

# Gender Equality in Entrepreneurial Motivation: An Analysis of Students Responses in North-East India

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## Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of innovation and economic growth and. Understanding the motivations behind entrepreneurial activity is essential for fostering a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. The study investigates gender-based perceptions regarding the entrepreneurial motivators - education and skills and the desire for self-employment. The analysis uses the Mann-Whitney U test to evaluate differences between male and female responses to the knowledge and skill relating to the entrepreneurial activities. The results indicate no statistically significant differences between male and female respondents on either statement, suggesting that both genders share similar views on the role of education and skills and the desire for self-employment which act as part of motivation in equipping students with entrepreneurial activity.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Gender equality, Skills, Knowledge, North-east India

## Introduction

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a significant driver of economic development, job creation, and social change. However, when viewed more broadly, entrepreneurship represents initiative, innovative thinking, and the ability to organize social and economic systems to transform human and natural resources into tangible outcomes. Entrepreneurship education has gained increasing attention in recent years, with many educational programs aiming to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to start and manage successful businesses. Motivational factors that drive individuals toward entrepreneurial ventures have been widely studied, with education and self-employment being two major catalysts. Education and skills are often perceived as tools for empowerment and innovation, while self-employment is seen as a key motivator for individuals seeking autonomy and control over their careers.

However, while much of the research has focused on entrepreneurial motivation from a general perspective, this study explores the perceptions of male and female students to study how education, skills and the desire for self-employment motivate individuals to start their own businesses.

## Literature Review

Entrepreneurship has been widely recognized as a crucial driver of economic development, individual empowerment, and innovation. Numerous studies have enriched the understanding of entrepreneurship from various perspectives. Atef and Balushi (2015) observed that entrepreneurship has immense potential to reduce the number of job seekers, thus benefiting both individuals and economies. Covin and Slevin (1990) identified three core traits of entrepreneurship: innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactivity. These traits help shape the entrepreneurial process, enabling individuals to establish and grow businesses in competitive markets. According to Carsrud and Brannback (2007), entrepreneurship is vital for the economic prosperity of individuals, communities, and nations, as it fosters the creation of wealth and job opportunities. Entrepreneurs face complex decisions in building their businesses, decisions that are not linear and depend on a variety of factors (Miller et al., 2013). These activities are driven by various factors, including individual motivations and external circumstances. According to Goel et al. (2007) entrepreneurship education has been observed a generally positive attitude toward entrepreneurship among youth in both India and China. Education in entrepreneurship equips individuals with key competencies such as problem-solving, creativity, and leadership, which are essential for entrepreneurial success (Kuratko, 2005). Zhao et al., (2010) find in their study that the education is widely recognized as a crucial factor in fostering entrepreneurship, providing individuals with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue new business ventures. As a result, entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as an important foundation for developing future entrepreneurs. According to Blanchflower (2000), various studies have explored the factors that drive entrepreneurial behavior. Similarly, the desire for self-employment is frequently cited as a primary motivator for individuals to pursue entrepreneurship. The study conducted by Carter et al., (2003) has revealed that the, women often report starting businesses for reasons related to flexibility and work-life balance, while men are more likely to start businesses driven by financial gain and innovation

## Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study are:

1. To examine how education and skills inspire youth to explore new business opportunities and pursue entrepreneurship.
2. To investigate how the desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start their own business.

## Research Methodology

To achieve the specific objectives, primary data was collected through a questionnaire from 500 selected respondents from two north-east Indian states, representing various educational backgrounds studding in Degree College and universities. Descriptive statistics along with Mann-Whitney U test have been applied to analyze the data.

## Data analysis & Findings

Exhibit-1: shows the distribution of responses to the statement "Education and skills inspire youth to explore new business opportunities and pursue entrepreneurship". A total of 70% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, suggesting a strong consensus that education and skills inspire youth for starting a new venture. Neutral responses (22%) represent a noteworthy group who may require more information or clarity on the importance of

entrepreneurship knowledge. However, 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, which shows a relatively small portion of people who reject the statement.

**Exhibit-1: Education and skills inspire youth to explore new business opportunities and pursue entrepreneurship**

Perception	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	2.2	2.2
Disagree	26	5.2	7.4
Neither agree nor disagree	113	22.6	30.0
Agree	189	37.8	67.8
Strongly agree	161	32.2	100.0
Total	500	100.0	

**Source:** Author’s Calculation from Primary Data (2024)

Overall, the majority of respondents either agree or strongly agree that education and skills inspire youth to explore business opportunities, making it clear that there is a strong belief in the positive impact of education and skills on entrepreneurship. However, the neutral group (22.6%) suggests that further discussion or exploration might be needed to convince all individuals of this influence.

The exhibit-2 shows the data reflects the distribution of responses to the statement. The desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start a new venture. A total of 64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, indicating a positive perception of the course. Neutral responses (26%) make up a significant portion, which could suggest that while many students are uncertain or ambivalent, they might still recognize some value in the course. 10% represent a smaller group but still show that desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start their own business some felt the course does not meet their expectations in providing essential knowledge and skills relating to the entrepreneurial activities.

**Exhibit-2: The desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start their own business**

Perception	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	15	3.0	3.0
Disagree	35	7.0	10.0
Neither agree nor disagree	129	25.8	35.8
Agree	161	32.2	68.0
Strongly agree	160	32.0	100.0
Total	500	100.0	

**Source:** Author’s Calculation from Primary Data (2024)

Overall, the data indicates a clear consensus that the desire for self-employment is a strong motivator for starting a business, with 64% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. However, the neutral responses (26 %) suggest that there is still some variation in perspectives, and some may need further clarity or persuasion about the connection between self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The Exhibit-3 represents the Mean Rank about the perceptions of male and female students on the issues separately. In the first case (education and skills inspire youth to explore new business opportunities and pursue

entrepreneurship), female have a slightly higher mean rank (258.64) compared to male (248.50). This suggests that, on average, males gave a somewhat stronger endorsement or agreement that entrepreneurship knowledge is essential. However, in the second case (The desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start their own business), females have a slightly higher mean rank (258.64) compared to males (242.80). This indicates that, on average, females perceive the desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start a new venture to a slightly greater degree than males. There is a minor difference, suggesting general agreement between genders on both the issues.

**Exhibit-3: Mean Rank**

Questionnaire	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Education and skills inspire youth to explore new business opportunities and pursue entrepreneurship	Male	257	242.80	62399.50
	Female	243	258.64	62850.50
	Total	500		
The desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start their own business	Male	257	261.02	67082.50
	Female	243	239.37	58167.50
	Total	500		

Source: **Source:** Author’s Calculation from Primary Data (2024)

The Mann-Whitney U test (Exhibit-4) shows whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups (males and females).The result shows for both cases p-values are greater than 0.05. ( $p = 0.197$  and  $p = 0.080$  respectively). This means that there is

**Exhibit-4: Test Statistics of Mann-Whitney U**

Grouping Variable: Gender	Education and skills inspire youth to explore new business opportunities and pursue entrepreneurship	The desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start their own business
Mann-Whitney U	29246.500	28521.500
Wilcoxon W	62399.500	58167.500
Z	-1.291	-1.749
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.197	.080

Source: **Source:** Author’s Calculation from Primary Data (2024)

no statistically significant difference between male and female responses for either of the two statements. This suggests that gender does not have a meaningful impact on perceptions of these two factors.

## Conclusion

This research paper examined the role of gender in shaping perceptions of education, skill, and self-employment as motivators for entrepreneurship. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, it has been found that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female respondents in their views on the motivational factors on both the cases- Education and skills inspire youth and the desire for self-employment motivates individuals to start their own business. Despite slight differences in mean ranks, the results suggest that gender does not significantly influence perceptions of entrepreneurial motivation in the context of education and self-employment.

However, future research could explore additional factors, such as prior experience, socio-economic status, and cultural attitudes, to further understand the complexities of entrepreneurial motivation.

## Funding

The work has been supported by a financial grant, F.N0. 02/ 7/2022-23/ICSSR/RP/MN/GEN; dated 04-05-2023, from the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). The author gratefully acknowledges ICSSR for financial support during the research work.

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