A Differential Impact of Family Background on Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies of Potential Entrepreneurs

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Abstract: Entrepreneurial ventures have emerged to be the major drivers of economic growth. Any economy must endeavor to create a supportive regulatory environment to facilitate entrepreneurial activity. Indian entrepreneurial efforts have been sustained to drive India's growth story owing to several policy initiatives to improve the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Entrepreneurship Education and Training (EET) constitutes the essential part of the 'institutional' component of the ecosystem. The participant characteristics have a moderating influence on such program outcomes. Studies have suggested that entrepreneurship is facilitated by specific cultural dimensions. In a diverse-culture economy like India, designing a uniform training program for potential entrepreneurs won't serve the purpose. Hence the entrepreneurial training programs should, first, recognize the role of participant characteristics in terms of the socio-demographic profile, while designing the program content and curriculum. The present study attempts to identify the differential impact of the moderating variable of the family background of the participant on the training outcomes and finds that, out of the 13 personal entrepreneurial competencies tested, seven of the components of the training program content are highly significant to the demographic variable. In contrast, the remaining six components proved nonsignificant.

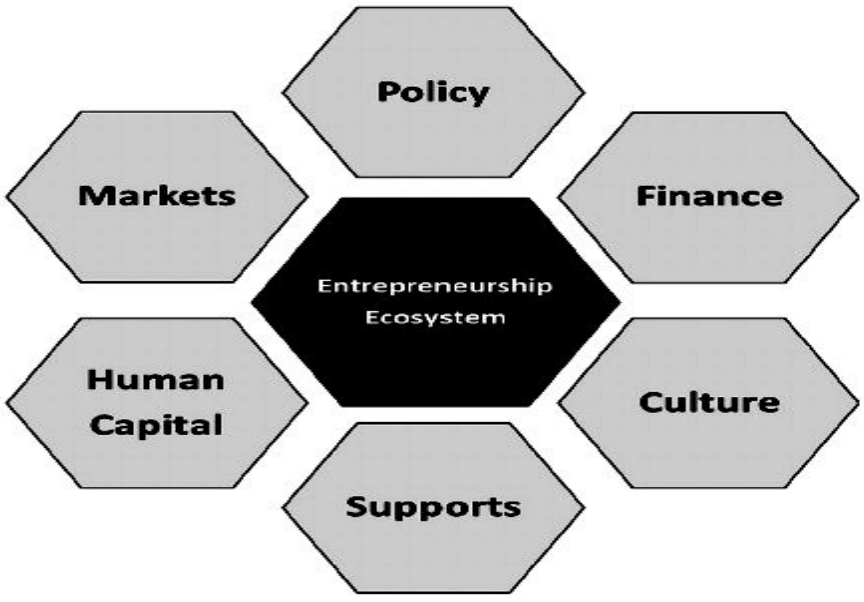
Keywords: Entrepreneurial competencies, family background, economic growth, entrepreneurship training, entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Introduction

The Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Fostering entrepreneurship has become a core component of economic development in countries around the world. In the modern economic context, entrepreneurial ventures have emerged to be the major force driving economic growth. For the past 30 years, average net job creation in the private sector of USA was around 1.4 million jobs per year, about 20 percent of US gross job creation (Ryan, John, Rona & Javier, 2014) owing to a conductive and facilitating entrepreneurship ecosystem. An entrepreneurship ecosystem is nothing but the social and economic environment affecting the local/regional exertions of entrepreneurship. For entrepreneurs to thrive, there needs to exist a supportive ecosystem of intertwined factors ranging from infrastructure to financial access. Policy frameworks and institutions play a particularly important role in entrepreneurship ecosystems (CIPE, 2014). Thus,*entrepreneurship ecosystem* has emerged to be the predominant metaphor for fostering entrepreneurship across the nations and regions. In fact, an entrepreneurship ecosystem consists of hundreds of specific elements that are grouped into a network of six general domains: a conducive *culture*, enabling *policies* and leadership, availability of appropriate *finance*, quality *human capital*, venture-friendly *markets* for products, and a range of institutional and infrastructural *supports* (**Figure-1**). Entrepreneurial ventures are successful when the ecosystem is conductive to encourage and safeguard the businesses by providing access to the required resources.

Figure-1: Six domains of an entrepreneurship ecosystem.



Source: Isenberg, D. (2011)

As Indian entrepreneurial efforts sustain to drive India's growth story, it is essential to evaluate the conduciveness of the business ecosystem in India. TiE and KPMG jointly conducted a study to develop the Indian Entrepreneurial Confidence Index and concluded that the countryappears to be moving in the right direction with increased number of Indians being positive and confident of the prevailing ecosystem (KPMG, 2008).The changed business climate of India can be judged from the fact that the country is considered to be amongst the three top investment destinations. The 20th CEO Survey ranked India among top 3 investment destinations over medium term (PWC, 2017).Despite the fact being considered as the third most attractive destination for investments globally due to the market attractiveness, the Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI), an annual index published by the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (GEDI), measuring the health of entrepreneurship ecosystems in 137 countries, ranked India at a dismal 104th rank in 2015, below all the BRICS economies. India needs to improve its entrepreneurial ecosystem as India ranks relatively low on entrepreneurial attitude among the BRIC countries (Kapoor & Sharma, 2015) since only 61 percent of the adults in the age group of 18 to 64years opted for entrepreneurship as a desirable career option while the same stands at 70 percent among the BRICs economies.However, India could rise to 68th rank in the GEI (2018) showing a remarkable improvement from the

dismal 104th rank in GEI (2015) by making immense policy initiatives towards an appropriate education and training environment for existing as well as potential entrepreneurs along with the most conductive regulatory mechanism. In barely a decade, India has become the world's third-largest startup ecosystem worldwide with only the UK and the US standing ahead of the country with respect to the total number of startups.

Entrepreneurship Education and Training

Even though the conservative belief is that entrepreneurial spirit is innate, research suggests that certain entrepreneurial skills and mindsets can be learned, which, in turn, has given rise to the field of entrepreneurship education and training (EET).The formal entrepreneurship education programs focus on imparting knowledge and skills for the purpose of entrepreneurship, while the training programsendeavor to prepare the trainees for launching an enterprise by building specific knowledge and skills.Research observes that the influence of EET programs on the participants is on four domains - entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial capabilities, entrepreneurial status, and entrepreneurial performance.

India, as an emerging economy, accords high priority for entrepreneurship education and training (EET) programs. Raichaudhuri (2005) found that the inclination to pursue entrepreneurship as a career is relatively stronger in India, but the institutional and policy support still needs to be improved. Hence, there is a need to better understand what shapes the entrepreneurship training program outcomes. Valerio, Parton, & Robb. (2014) outlines the three dimensions that influence the range of EET outcomes - (a) the *context* within which programs are implemented, (b) the *characteristics of individual* participants, and (c) the functional *characteristics of the program* itself.From an operational standpoint, EET programs themselves recognize the role of participant characteristics in moderating outcomes.The effectiveness of entrepreneurship training programs essentially depends on the program content and the participant characteristics in the backdrop of the program context.

Entrepreneurship Training for Potential Entrepreneurs (ETPo)

In the past it was believed that entrepreneurs are born and not made. It was thought that only those persons who have got business family background can become successful entrepreneurs. Now-a-days this viewpoint has given place to the reality that persons who gain proper knowledge and training can become entrepreneurs. This opinion has further beenstrengthened by David C. McClelland who proved through the

popular *'Kakinada Experiment'* that possession of certain competencies is necessary for success in entrepreneurship and such competencies can be inculcated in a person by proper training.However, it should be noted that, the factors that influence the training outcomes should not be ignored while developing such programs. The program design should result from an understanding of the participants' needs and the contextual factors that can influence program outcomes. Effective training programs for different contexts or cultures can be designed by considering these two principal constraints.

The starting point of any start-up or entrepreneurial venture originates from a single person.Globally, a lot of importance is given to motivate individuals and kindle their entrepreneurial aspirations. One of the widely recognized theoretical foundations for the so-called traits approach is the studies done by the Harvard psychologist McClelland (1961).He outlines thirteen areas or entrepreneurial strengths, which were observed to be consistent across geographical boundaries, for identifying and further strengthening of entrepreneurial potential.

Framework for entrepreneurship training for potential entrepreneurs in India

Studies have suggested that entrepreneurship is facilitated by culture.In a diverse-culture economy like India, designing a uniform training program for potential entrepreneurs won't serve the purpose, as it was evident from the ineffective outcomes of many such efforts by policy makers.As individuals are the products of their cultures, an essentially moderating factor is what individual participants bring with them coming into a program. Therefore, participant characteristics are the consequence of his or her own culture. Hence the entrepreneurial training programs should, first, recognize the role of participant characteristics in terms of the socio-demographic profile, while designing the program content and curriculum.As is the normal practice in social research, factors such as gender, age, income and family background, often decide the need for enhancing specific competencies of individual participants.. Thus, the characteristics of any entrepreneurship training programs must reflect the diversity of individuals targeted and the outcomes they pursue. That is, the specific needs of particular vulnerable groups in specific contexts should be met through specific training programs.

In the Indian context, effective entrepreneurship training programs can be customized by duly considering the two critical aspects - the varied needs for enhancement of specific entrepreneurial competencies, as suggested by David C. McClelland, and the participant profile in terms of the gender, family income and background etc.Different demographic characteristics of participants have shown deficiency of different competencies, motivating to provide a model for an effective entrepreneurial training program based on the participant characteristics and intended

training outcomes, which may serve to provide a better guidance for the policy makers while developing an entrepreneurship ecosystem considering the prevailing social dynamics of India, as a conglomerate of diverse cultural backgrounds.

The present study proposes an effective model of entrepreneurship training for potential entrepreneurs, based on the recent research conducted on a sample of 482 management graduates aspiring to take up entrepreneurship as a career choice, from six universities in two southern States of India, to study the status of the 13 personal entrepreneurial competencies, proposed by McClelland (1961), in view of the participant family background as an independent variable.

The Study

In view of the indispensable need for understanding the role of the participant's socio-demographic profile in modern context, the present study aims to test the thirteen components of the PEC on potential entrepreneurs, by considering family occupation as control variable, in the present context of modern socio-cultural environment in India, after more than three decades of socio-cultural development from the earlier study. A sample of 482 students, who indicated beforehand that they were intended to take up entrepreneurship, from a population of around 4000 final year post-graduate management students from six universities –three in the State of Telangana, and the other three from the State of Andhra Pradesh, were selected. Initially, a sample of 500 students was served with PEC Self-Rating Questionnaire adopted from McClelland et al, (1987), which contains 65 items accounting to 13 specific competencies, where each specific competency has five statements answered by respondents on Likert scale. To make the analysis simple, precise, and more focused, the five statements pertaining to each competency are transposed statistically into a single variable by the name of the specific competency itself, with the help of SPSS. Then, the nature and degree of dissimilarities for each competency is discussed in detail.During the primary phase of data cleaning, 18 responses were found to be inconsistentwith the objective of the study and discarded accordingly, resulting into a net sample of 482 responses complete in all respects, out of which 301 were male and 181 females.The responses were statistically tested with ANOVA and t test, followed by effect size measurement for understanding the degree of influence of the control variable on the dependent variables.

The existence of certain skills and capabilities, otherwise called entrepreneurial competencies, distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. McClelland et al, (1987) have identified and validated a measuring instrument to measure the personal entrepreneurial competencies (PEC) to predict business formation and success, among existing as well as potential entrepreneurs, within and across cultures by conducting

competency studies in Malawi, India and Ecuador during 1970s and 1980s. The present study adopts these competencies as the program content to test the link with the participant characteristics.

The present study attempts to develop a more pragmatic approach for designing the training programs for potential entrepreneurs by testing the relationship between the *participant characteristics* in terms of the individual's socio-economic background and the program content and characteristics comprising the thirteen entrepreneurial competencies against the local socio-cultural context of each region or geographical areas. Participant characteristics, for the purpose of the study, are defined in terms of a few generic factors such as gender, family occupation, household income, and prevalence of role models. The program content is adopted from McClelland et al, (1987), in terms of thirteen personal entrepreneurial competencies identified to predict business formation and success, among existing as well as potential entrepreneurs, within and across cultures by conducting competency studies in Malawi, India and Ecuador during 1970s and 1980s. Way back in 1987, McClelland et al (1987) had declared that all 13 components are '*capable of being demonstrated by persons who had not yet started businesses and these competencies might be used to assess potentia1 entrepreneurs'*.

1. Initiative: Initiative of an entrepreneur refers to his or her preference for taking action on different assignments and able and willing to do more than what is required or expected of him or her in a job. The trait of taking the lead rather than waiting for others to start and acting out of choice rather than compulsion.
2. Sees and acts on opportunities: A mindset of looking for and seizing business opportunities from everyday experiences. This competency refers to the unique entrepreneurial behavior which helps the potential entrepreneur to be alert to information and ability to process it in order to identify and recognize the potential business opportunities even before his competitor.
3. Persistence: The quality of not giving up easily and striving continuously until success is achieved. Persistence of an entrepreneur denotes the ability that keeps the entrepreneur relentlessly motivated even when he is confronted by obstacles that seem insurmountable and willing to keep trying when things go wrong. Entrepreneurs seldom give up when things are not going well.
4. Information seeking: An entrepreneur has an urge to look for the required information in order to make an informed decision. This calls for the entrepreneurs to personally seek and obtain information that is required to make decisions and improve knowledge on his or her business. The ability to use contacts or information networks to obtain useful information and an overall openness to ideas and information.

5. Concern for high quality of work: A desire to produce better quality product or service and always compares own work favorably to that of others. An entrepreneur perceives concern for high quality of his products and services to meet or surpass existing standards of excellence in a faster, better and cheaply. By doing this an entrepreneur remains ahead of others in the market place.
6. Commitment to work contract: Accepts full responsibility for problems in completing a job and ready to make personal sacrifice or expends extraordinary effort to complete a lob.
7. Efficiency orientation: A successful entrepreneur always finds ways to do things faster or with fewer resources or at a lower cost.
8. Systematic planning: The strategic skill of developing plans, anticipating obstacles, finding and evaluating alternatives and taking a logical and systematic approach to planned activities. An entrepreneur is expected to have systematic planning which will help him to prepare an action plan for every area of operation in order to achieve the pre-determined goals.
9. Problem solving: Problem solving refers to the application of appropriate knowledge and skills in order to solve a problem arising while carrying on the business. It requires an entrepreneur to have creative thinking in order to understand the various techniques involved in resolving different problematic issues of a business. Observing potential problems in the course of action, generating new ideas and innovative solutions.
10. Self-confidence: It is an essential trait in an entrepreneur because he is regularly called upon to perform tasks and make decisions that require great amounts of faith in himself. He needs to have a strong but realistic belief in himself and his ability to achieve the predetermined goals. Expressing confidence in the self-ability to complete a task and relying on one's own capabilities to successfully manage the risks encountered in task accomplishment.
11. Assertiveness: Assertiveness of an entrepreneur is about his behavioral aspect that affirms his rights or point of view without either aggressively threatening the rights of others (assuming a position of dominance) or submissively permitting others to ignore. Successful entrepreneurs for the most part are assertive. Conveying one's vision emphatically and convincing others of its value, directly tells others what they have to do and disciplines those failing in performance.
12. Persuasion:Convincing and eliciting support of others in the venture. Persuasion in entrepreneurship refers to the ability of entrepreneurs to link, convince and influence other individuals, groups, agencies, creditors, debtors, customers and even competitors in order to create a contact and maintain good rapport.

13. Use of influence strategies: Acts to develop business contacts and uses influential people as agents to accomplish own objectives.Building on these competencies, the present study tests for the influence of the specific demographic characteristic on entrepreneurial competencies of the respondents.

Family occupation

Family has been recognized as the most important institution that enhances an individual's awareness about entrepreneurship. Moreover, growing in a family where one of the relatives and particularly parents run their own business not only provides an inspiring and supportive environment for entrepreneurship but also serves as an opportunity to learn and experience the challenges of business. Involvement of family in entrepreneurship creates a profound opportunity for understanding how entrepreneurial qualities and perceptions develop among the offspring (Chrisman et al, 2003). Family background has been found to be the most prominent factor that affects early socialization and hence formation of attitude towards entrepreneurship. An entrepreneur parent provides strong inspiration at an early age and help to inculcate the independent nature of self-employment (Matthews & Moser, 1995). Various studies described that it is not easy to set up a business for the first-generation entrepreneurs, but majority of the entrepreneurs set up their business if they already have a family background of business and mostly capital for startup is provided by family and friends (Lee & Tsang, 2001). According to Kolvereid (1996), entrepreneurs tend to have parents with entrepreneurial mind set. Thus, entrepreneurs having entrepreneurial parents are more likely to behave entrepreneurially and to work with higher entrepreneurial orientation than other whose parents are job oriented and ultimately increase firm's entrepreneurial orientation.

The successful entrepreneur builds up through family background. Informal relations play very important role in this context especially from family member's side because those whose family members are business oriented, their participation is high. Early communication received and imbibed by an individual from the family would impact career choices by inducing individuals to choose a career in which they are viewed positively by society. Research observes that entrepreneurs often come from homes where the mother or father was self-employed (Crant, 1996). Family with a business background often influence and motivate their siblings to involve in entrepreneurial activity and they are expected to possess higher propensity to launch a business in future (Van Auken et al., 2006). Family business background leads perhaps to lower barriers to entrepreneurial entry, since those having it may capitalize on their social ties and social capital (Greve & Saleff, 2003). Family social capital isconsidered as a unique non-financial resource and

support offered by family members to the entrepreneur affects positively the start-up decision (Chang et al, 2009).

The family embeddedness perspective describes the impact and the importance of parents on the entrepreneurial career of their offspring (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Both the breadth and the quality of family business experience matter (Krueger, 1993). Experiences during early childhood and socialization at home and in school probably shape the attitudes of young people towards entrepreneurship (Basu & Virick, 2008).Parents act as initial role models and the parents active in a family business influence the future entrepreneurial intentions through changing attitudes and beliefs (Krueger et al, 2000). In Singapore, Lee and Wong (2003a, b) found that the desire to participate in entrepreneurship programs was found to be higher in people coming from families with business as major occupation. Together, these suggest that family background is likely to impact the preferences of individuals towards entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

However, a closer look into such studies reveals that the issue of family background has received scant attention as an explanatory variable of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Advocates of demographic models have suggested and found empirical support for the hypothesis that family background is related to entrepreneurial intentions (Mathews & Moser, 1995). Furthermore the family business background shapes the attitudes and willingness of people to start new businesses.Three prominent types of family occupations namely business or self-employment, agriculture and employment are considered to differentiate family background for the purpose of the present study.

Analysis and discussion

Variance

Since size of the three sample groups is not uniform (lopsided designs), the data is first processed with *Brown-Forsythe test*, which is more relevant for unequal groups. The assumption of variance among the sample groups is non-significant for six competencies out of the total 13. It implies that the sample groups, despite the family occupational background, hold identical flair for the competencies of - *information seeking; concern for high quality of work; efficiency orientation; systematic planning; problem solving* and *persuasion*. The variance can be observed among the groups for the remaining seven competencies that there are differences of varying degrees among the three groups of the population, is taken for consideration (**Table-1**).

Table 1
Robust tests of Equality of Means

Competency		Test	Statistic[a]	df1	df2	Sig.
1	Initiative	Brown-Forsythe	194.108	2	461.752	.000
2	Sees and acts on opportunities	"	135.097	2	475.067	.000
3	Persistence	"	182.174	2	455.410	.000
4	Information seeking	"	1.804	2	454.850	.166
5	Concern for high quality of work	"	1.247	2	441.214	.288
6	Commitment to work contract	"	109.872	2	475.407	.000
7	Efficiency orientation	"	0.433	2	459.006	.649
8	Systematic planning	"	0.005	2	454.616	.995
9	Problem solving	"	0.602	2	459.581	.548
10	Self-confidence	"	167.959	2	460.046	.000
11	Assertiveness	"	175.306	2	468.370	.000
12	Persuasion	"	1.786	2	451.798	.169
13	Use of influence strategies	"	72.342	2	466.700	.000

a. Asymptotically F distributed; *Source: SPSS analysis*

Once, the non-significant variables are sorted out, ANOVA (**Table-2**) test is applied to observe the degrees of difference among the groups on seven competencies which proved positive for variances. The analysis yielded highly significant F values representing noteworthy differences among the mean squares of the groups on all the components.

Effect size

When the observed variance is converted into concrete numbers through Cohen's d measurement, three variables – initiative, persistence and assertiveness, prove to attract major differences, i e. more than 50 percent of non-overlap among the members of the three groups, while the percentage of non-overlap is in medium range, between 30 percent to 50 percent, for the remaining four competencies – self-confidence, commitment and sees and acts on opportunities, and use of influence strategies (**Table-2**). Thus, the percentage of non-overlap is larger for three competencies, and medium for another four as proved through statistical analysis.For the sake of the clarity and coherence of interpretation, the effect size percentages are grouped into three ranges: > 50% asHigh (H); 30 to 50%as Medium (M); and < 30% as Low (L).

Table2
ANOVA-Effect Size

Competency	F	Sig.	Cohen's d	Percent of Non-overlap	Range
Initiative	177.552	.000	0.86	51.6%	High
Sees and acts on opportunities	125.845	.000	0.72	47.4%	Medium
Persistence	166.076	.000	0.83	51.6%	High
Commitment to work contract	102.175	.000	0.65	43.0%	Medium
Self-confidence	152.886	.000	0.79	47.4%	Medium
Assertiveness	161.244	.000	0.82	51.6%	High
Use of influence strategies	70.019	.000	0.54	38.2%	Medium

Conclusion

Considerable differences are observed for seven competencies across all the sample groups while six competencies are proved to be non-significant. Hence the training program content shall be revised to suit to the needs of the potential entrepreneurs by omitting some modules pertaining to the non-significant competencies since the trainers don't differ on these issues and the sample groups from different family backgrounds exhibit similar preferences towards these competencies. Similarly, some competencies that attracted higher degree of difference among the sample groups shall be given more importance for the specific target groups through differential weightage of training content and duration as well.

Thus, the governance bodies of the entrepreneurship training program for potential entrepreneurs, across the different regions and provinces of India, should first set the trainingprogram *context* for the specific target of participants. Then, the training *content* shall be tailor made, based on the *participant characteristics* such as family background. The training content, which has traditionally been delivered across all regions, across all participants and across all times, has to be immediately revised, to yield better results. Thus, this study attempts to provide a pragmatic approach for the entrepreneurship training of the potential entrepreneurs by synchronizing the training content with the participant characteristics for better results.

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