills. The RAWE and ELP programmes have potential to strengthen these dimensions, but only when implemented with adequate mentoring, structured guidance, financial literacy training, and exposure to real-world entrepreneurs. Divya *et al*. (2022) highlighted the importance of market orientation in shaping agripreneurial ecosystems, to elevate entrepreneurial attitude from moderate to high, education must also build market savvy and support infrastructure

As agriculture transitions from subsistence to market-led enterprise, there is an urgent need for higher agricultural education systems to revamp entrepreneurship education. Just as conservation agriculture demands a shift in mindset, entrepreneurial learning must move beyond classroom theory to challenge assumptions, correct misconceptions, and empower students through participatory, problem-solving, and real-life experiences.

It is the responsibility of agricultural universities, extension professionals, policymakers, and private sector stakeholders to collaboratively develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports young graduates especially those from rural backgrounds. Encouraging innovations, facilitating start-up grants, integrating incubators, and celebrating student-led enterprises can go a long way in making entrepreneurship a viable and attractive career choice.

Thus, promoting entrepreneurship in agriculture is not merely about teaching business it is about cultivating a culture of confidence, creativity, and calculated risk-taking among future agriculturists, ensuring that they emerge not only as job seekers but as job creators who contribute to rural economic transformation.

FUTURE SCOPE

The present study highlights the entrepreneurial attitude orientation of final-year agriculture students, reflecting the impact of RAWE and ELP components. Future research can explore longitudinal tracking of students to assess entrepreneurial outcomes, conduct comparative studies across institutions, and analyse gender-based differences. Intervention-based studies and impact assessments of specific modules like ELP can offer deeper insights. This study can also inform curriculum reforms and policy initiatives to strengthen entrepreneurship education and support systems in agricultural universities.

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