

Entrepreneurial Competencies of Vocational Higher Secondary School Students of Kerala

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Abstract

Nations across the world have realized that it is the entrepreneurs and their activities which are the critical determinants of the level of growth and prosperity in any economy. Therefore, entrepreneurs are a national treasure and entrepreneurship should be protected and encouraged. Positive relationship exists between education and business creation. Successful entrepreneurs were fostered by their parents, their teachers and their society. It is widely approved that entrepreneurship can be learnt. Entrepreneurship education equips the students to be accountable, enterprising individual who have the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to turn their ideas into flourishing businesses. As a part of it, entrepreneurship is taught as a compulsory subject named as 'General Foundation Course- Entrepreneurship and Management' to the second-year students of the vocational Higher Secondary Schools of Kerala. The present study is designed to assess the level of Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students of Kerala. The sample for the study consisted of 350 business and commerce branch students from 10 schools of Kerala selected through stratified sampling method. The tool used for the study is the Entrepreneurial Competencies Test for Vocational Higher Secondary School Students prepared and standardised by the investigator. The statistical techniques used were one sample t-test, Test of significance of difference between means, one-way ANOVA and Scheffe's test of multiple comparison. It was found that a low level of Entrepreneurial Competencies exists for the Total sample. The study also found out that there exists a significant difference in the Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School students based on the sub samples Gender, Parental Occupation and Birth Order.

Keywords

Entrepreneurial Competencies, Entrepreneurial drive, Scheffe's test of multiple comparison.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the attitude of the mind to seek opportunities, to take calculated risks and derive benefits by setting up a venture. It is the entrepreneurial drive and persistence that brought us back with each economic downturn (Kuratko 2006)¹. Economic recession, fluctuations in international trade, devaluation of currency and the like. It is the clear-cut answer for the increasing unemployment, rural development, rehabilitation of the NRI's returning to their home countries due to nationalization policies and tightening of labour laws in many of the foreign countries. Moreover, the new economy and knowledge driven sectors like Information Technology, Nano Technology, and Bio-Technology are new manifestations to entrepreneurship and has made the scope of Entrepreneurship broader.

Significance of the study

Nations across the world have realized that it is the entrepreneurs and their activities which are the critical determinants of the level of growth and prosperity in any economy. Therefore, entrepreneurs are a national treasure and entrepreneurship should be protected and encouraged. Positive relationship exists between education and business creation (Luthje & Frank, 2002)². Entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in moulding our students with this 21st century skills not only to become entrepreneurs, but also to become promising employees who act as per the expectations of the employers. Getting a highly rewarding job is now reserved to the most skilled ones. Successful entrepreneurs were fostered by their parents, their teachers and their society. It is widely approved that entrepreneurship can be learnt. Thus, Entrepreneurship Education equips the students to be accountable, enterprising individuals who have the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to turn their ideas into flourishing businesses. As a part of it, entrepreneurship is taught as a compulsory subject named as 'General Foundation

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Course-Entrepreneurship & Management' to the second-year students of the Vocational Higher Secondary Schools of Kerala. The present study is designed to assess the level of Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students of Kerala. The study also aimed to find out whether there exists a significant difference in the Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School students based on the sub samples Gender, Parental Occupation and Birth Order. The Entrepreneurial Competencies can be defined as underlying characteristics such as generic and specific knowledge, motives, traits, self-images, social roles, and skills which result in venture birth, survival, and/or growth (Bird, 1995)³. In this context, the study entitled "A Study on the Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students of Kerala" assumes greater significance.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To assess the level of Entrepreneurial Competencies of Vocational Higher Secondary School Students for the Total Sample.
- 2) To test whether significant difference exists in the Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students based on Gender, Parental Occupation and Birth Order.

Hypotheses of the Study

- 1) The Vocational Higher Secondary School Students have satisfactory level of Entrepreneurial Competencies for the Total Sample.
- 2) There exists significant difference in Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students on the basis of Gender, Parental Occupation and Birth Order.

Methodology

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of 350 business and commerce branch students from 10 schools of Kerala selected through stratified sampling method.

Tools Used for Data Collection

The tool used for the study is the Entrepreneurial Competencies Test for Vocational Higher Secondary School Students (Meera & Menon, 2011)

Statistical Techniques

- One Sample t – test
- One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
- Scheffe's Test of Multiple Comparison
- Test of Significance Of Difference Between Means

Entrepreneurial Competencies of Vocational Higher Secondary School Students of Kerala-Analysis

The data collected was subjected to statistical treatment. The level of Entrepreneurial Competencies was assessed using one sample t-test and comparison of the mean scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies based on Gender, Parental Occupation and Birth Order was done by using t-test and Analysis of Variance. The results of the analysis are given below:

One sample t-test was conducted on the Competencies scores to assess the level of Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students for the Total Sample. For this the hypothesized mean is considered to be '21' (the number of items in the final tool consisted of 42 items, with the score '1' for correct answer and '0' for wrong answer). The one sample t statistic together with p-values ($p < 0.05$), are used to evaluate whether the mean of the Total Samples significantly differ from the hypothesized mean ' $\mu = 21$ '. If there is significant difference the hypothesis ' $\mu = 21$ ' is rejected and if there is no significant difference between t statistic and hypothesized mean, ($p > 0.05$), the hypothesis ' $\mu = 21$ ' is accepted.

Table 1: Data and Results of One sample t-test of Entrepreneurial Competencies for the Total Sample

Total Sample	M	SD	N	df	Com-parison Value	95% CI for Mean Difference	t	p-value
Entrepreneurial Competencies	18.80	4.40	350	349	21	-2.663 to -1.737	9.35	0.000

Source: Primary data.

Table 1 shows that the sample mean score of 18.80 (SD = 4.40) is significantly different from the hypothesized mean 21, $t = 9.35$, with a p -value = 0.000. The 95% confidence interval for the Total Sample mean ranged from -2.663 to -1.737. The results support the conclusion that the level of Entrepreneurial Competencies for the Total Sample is significantly lower than the moderate position.

Comparison of the Mean Scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies Based on Gender, Parental Occupation and Birth Order

The significance of variation in the Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students based on the independent variable is tested by using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The t value, F value and p-value is

obtained to find out the level of significance of difference.

Table 2: Comparison of the mean scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	p-value
Boys	170	19.0	4.5	0.6	0.549
Girls	180	18.7	4.3		

Source: Primary data.

The data relating to the Gender wise analysis of Entrepreneurial competencies is presented in Table 2. It shows that the Boys (Mean Score= 19.0) of the Vocational Higher Secondary Schools of Kerala are having more Entrepreneurial Competencies than the Girls (Mean Score= 18.7) counterparts.

As the t value is 0.6 and p-value 0.549, it can be concluded that there exists no significant difference in the Entrepreneurial Competencies between the Boys and Girls of the Vocational Higher Secondary Schools of Kerala.

Table 3: Comparison of the mean scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies Based on Parental Occupation

Parental Profession	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	p-value
Non Business	304	18.5	4.3	3.39**	0.001
Business	46	20.9	4.7		

Source: Primary data. ** indicates difference significant at 0.01 level

Data presented in Table 3 clearly shows that according to the Parental Occupation, Entrepreneurial Competencies of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students vary between 18.5 to 20.9. The highest mean score of 20.9 is shown against the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students whose parents are running Business as their Occupation. The least mean score of 18.5 is recorded against those Vocational Higher Secondary School Students whose Parents are having occupational background other than Business.

The variance analysis carried out to test the statistical significance of the difference of mean scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies based on Parental Occupation indicates that the variation is significant at one percent level as the t value is 3.39 and p-value is 0.001.

Table 4: Comparison of the mean scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies Based on Birth Order

Birth Order	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p-value
Eldest	153	21.8	4.5	111.77**	0.000
Middle	111	17.7	2.7		
Youngest	86	15.1	1.7		

Source: Primary data. ** indicates difference significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows that the Entrepreneurial Competencies in the Vocational Higher Secondary

Schools of Kerala on the basis of Birth Order vary between 15.1 and 21.8 respectively. The highest level of Entrepreneurial Competencies (Mean Score = 21.8) is seen against students whose Birth Order is Eldest. The students having Middle (17.7) and Youngest (15.1) Birth Orders in their families come in the second and third position.

The one-way ANOVA shows that the value ($F = 111.77$) is significant at one percent level (p-value 0.000). It shows that the variation in the Entrepreneurial Competencies according to the Birth Order is statistically significant.

From the F value and p-value of the data presented in Table 4, it is clear that the variation in the Entrepreneurial Competencies is significant according to the Birth Order of the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students. The data is further analyzed by using Scheffe's test of multiple comparison to know the significance of variation among the Vocational Students based on their Birth Order in relation to each other. The result of the Scheffe's test is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Scheffe's Test of Multiple Comparison of Entrepreneurial Competencies Based on Birth Order

Pair	F'	P
Eldest & Middle	45.2**	0.000
Eldest & Youngest	102.6**	0.000
Middle & Youngest	13.4**	0.000

Source : Primary data. ** indicates difference significant at 0.01 level

The Entrepreneurial Competencies of Vocational Higher Secondary School Students with Eldest Birth Order and Middle Position statistically differ ($F' = 45.2$) at one percent level with p-value 0.000. Similar result can be observed for the Entrepreneurial Competencies of the students having Eldest and the Youngest Birth Orders ($F' = 102.6$) which is significant at one percent level with a p-value of 0.000. The Entrepreneurial Competencies of students with Middle and Youngest Birth Orders also show a significant variation ($F' = 13.4$) and the p-value being 0.000. Thus, it can be concluded that the Entrepreneurial Competencies of Vocational Higher Secondary School Students with Eldest Birth Order are significantly high when compared with the other two Birth Orders.

From the analyses presented in Table 2 to Table 5, it is clear that the variation in the mean scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies is found significant in the case of Parental Occupation and Birth Order and not significant according to Gender.

Conclusion

The study found out that there existed a low level of Entrepreneurial Competencies among the Vocational Higher Secondary School Students of Kerala. The comparison of mean scores of Entrepreneurial Competencies was found to be significant in the case of Parental Occupation and Birth Order and not significant in the case of Gender. So, it is a high time to plant the seeds of entrepreneurship in the minds of students today. The study could be a source of immense intellectual excavation which triggers new, revitalized thinking for programmes, policies and practices in the field of Entrepreneurship Education at the Vocational Higher Secondary Schools of Kerala.

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