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Barriers perceived by students of Junagadh Agricultural University towards entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth, job creation and innovation and this matters especially in India, given its large youth population and persistently high youth unemployment. Supporting entrepreneurship can therefore play a crucial role in tackling these challenges and unlocking the country's economic potential, yet turning entrepreneurial intention into actual business ventures is often held back by a range of perceived barriers. This study set out to examine the barriers perceived by students of Junagadh Agricultural University (JAU) towards entrepreneurship, drawing on a stratified random sample of 413 final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students across six constituent colleges of the university. A total of 27 barriers, spanning financial, socio-cultural, personal and psychological and technical dimensions, were ranked using the Rank-Based Quotient (RBQ) technique. The findings showed that financial barriers were perceived as the most severe overall, with the lack of personal savings or seed capital to start a business emerging as the single most critical barrier (RBQ = 83.54). Socio-cultural barriers followed closely, led by family expectations favouring stable government or private-sector employment (RBQ = 83.53), while insufficient business leadership experience was the top personal and psychological barrier (RBQ = 81.84). Technical barriers were comparatively less severe overall within this category, the lack of skills to prepare a business model or feasibility report ranked highest (RBQ = 80.77, overall rank eight), pointing to gaps in practical business-planning competence among students. Taken together, these results suggest that financial constraints and prevailing family and social expectations, more than technical skill gaps, are the dominant barriers keeping JAU students from pursuing entrepreneurship. The study's findings underscore that improved access to seed funding, simplified government support mechanisms and targeted engagement with families and communities, alongside structured skill-building programmes, are likely to meaningfully strengthen students' entrepreneurial intention and its translation into real entrepreneurial action.

Keywords: Barriers perceived, entrepreneurship, rank-based quotient, agricultural students, entrepreneurial intention

1. Introduction

A nation's economic progress is greatly influenced by entrepreneurship. It stimulates innovation, regional growth, employment generation and higher living standards. However, Indian youths still have two major challenges in spite of this supportive atmosphere. The first issue is a deficiency of soft skills, which are essential for employment in the business sector. Second, they lack the entrepreneurial abilities necessary to launch and manage their own businesses. Due to their desire for independence and innovation, young people around the world are becoming increasingly entrepreneurial ^[1]. Despite the increasing amount of research on entrepreneurial intention, relatively little focus has been placed on methodically ranking the obstacles that agricultural university students perceive using a quantitative method that can record the frequency and relative importance of each obstacle. In light of this, the study was conducted to investigate the perceived obstacles to entrepreneurship among Junagadh Agricultural University

(JAU) students in order to produce data that can guide the development of entrepreneurship education, institutional support systems, and policy for agricultural university students.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study area

The study was conducted in Junagadh Agricultural University (JAU), Gujarat, which offers education in agriculture and allied sciences.

2.2 Sampling procedure

The stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The overall sample size for the study consisted of 413 respondents, comprising 233 final-year undergraduate students and 180 postgraduate students, selected in proportion to their respective enrolments within their disciplines. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to JAU students. The study was

conducted following approval of the research protocol by the Advisory Committee of Junagadh Agricultural University, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection; participation was voluntary and respondent identities were kept confidential.

2.3 Analytical Technique

Rank-Based Quotient technique was employed to study the barriers perceived by students towards entrepreneurship. Respondents were asked to rank the perceived barriers under each category in order of severity, and the RBQ for each barrier was computed using the following formula:

$$RBQ = \frac{\sum F_i [(n+1) - i]}{N \times n} \times 100$$

Where, F_i = Frequency of respondents for the i [th] ranked barrier; N = Number of respondents; n = Number of barriers perceived; i = Rank given to barrier.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Barriers perceived by students of Junagadh Agricultural University towards entrepreneurship

A total of twenty-seven barriers, spanning financial, socio-cultural, personal and psychological, and technical dimensions, were ranked by the respondents using the RBQ technique. Financial barriers emerged as the most severe category overall, closely followed by socio-cultural barriers, with personal/psychological and technical barriers trailing in that order (Table 1).

Table 1: Barriers perceived by students of Junagadh Agricultural University towards entrepreneurship (n = 413)

Code	Barrier	RBQ Value	Overall Rank
I	Financial barriers		
FB1	Lack of personal savings or seed capital to start a venture	83.54	I
FB3	Lack of regular income during the startup phase	81.07	V
FB7	High costs of raw materials and inputs perceived as a risk leading to early business losses	80.92	VI
FB2	Lack of assets that can be used as collateral for bank loans	80.73	IX
FB5	High interest rates on private business loans	80.24	XI
FB6	Limited awareness about investors in the agriculture sector	80.15	XIII
FB4	Government financial schemes perceived as complex and difficult to access	78.98	XIX
II	Socio-cultural barriers		
SCB1	Family expectations favouring stable government or private-sector employment	83.53	II
SCB4	Immediate family financial responsibilities discouraging risk-taking	81.26	IV
SCB2	Social pressure arising from peers focusing on competitive examinations	80.77	VII
SCB3	Business failure perceived to negatively affect social and family reputation	80.34	X
SCB5	Perceived lack of successful entrepreneurial role models in society	79.76	XV
SCB6	Agripreneurship perceived as having low socio-economic status in society	77.72	XXVII
III	Personal and psychological barriers		
PB1	Insufficient experience to lead a business successfully	81.84	III
PB6	Difficulty in maintaining motivation when facing initial business setbacks	80.19	XII
PB4	Fear of making incorrect decisions that may result in significant financial losses	80.00	XIV
PB2	Lack of confidence in pitching ideas to investors or government officials	79.23	XVII
PB3	Preference for the security of a fixed salary over uncertain business income	78.02	XXV
PB5	Lack of leadership and communication skills required to manage employees	78.01	XXVI
IV	Technical barriers		
TB1	Lack of technical skills to develop a business model or feasibility report	80.77	VIII
TB4	Inadequate knowledge of implementing digital marketing tools	79.52	XVI
TB5	Lack of expertise to manage financial accounts, cash flow and taxation	79.13	XVIII
TB8	Limited awareness of the procedures to protect innovations	78.89	XX
TB3	Lack of knowledge about agricultural supply chains and logistics management	78.79	XXI
TB6	Inadequate technical knowledge about quality certifications	78.45	XXII
TB2	Inadequate awareness of legal requirements for business registration	78.21	XXIII
TB7	Lack of skills to use modern agricultural software	78.11	XXIV

Note: FB = Financial barrier; SCB = Socio-cultural barrier; PB = Personal and psychological barrier; TB = Technical barrier; RBQ = Rank-Based Quotient.

Financial barriers

Lack of personal savings or seed capital (FB1, RBQ = 83.54) was the single most severe barrier overall, followed by concerns over regular income during the startup phase (FB3, RBQ = 81.07), high input costs (FB7, RBQ = 80.92), lack of loan collateral (FB2, RBQ = 80.73) and high interest rates (FB5, RBQ = 80.24); the perceived complexity of government schemes (FB4, RBQ = 78.98) was the least severe within the category.

The primary obstacle is clearly capital unavailability. Pahrkar *et al.* [2] and Upadhya and Chadha [3] reported capital/credit access as the top barrier among management

students, while Reddy and Chandawat [4], working with JAU postgraduates and Jayasudha *et al.* [5], across Gujarat's SAUs, both identified laborious loan procedures as the primary financial constraint, supporting the high ranks of FB2, FB4, and FB5 found here.

Socio-cultural barriers

Family expectations favouring stable government or private-sector employment (SCB1, RBQ = 83.53) ranked second overall, closely trailed by family financial responsibilities discouraging risk-taking (SCB4, RBQ = 81.26) and peer pressure toward competitive examinations (SCB2, RBQ =

80.77); the perception of low socio-economic status attached to agripreneurship (SCB6, RBQ = 77.72) was the least severe barrier across the entire study.

The dominance of job-security expectations mirrors Thavaraj and Varghese ^[6], who found this to be the single most prominent deterrent among management students, and is reinforced by Sharma and Madan ^[7], Sharma ^[8] and Upadhaya and Chadha ^[3] on the role of family and social pressure. Notably, SCB6's low rank here contrasts with Jayasudha *et al.* ^[5], who found status perception to be the top socio-personal barrier among Gujarat SAU students, a divergence that may reflect a genuine shift in attitudes toward agripreneurship among more recent cohorts.

Personal and psychological barriers

Insufficient experience to lead a business (PB1, RBQ = 81.84) ranked third overall and highest within this category, followed by difficulty sustaining motivation after setbacks (PB6, RBQ = 80.19) and fear of costly decisions (PB4, RBQ = 80.00); lack of leadership/communication skills (PB5, RBQ = 78.01) ranked lowest.

The high rank of PB1 is directly corroborated by Reddy and Chandawat ^[4], whose JAU-based study found limited practical entrepreneurship knowledge to be the top constraint (40% of respondents). Risk-aversion and fear-related barriers (PB4, PB6) parallel Thavaraj and Varghese ^[6] on risk dislike and Singh and Mookerjee ^[9], who found perceived financial risk and behavioural control to significantly and negatively predict entrepreneurial aspiration.

Technical barriers

Technical barriers were comparatively less severe (ranks VIII–XXIV) but still meaningful. Lack of skills to prepare a business model or feasibility report (TB1, RBQ = 80.77) ranked highest, followed by gaps in digital marketing (TB4, RBQ = 79.52) and financial/account management (TB5, RBQ = 79.13); proficiency with agricultural software (TB7, RBQ = 78.11) ranked lowest.

Jayasudha *et al.* ^[5] similarly identified exposure and business-planning gaps as the leading management/technical barrier and market-intelligence gaps as the leading marketing barrier among Gujarat SAU students, while Parmar and Rathod ^[10] and Kumar *et al.* ^[11] confirmed that knowledge and skill deficits, more than infrastructural constraints, were the more consequential technical barriers to agripreneurship consistent with the narrow, evenly-distributed RBQ spread observed across TB1–TB7 in the present study.

Policy implications

The findings carry several implications for institutions and policymakers seeking to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem for agricultural university students. First, given the primacy of seed-capital constraints, simplifying access to government financial schemes, expanding low-collateral credit instruments and introducing dedicated seed-funding windows for student entrepreneurs would directly address the single most severe barrier identified. Second, because family expectations and socio-cultural norms rank alongside financial constraints in severity, entrepreneurship promotion efforts should extend beyond individual competency development to engage family and community stakeholders, for instance through showcasing successful agripreneurship

role models and integrating entrepreneurship awareness into extension outreach directed at rural households. Third, the prominence of experience- and confidence-related personal barriers points to the value of structured internships, incubation cells and mentoring programmes embedded within the university curriculum, enabling students to accumulate practical exposure before graduation. Finally, the relatively uniform severity of technical barriers suggests that a modular skill-development approach, covering business-model preparation, digital marketing, financial management and regulatory compliance, would be more effective than isolated, single-skill interventions. Collectively, these measures suggest that improving access to seed funding and government support mechanisms, alongside experiential and technical capacity-building, is likely to enhance students' entrepreneurial intention and its translation into entrepreneurial action.

4. Conclusion

The study systematically examined the barriers perceived by students of Junagadh Agricultural University towards entrepreneurship using the Rank-Based Quotient technique applied to twenty-seven barriers across four categories. Financial barriers, led by the lack of personal savings or seed capital, and socio-cultural barriers, led by family expectations favouring stable employment, emerged as the most severe constraints, followed closely by insufficient business leadership experience. Technical barriers, though comparatively less severe, remained consistently important across a fairly narrow range of severity. The findings suggest that entrepreneurial intention among agricultural university students is unlikely to translate into entrepreneurial action unless structural financial constraints, prevailing socio-cultural norms and gaps in practical experience and technical competence are addressed in an integrated manner. Strengthening seed-funding access, engaging family and community networks and embedding experiential and technical skill-building within university curricula therefore represent priority areas for future entrepreneurship promotion efforts at agricultural universities.

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