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Entrepreneurship intentions of postgraduate agricultural students of SKUAST-K in Kashmir

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Abstract

Large-scale unemployment among the educated groups has become today's basic socioeconomic problem increasing economic instability, aggravating national development and depriving people of the dignity and satisfaction. Thus, considering the context of entrepreneurship in higher education is necessary to keep pace with the challenges of unemployment. The study investigated the extent of entrepreneurial intention and perceptions on the dimensions of entrepreneurial intention among the postgraduate agricultural students of SKUAST-K in Kashmir. Multistage random sampling technique was employed to select the sample of 120 postgraduate agricultural students from the 4 selected faculties. Data were collected using a pretested structured interview schedule. Simple descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. Results revealed that majority of the respondents (72.50%) had medium level of entrepreneurial intention. The statement "I agree that, being an entrepreneur would entail greater satisfaction" with weighted mean score (W.M.S.)-3.99 was viewed as the most favourable attitude while the statement "do you agree that, your friends see entrepreneurship as a logical choice?" (W.M.S.-3.62) was identified as main subjective norm. Further, the statement "if I want I could become self-employed after my studies" (W.M.S.-3.64) was adjudged as strong perceived behavioural control whereas the statement "do you agree that, more entrepreneurial and business educational programmes at campus would help students to start a business?" (W.M.S.-4.26) was seen as chief entrepreneurial education. Among the personality traits, the statement "I like to do/try new things" (W.M.S.-4.29) was entailed highest rank. To achieve the socioeconomic development and livelihood diversification objectives, policy must be directed towards the entrepreneurship development among the agricultural students.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, intention, factors, attitude, SKUAST-K, Kashmir

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a creative and innovative response to environment, thus acting as an agent for the creation of new business and enterprise (Banjoko *et al.*, 2020) [3]. Entrepreneurship is an activity that involves discovering, evaluating and exploiting opportunities in order to introduce products, services, organizing methods, markets, processes, and new materials (Sabuhilaki, 2016) [21]. Entrepreneurship is the application of energy for initiating and building an enterprise (Rufai *et al.*, 2013) [20]. The term entrepreneurship is used to describe the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth (Shailesh, *et al.*, 2013) [23]. Entrepreneurship is actually concerned with creating opportunities and meeting the needs of individuals (Sadashive *et al.*, 2017) [22]. An entrepreneur is a person who starts a business, or businesses, taking on financial risk in the hope of profit (Obayelu *et al.*, 2019) [15]. Entrepreneurship activities can be found in almost every sphere of world, as it has been recognized as the determinant or pivotal element of economic growth and development (Rudhumbu *et al.*, 2016) [19]. This is because entrepreneurship leads to the creation of small and medium scale businesses, providing employment opportunities, income generation, uplifting of standard of living, and utilization of human, material and financial resources of country in the right direction (Sabuhilaki, 2016; Islam *et al.*, 2020a) [21, 8]. Many countries have placed intensive and frantic efforts and programmes towards development of Entrepreneurship (Pulka *et al.*, 2014) [16]. Thus is being defined as the process that creates opportunities for educated youth by achieving financial independence through increased innovation and new business opportunities (Souitaris *et al.*, 2007) [27]. The unemployment scenario that is increasing day by day in most of the countries, even in advanced industrial countries is facing it as a major problem (Shailesh *et al.*, 2013) [23]. Due to this most of the countries policymakers are facing great challenges. As unemployment crises is resulting in threat to all societies, especially unemployment of university graduates who are facing non-compensation consequences in social, economic and political dimension (Shiri *et al.*, 2012) [25]. This problem of unemployment in third world countries, especially in our country is faced with severe condition (Shazia *et al.*, 2020) [24].

High unemployment rates among young graduates creates a wide range of social ills and young people are particularly susceptible to its damaging effects namely lack of skills, low self-esteem, marginalization, impoverishment and wasting of an enormous human resource (Agu, 2013; Islam *et al.*, 2020b) [1, 9]. Thus, it has been resulted as a socio-economic problem and to overcome it there is a need for proper and consistent planning (Ram *et al.*, 2014; Dilip, 2017) [17, 6]. During past decades, because of the positive impact of entrepreneurship many developing countries including India has dragged its serious attention to entrepreneurship as a potential solution to various problems such as lack of efficiency in economy, rising unemployment, increased unemployed university graduates and the inability of private sector and government to create jobs for them (Karimi, 2010) [10]. Since, the entrepreneurial behavior is a result of intentions and desires of the people (Bird, 1998) [4] and based on this fact that, intention is prior to behavior, in this study entrepreneurial intention is considered as the main variable. Entrepreneurial intention is a process of creating something new with a value, particularly responding to the opportunities available (Idris, 2017) [7]. Thus setting one's own business is an example of a planned behavior that is affected by several factors (Chaurasiya *et al.*, 2017) [5]. Entrepreneurial intention of students is influenced by several factors. According to Luthje and Frank (2003) [14], environmental factors can facilitate individual's behavior and its vision of thinking out of box. Hence, the present research is concerned to study those factors which influence the intention of the students towards setting up their own venture with the objective to identify factors that influence entrepreneurship intentions of the students.

Materials and Methods

Sampling procedure

The present study was conducted in the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and technology of Kashmir (SKUAST- K), Srinagar, Kashmir. Sample selection procedure for the study was consisted of purposive sampling of faculties followed by simple random sampling (Ray and Mondol, 2004) [18] of postgraduate agricultural students. Out of seven faculties of the SKUAST-K, four faculties namely, Faculty of Horticulture, Shalimar, Srinagar, Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, Sopore, Faculty of Veterinary & Animal Husbandry, Suhama, Ganderbal and Faculty of Fisheries, Rangil, Ganderbal were selected. Thirty (30) postgraduate agricultural students were randomly selected from each selected Faculty. The final sample size comprised of one hundred and twenty (120) postgraduate students belonging to various selected faculties for the field study.

Data collection

A descriptive survey design was used to collect data from the participants on the variables of present study. It is a research design which states clearly the characteristics of a particular situation or group or individual (Rudhumbu *et al.*, 2016) [19]. The data were collected through personal interviews of the respondents using a well-structured pre-tested interview schedule (Kumar, 2012) [13]. A self-administered interview was used for collection of data to avoid the respondents from being influenced by researchers. The interview schedule employed a 5-point Likert scale. The interview schedule was constructed on the basis of reconnaissance survey of the faculties, discussion with the postgraduate agricultural students, consultation with the experts and earlier related works. The interview schedule possessed entrepreneurial

information on attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, entrepreneurial education and personality traits. Interview in most of the cases were conducted in a group of postgraduate agricultural students in order to get in-depth information. In group setting, the respondents were given enough time to answer the questions and to obtain a high response rate.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics including the frequency, percentage, average, standard deviation and range (Snedecor and Cochran, 1967) [26] were applied to summarize the entrepreneurial information of the agricultural students. The data collected were analyzed on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 16 and the results were displayed through tables for meaningful interpretation and drawing inferences.

Results

Entrepreneurial intention

The results (Table 1) indicated that majority of the respondents (72.50%) had medium level of entrepreneurial intention, followed by (17.50%) had low level of entrepreneurial intention, while (10.00%) of the respondents had high level of entrepreneurial intention.

Attitude towards entrepreneurship

With regards to attitude towards entrepreneurship (Table 2), the highest (Ist) ranked statement was "I agree that, being an entrepreneur would entail greater satisfaction" with weighted mean score (W.M.S.) of 3.99 which was followed by "I agree that, a career as entrepreneur is attractive for me" and "I agree that, if I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a firm" (WMS, 3.90; rank IInd) and "I'd prefer to be my own boss rather than to have a secure job" (W.M.S., 3.82; rank IVth).

Subjective norms

The most important subjective norm of entrepreneurship intention as perceived by the respondents was "do you agree that, your friends see entrepreneurship as a logical choice?" (WMS, 3.62; rank Ist) followed by "do you agree that, people who are important to you, think that you should pursue a career as an entrepreneur?" (WMS, 3.31; rank IInd). The statements "do you agree that, your parents are positively oriented towards a career as entrepreneur?" and "do you agree that, in your university students are actively encouraged to pursue their own ideas?" were also considered prominent subjective norms by the respondents but were ranked IIIrd (WMS, 3.23) and IVth (WMS, 3.18) respectively (Table 2).

Perceived behavioural control

Under the perceived behavioural control category, the statement "if I want I could become self-employed after my studies" (W.M.S., 3.64; rank Ist) received highest priority followed by "I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project" (W.M.S., 3.37; rank IInd). Other statements like "to start a firm and to keep it working would be easy task for me" and "to start a firm would be easy for me" were also considered important factors of entrepreneurship intention but were ranked IIIrd (W.M.S., 2.98) and IVth (W.M.S., 2.68), respectively (Table 2).

Entrepreneurial education

The statement “do you agree that, more entrepreneurial and business educational programmes at campus would help students to start a business’ (WMS, 4.26; rank Ist) was the top factor of entrepreneurial education as adjudged by the respondents. The statements “do you agree that it should be taught in universities?” (WMS, 4.24; rank IInd) and “do you agree that, entrepreneurial subject is very important?” (WMS, 4.14; rank IIIrd) were perceived as next stronger factors for the entrepreneurial intention. The statement “do you agree that, your university course prepare people well for taking entrepreneurship as their career?” (WMS, (3.41; rank IVth) was the lowest ranked factor of entrepreneurial intention among the respondents (Table 2).

Personality traits

Among the personality traits, the respondents gave highest score to “I like to do/try new things” (WMS, 4.29; rank Ist) which was closely followed by “when I travel I like to choose new routes?” (WMS, 4.19; rank IInd). The statements “I will set my own business if I would be able to detect an opportunity” (WMS, 4.06; rank IIIrd) and “I am confident of my abilities and skills to start a business” (WMS, 4.00; rank IVth) were received next highest priority scores in this category.

Discussion

The dominance of medium level of entrepreneurial intention among the respondents could be attributed to middle level education, small and marginal land holding and medium information seeking behaviour. The same findings are somewhat in line with Ahmaruddin *et al.* (2016) [2]. A closer look at the responses to statements for checking the entrepreneurial intention of the students revealed a very encouraging picture. The respondents found entrepreneurship a satisfactory and an attractive career option. They expressed their desire to be job providers than job seekers. An analysis of the responses evoked from the statements showed that

students want to take up entrepreneurship as career option. However, they need to be provided with resources and opportunities. University besides providing technical expertise to the students should have a tie-up with the entrepreneurship institutes like the one (JKEDI) in Kashmir valley. These institutes nurture the ideas of young people and assist them to grow as full-fledged entrepreneurs. Students not only need technical expertise but they need to be skillful in project formulation, risk management, conflict management, finance, marketing and many aspect that are the essential for any business venture. One of the statements revealed that perhaps students were not encouraged to pursue their own ideas. The findings were similar to the results of Turker and Selcuk (2008) [29]. The result of entrepreneurial intention of the agricultural students indicated that the respondents required information on entrepreneurial development in terms of motivation skills, interpersonal relationship skills, social network and interaction skill. There is a multitude of studies across the world (Pulka *et al.*, 2014; Rudhumbu *et al.*, 2016; Kumar, 2017; Kumar *et al.*, 2017; Tiwari *et al.*, 2017; Yadav *et al.*, 2017; Zulfiqar *et al.*, 2017; Banjoko *et al.*, 2020) [16, 19, 11, 12, 28, 30, 31, 3] who emphasized the entrepreneurial information needs of agricultural students. To help the agricultural students to materialize their ideas, their teachers themselves must be proficient in knowing the ways they can do so. Faculty must have zeal for entrepreneurship, must have a purpose /goal of helping their students to convert their ideas into reality. There must be regular training programmes for the faculty also so as to enhance their ability and expertise to motivate students to choose entrepreneurship as career. The University needs to establish liaison with financial institutes so that they can help the students to get credit. They should organize awareness programs to create awareness regarding start-up schemes initiated by the government for youth. Provision of entrepreneurial skills and financial opportunities to agricultural students in Kashmir will reduce youths’ involvement in crimes in the society, open up business opportunities and sustainable growth to the state’s economy.

Table 1: Entrepreneurship intentions of postgraduate agricultural students of SKUAST-K in Kashmir

(N=120)

Level of entrepreneurial intention	Fisheries		Agriculture		Horticulture		Vet & AH		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Low (up to 23)	4	13.33	5	16.67	7	23.33	5	16.67	21	17.50
Medium (24 to 31)	23	76.67	21	70.00	21	70.00	22	73.33	87	72.50
High (above 32)	3	10.00	4	13.33	2	6.67	3	10.00	12	10.00
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100	30	100	120	100

Table 2: Dimension wise entrepreneurial intention of postgraduate agricultural students of SKUAST-K in Kashmir (N=120)

Statement	Overall mean	Overall SD	Rank
Attitude towards entrepreneurship			
I'd prefer to be my own boss rather than to have a secure job.	3.82	1.06	IV
I agree that, a career as entrepreneur is attractive for me.	3.90	0.85	II ^b
I agree that, if I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a firm.	3.90	0.95	II ^a
I agree that, being an entrepreneur would entail greater satisfaction.	3.99	0.87	I
Subjective norm			
Do you agree that, your parents are positively oriented towards a career as entrepreneur?	3.24	1.09	III
Do you agree that, people who are important to me, think that you should pursue a career as an entrepreneur?	3.31	1.00	II
Do you agree that, in your university people are actively encouraged to pursue their own ideas?	3.18	1.11	IV
Do you believe that, your friends see entrepreneurship as logical choice?	3.62	1.01	I
Perceived behaviour control			
To start a firm would be easy for me.	2.68	0.78	IV
To start a firm and to keep it working would be easy task for me.	2.98	1.05	III
I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project.	3.37	0.98	II
If I want I could become self-employed after my studies.	3.64	0.96	I

Entrepreneurial education			
Do you agree that, entrepreneurial subject is very important.	4.14	0.78	III
Do you agree that, it should be taught in Universities?	4.24	0.70	II
Do you agree that, your university course prepare students well for taking entrepreneurship as their career?	3.41	1.16	IV
Do you agree that, more entrepreneurial and business educational programmes at campus would help students to start business?	4.26	0.61	I
Personality traits			
I like to do/try new things.	4.29	0.69	I
When I travel I like to choose new routes.	4.19	0.94	II
I am confident of my abilities and skills to start a business.	4.00	0.92	IV
I will set my own business if I would be able to detect an opportunity.	4.06	0.90	III

Conclusion

The present study concluded that there exists medium level of intention among respondents towards entrepreneurship and most of the students hold a positive perceived image towards entrepreneurs which subsequently predicts entrepreneurial intentions among university students. However, formation of a road map, a blue print of the activities to be undertaken, and specific strategy needs to be carved to enhance not only the entrepreneurial intention to a higher level but at the same time make their vision clear and journey of the students towards entrepreneurship less strenuous. The study concluded that for enhancing entrepreneurial intention among students, from medium to higher levels there is a need for university to take a realistic approach, have a vision, be innovative, recognize and create opportunities and respond to challenges.

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