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Academic Approaches to Strengthening Students' Entrepreneurial Skills

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aim: Explore the academic approaches to strengthen the students' entrepreneurial skills.
Research Design: Descriptive study.
Sample: Post graduate and Doctoral scholars of University.
Methodology: A structured questionnaire was developed and applied as data collection tool to 751 students for this study.
Results: Hosting training sessions led by successful entrepreneurs to impart essential skills, Creating hands-on learning opportunities for students to gain practical experience, Organizing workshops focused on enhancing creative thinking and brainstorming abilities, Organizing university-level conferences on entrepreneurship and Offering job placement services and vocational guidance were the mechanisms reported by the respondents. Regular curriculum revisions help align academic content with market demands while accommodating students' diverse abilities, ensuring education remains relevant and effective.

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Keywords: Students; entrepreneurial skills; approaches; career guidance; curriculum.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial skills are vital for students to thrive in today's fast-changing and competitive business environment (Kissi et al., 2020). Cultivating these skills not only promotes innovation and independence but also strengthens problem-solving and leadership capabilities. Educational institutions play a key role in preparing students with the knowledge, mindset, and practical exposure required for entrepreneurship (Mohamad, 2023). By incorporating entrepreneurship education, hands-on learning, and mentorship programs, academia can foster creativity, risk-taking, and adaptability (Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2021). This paper examines various academic approaches to enhancing students' entrepreneurial abilities, highlighting the importance of curriculum development, industry partnerships, and experiential learning opportunities.

Entrepreneurship has been viewed as a critical contributor and an economic engine of every country as it helps in creating new jobs, and increases innovation and competitiveness in the labor market (Barba-Sanchez et al. 2022). Cognitive and personality factors, such as self-efficacy, individual attitudes, desire for achievement and behavioral control, have significant influence on students' intentions towards entrepreneurship (Nasip et al. 2017; Shah and Soomro 2017; Biswas and Verma 2021). The research of Barth and Muehlfeld (2021) found that the interventions in early entrepreneurship enhanced the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of university students. The outbreak of COVID-19 has affected entrepreneurship (Yu et al. 2021), and hence future research may consider the impact of the pandemic, such as online education, macroeconomic factors, etc., on EI of university students. Psychological factors, supports and services, academic and work skills were presented as important influential factors on entrepreneurs (PoorAtashi and Mokhtarnia, 2009).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the growing importance of entrepreneurial skills, traditional academic approaches often fail to equip students with practical knowledge, problem-solving abilities, and an innovative mindset. There is a need to explore effective educational strategies, such as experiential learning and industry collaboration, to bridge this gap. This study seeks to identify shortcomings in current methods and propose academic interventions to enhance students' entrepreneurial competencies. Keeping in mind the study was undertaken with the following objective.

1. To explore the academic approaches to strengthen the students entrepreneurial skills.

3. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive study was employed for this study since the aim is to explore the academic approaches to strengthen the students' entrepreneurial attitude and intention. A structured questionnaire was used as data collection tool for this study. A questionnaire was developed and validated by seeking feedback from a panel of experts. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a score of 0.90. Questionnaire has been sent to Post graduate and Doctoral scholars. The entire population of 751 students (398 PG and 353 Doctoral scholars) was taken as the sample for the study.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Orientation

Orientation programs aim to foster entrepreneurial skills by bringing successful entrepreneurs to share their expertise. Students are guided on forming and managing entrepreneurial associations while gaining access to well-designed educational resources. These initiatives include teaching students how to register a business, create business plans, and manage finances through tools like accounting and budgeting. Additionally, awareness of privatization regulations is imparted to prepare students for diverse business environments.

4.2 Career Education

Career education focuses on equipping students with practical skills and real-world experience. It provides structured guidance for apprenticeship programs and supports entrepreneurial initiatives within student associations. Vocational orientation helps students shape their entrepreneurial ideas, while educators are trained to deliver impactful entrepreneurship lessons, ensuring a holistic approach to career development.

Table 1. Approaches to enhance students' entrepreneurial skills

Sl.No	Approaches	Rank
1	Hosting training sessions led by successful entrepreneurs to impart essential skills.	I
2	Encouraging and guiding student associations to engage in entrepreneurial activities.	II
3	Developing and sharing educational resources focused on entrepreneurship.	III
4	Educating students on the process of registering a business or establishing a new enterprise.	IV
5	Providing instruction on drafting comprehensive business plans.	V
6	Offering insights into financial tools, accounting practices, and budgeting techniques.	VI

Table 2. Impactful entrepreneurship lessons for career development

Sl.No	Approaches	Rank
1	Creating hands-on learning opportunities for students to gain practical experience.	I
2	Offering structured guidance for effective apprenticeship programs.	II
3	Supporting student associations in fostering entrepreneurial activities.	III
4	Guiding students toward vocational pathways and nurturing their entrepreneurial ideas.	IV
5	Equipping educators with the skills to teach and promote entrepreneurship.	V

Table 3. Approach to modern and practical learning experience

Sl.No	Approaches	Rank
1	Organizing workshops focused on enhancing creative thinking and brainstorming abilities.	I
2	Developing university curricula aligned with job market requirements.	II
3	Crafting educational content tailored to students' cognitive abilities and skill levels.	III
4	Incorporating entrepreneurship as a core subject in the curriculum.	IV
5	Planning educational programs that address students' individual needs and aspirations.	V

Table 4. Real-world connections and opportunities

Sl.No	Approaches	Rank
1	Organizing university-level conferences on entrepreneurship.	I
2	Providing training in computer skills and internet applications.	II
3	Offering job placement services and vocational guidance.	III
4	Establishing strong collaborations with local executive organizations.	IV

4.3 Curriculum Revitalization

Revitalizing the curriculum emphasizes aligning education with market demands and student capabilities. Workshops on creative thinking and brainstorming encourage innovation, while curricula are designed to meet job market requirements. Entrepreneurship is integrated into the academic content, supported by educational planning that caters to students' individual needs and aspirations, ensuring a modern and practical learning experience.

4.4 Auxiliary

Auxiliary initiatives complement core educational efforts by hosting university conferences on entrepreneurship and offering training in essential digital skills like computer usage and internet applications.

Job placement services and vocational counseling support students' career transitions, while partnerships with local executive organizations enhance real-world connections and opportunities.

5. CONCLUSION

From an academic standpoint, cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset among agricultural students requires a comprehensive approach. A strong drive for achievement is often marked by effective planning, resilience, a readiness to

make sacrifices, and a willingness to embrace innovation. Respondents exhibit high self-efficacy, reflected in their confidence to learn from failure, pursue ambitious goals, strive for substantial earnings, acquire new skills, and address challenges effectively. They also demonstrate strong entrepreneurial intentions, agreeing on critical factors such as customer satisfaction, innovation, competitive strategies, risk-taking, contingency planning, and balancing customer satisfaction with business growth. By equipping agricultural students with the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes, educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the future of agribusiness.

The study outlines a structured strategy for promoting entrepreneurship and career readiness through focused educational initiatives. Orientation programs lay the groundwork by equipping students with essential entrepreneurial skills, while career education emphasizes hands-on experience and mentorship to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Curriculum updates ensure that academic content aligns with market needs and caters to the diverse capabilities of students, keeping education relevant and impactful. Additionally, auxiliary support, such as technology training, career counseling, and industry partnerships, reinforces these efforts. Together, these elements create a holistic framework that fosters innovation, prepares students for professional challenges, and supports their growth in a competitive environment.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A detailed investigation can be conducted by comparing different academic fields.

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DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models, etc have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript. This explanation will include the name, version, model, and source of the generative AI technology and as well as all input prompts provided to the generative AI technology.

Details of the AI usage are given below:

1. ChatGPT

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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