DOI: 10.28934/jwee25.12.pp155-173
JEL: A20, D9, I23, J16, L26

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Fostering Entrepreneurial Spirit: Impact of Incubation Activities on Female Students' Entrepreneurial Intention

Karunambika R [1]
Arthi J [2]
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Department of Business Administration, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

A B S T R A C T

Women around the world continue to inspire in various professions and careers. Women's entrepreneurship is one such sphere that is rapidly expanding around the globe. With women's entrepreneurial activity reaching levels comparable to men and showing higher engagement at an early age—the entrepreneurial intentions of female students are a crucial area of research. The objective of this study is to ascertain the impact of entrepreneurial incubation on the entrepreneurial intention of female students in selected higher education institutions. The well-being of female students is important not only to their personal development and success but also to the collective success and reputation of an educational institution. The study employs a descriptive research design and a stratified random sampling technique. The sample includes 250 female students from five NAAC and NIRF accredited colleges in the state of Tamil Nadu, and the data collected are analyzed statistically based on various tools like exploratory factor analysis, multiple correlation, regression analysis, and SEM. Results from the research recommends that entrepreneurial incubation activities need to be cultivated in every educational institution to nurture entrepreneurial intention among female students. This study attempts to establish the correspondence

[1] Corresponding author, e-mail: 18phbap003@avinuty.ac.in
[2] E-mail: arthi_mba@avinuty.ac.in

between various incubation activities and entrepreneurial intentions of female students in multiple institutions of higher education in Tamil Nadu.

KEYWORDS: *women entrepreneurship, incubation activities, entrepreneurial intention, higher education, gender-sensitive frameworks*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful driver of economic development, innovation, and social inclusion, especially in developing countries like India. Entrepreneurship in India is experiencing significant growth every year. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report (GEM 2022-23), India's NECI ranking has improved dramatically, from 16th in 2021 to 4th in 2022 and then to 2nd in 2023. The report also confirms higher entrepreneurial engagement at an early stage (18-34) compared to other individuals. It is a platform for achieving self-employment, creating jobs, and realizing untapped potential. However, as much as it has the potential to bring about change, entrepreneurship is underutilized by women, even among college students. Women, who constitute about half of India's population, still suffer from systemic constraints such as limited access to resources, socio-cultural biases, and lack of mentorship that stifle their entrepreneurial spirit. They are also hampered by conventional teaching methods that do not meet the specific needs and challenges of women. Universities have also launched entrepreneurship education programs in recent years to improve students' innovation and business skills. However, these programs rely primarily on traditional pedagogies such as theory-driven classroom training and generic business plan competitions that do not provide the hands-on experience needed to instill confidence, risk-taking, and innovation in female students.

The lack of gender-specific incubation models, such as tailored mentors, networking spaces for female role models, and access to seed capital, also means that the gap between entrepreneurial intentions and actions persists. Incubation activities such as start-up boot camps, mentorship workshops, collaborative workshops, and exposure to industry networks can potentially bridge this gap by creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs. These activities not only equip them with skills and knowledge, but also with confidence and resilience that help them overcome institutional and societal constraints. However, the implementation of such activities at universities remains fragmented and

inconsistent. Most programs also work in isolation, are not geared towards intensive interaction, or do not provide psychosocial support to address gender-specific challenges such as social norms or fear of failure.

Furthermore, personal contact in the implementation of incubation activities discourages women from rural or economically marginalized regions from reaching out and participating. The lack of empirical data on how incubation activities specifically affect female students' entrepreneurial intentions, self-efficacy, and business creation poses an even greater challenge to the development of an effective intervention. This research gap necessitates conducting an in-depth study to investigate how systematic incubation activities affect female students' entrepreneurial intentions. By identifying gaps in existing practices and emphasizing the intersection of socio-cultural dynamics and institutional support, this study aims to provide experiential insights into building equitable, gender-sensitive entrepreneurial ecosystems. In this regard, the current study seeks to explore the contribution of incubation activities in influencing the entrepreneurial intentions of female students at specific higher education institutions. It aims to investigate how the experiences of mentorship, skill acquisition, peer network, and access to resources through incubation programs influence their entrepreneurial motivation, perceived competence, and engagement in entrepreneurial activities. By examining the antecedents of entrepreneurial intention, which include entrepreneurial ability, entrepreneurial attitude, pre-startup behavior, perceived feasibility, and entrepreneurial obstacles, this study aims to contribute to more knowledge about women's entrepreneurship.

Review of Literature

In their study, Xanthopoulou and Sahinidis (2024) investigated the determinants of university students' entrepreneurial intention using a mixture of bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review. A detailed analysis of 802 documents was conducted, which were reduced to 677 studies showing the growing focus on the topic over the last decade. In the study, determinants are systematically categorized into four broad groups: contextual factors, motivational factors, and personal background factors. By overlapping quantitative findings based on bibliometric analysis and qualitative content analysis of the literature review, the study provides a comprehensive picture of the current research landscape. The findings

summarize salient trends and gaps in literature and provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to promote entrepreneurial behavior in students. This integration not only contributes to scientific understanding but also offers pragmatic advice for promoting entrepreneurship through contextualized interventions that can be adapted to individual circumstances.

Padmaja and Madhooha (2023) in their study have discussed the promotion of entrepreneurship in Indian higher education and highlighted strategies, outcomes, challenges, and opportunities. It emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurship education, including the integration of entrepreneurial curricula, extracurricular activities, and industry engagement to equip students with the necessary skills and resources. The results of the study show that these interventions have a positive impact on graduate entrepreneurial intentions and behavior, with a focus on improved funding opportunities that facilitate student business creation. However, problems such as resource scarcity, lack of knowledge, and insufficient cooperation between the various stakeholders, such as universities, industry, and government, are also discussed. Her study concludes with suggestions for improving entrepreneurship education and fostering a conducive environment for potential entrepreneurs in Indian higher education.

Bhandari et al. (2024) demonstrated that psychological capital directly influences entrepreneurial spirit in women, suggesting that confidence-building measures are as vital as technical competencies. Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory highlights the role of self-efficacy, observational learning, and social reinforcement in shaping individual behaviors and intentions. In the context of entrepreneurial development, incubation activities serve as critical environments where female students can observe successful entrepreneurial models, receive mentorship, and build confidence in their capabilities. Manjaly et al. (2022) discuss how self-assessment tools can help female students recognize their entrepreneurial potential, aligning with the Theory of Planned Behavior's focus on perceived behavioral control.In their study, Imran Anwar et al. (2020) investigated the determinants of entrepreneurial intention (EI) in Indian female university students, using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a theoretical framework. The study examines the functions of cognitive factors such as attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) and tests the moderator role of entrepreneurial education (EE). The results of data from 387 students from

three universities indicate that ATE, SN, and PBC have significant effects on EI and that EE supports these associations. The study confirms the substantial contribution of EE to entrepreneurial intentions and the need for specific educational interventions to empower female students in entrepreneurship. The findings of the study can help policymakers and educators interested in increasing women's participation in entrepreneurship and thereby promoting overall economic growth in India.

In their study, Wardana et al. (2020) investigated how entrepreneurial education affects students' entrepreneurial attitudes, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy and attitude playing a mediating role. The study applies structural equation modeling (SEM) and confirmatory factor analysis to examine data from 376 students from different universities in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The result shows that entrepreneurial education has a positive impact on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial attitude and ultimately on entrepreneurial mindset. In particular, the study confirms that although self-efficacy successfully mediates between education and attitude, it is not sufficient on its own to promote an entrepreneurial mindset. The findings add to the literature in that they clearly emphasize the role of a conducive learning environment in the development of students' entrepreneurial competence and thus in the development of curricula that enable innovative thinking and business creation. Fayolle and Gailly (2015) demonstrated that entrepreneurship education exerts a hysteresis effect, meaning that its influence on entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions persists over time. In the context of female students, incubation activities embedded within educational institutions can therefore have a lasting impact, strengthening entrepreneurial intention and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset even after the incubation program ends.

Wilson, Kickul, and Marlino (2007) demonstrated that entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between gender and entrepreneurial career intentions, emphasizing the need for targeted educational interventions to enhance women's confidence in entrepreneurial capabilities. According to Maes et al. (2015) gender differences significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions among university students, with societal norms and self-efficacy playing crucial roles Gupta and Turban (2009) examine the influence of gender stereotypes on the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the barriers that women entrepreneurs face due to societal perceptions, structural biases, and limited access to resources are

highlighted in the study. It emphasizes the need for gender-equitable policies to promote an equitable entrepreneurial environment.

Marlow and McAdam (2015) examine business incubators as gendered spaces and their impact on women-led startups. The study argues that incubators, although designed to promote entrepreneurship, often reinforce gender biases and limit opportunities for women entrepreneurs. The findings highlight the need for gender-sensitive incubation models to promote inclusivity in entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Brush, Greene, and Welter (2009) emphasize that entrepreneurial ecosystems must be sensitive to gendered experiences to effectively support women entrepreneurs. Their gender-aware framework suggests that incubation programs should not only provide access to resources but also address societal and institutional barriers that women face. In the context of higher education, designing incubation activities that are aligned with these principles can significantly enhance the entrepreneurial intention of female students.

Shinnar, Giacomin, and Janssen (2012) emphasize that gender and cultural factors significantly shape entrepreneurial perceptions and intentions. Their findings highlight the need for incubation activities that consciously address cultural stereotypes and enhance self-efficacy among female students. By creating supportive and inclusive entrepreneurial environments, incubators can help mitigate gender-based barriers and foster stronger entrepreneurial intention among women.

Bøllingtoft and Ulhøi (2005) conceptualize business incubators as dynamic, networked environments that foster entrepreneurial agency through social capital, collaboration, and shared learning. For female students, incubators structured around such networked models can provide critical peer support, access to mentors, and real-world entrepreneurial ecosystems. The study by Musthaq and Jegadeeshwaran (2023) emphasizes the critical role of *knowledge management practices* in enhancing *job performance* within higher education institutions. Drawing parallels, effective knowledge-sharing environments, much like those studied in Coimbatore's educational institutions, are essential in entrepreneurial incubation settings as well.

Shabnaz and Islam (2021) in their study investigated the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Bangladesh based on their entrepreneurial intentions and constraints. The data was collected through a coded questionnaire completed by 398 students majoring in

business. The study utilized statistical data analysis techniques such as exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis using SPSS software. The result of the present study shows that there are six main drivers of entrepreneurial intention and that independence and the motive of independence are the strongest drivers. Financial constraints and availability of supportive resources were also found to be important inhibiting factors for students' entrepreneurial intentions. The study highlights the need for practice-oriented entrepreneurship education and supportive policies to overcome perceived barriers and strengthen students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Rahman et al (2022) in their study identify factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions among female undergraduate students in Bangladesh, using structural equation modeling. They compare cross-cultural factors affecting female entrepreneurial intentions, highlighting similarities and differences between Indian and Bangladeshi contexts.

Paunovic and Musial (2024) explore gender differences in entrepreneurial intention, reasoning, self-efficacy, and education preferences, using the Entrepreneurial Event Theory framework as a complementary perspective to the Theory of Planned Behavior, focusing on perceived desirability and feasibility.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic development and individual empowerment is a potential area for women in India, especially students aspiring to pursue higher education. Despite pro-women policies and external pressure to achieve gender equality, women are still disadvantaged by institutional constraints such as limited access to assets, socio-cultural biases, and a lack of mentorship that discourage them from becoming entrepreneurs. Even when schools have introduced entrepreneurship education programs, these are usually based on traditional pedagogical approaches that do not address the specific needs of women. Traditional pedagogies such as theoretical classroom lectures and generic business plan competitions do not provide the hands-on, experiential learning needed to foster confidence, risk-taking, and innovation in female students. The lack of gender-specific start-up models, including tailored mentors, female network role models, and access to seed capital, also plays a role in creating a gap between women's intentions and actions. This study

attempts to examine the impact of institutional start-up activities on the entrepreneurial intentions of female students at selected universities. It seeks to determine whether access to mentors, skill learning, a network of peers, and the provision of resources through incubation influences their motivation, self-efficacy, and commitment to pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. This study will develop an understanding of how to foster equitable, gender-sensitive entrepreneurial ecosystems by identifying gaps in current practice and illuminating the relationship between institutional support and sociocultural forces. The findings will advise policymakers and universities on how to re-conceptualize incubation models that enable female students to overcome barriers and contribute meaningfully to India's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the impact of Incubation Activities on Female students' Entrepreneurial Intention in select colleges.
2. To suggest a model for Incubation activities for colleges.

Hypotheses of the Study

H_{01} There is no significant relationship between Incubation Activities on Female students' Entrepreneurial Intention

H_{02} There is no significant impact of Incubation Activities on the Entrepreneurial Intention of Female students.

Methodology of the Study

The present study is descriptive in nature. Both primary data and secondary data were used. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaires from female students at the respective selected colleges through the Internet, while the secondary data was collected from various research journals, college websites, project reports, books, and dissertations. A structured questionnaire was developed containing demographic items and 28 questions on a Likert scale to measure five key constructs. The questionnaire underwent rigorous validation, including expert review for content validity, a pilot test (Cronbach's α = 0.82-0.89),

and exploratory factor analysis (KMO = 0.87, Bartlett's test $p<0.001$) to confirm reliability and construct validity. Data collection was via online informed consent surveys, while analysis utilized SPSS for descriptive/correlational analyses and AMOS for SEM, with fit indices (CFI = 0.971, RMSEA = 0.032) meeting established thresholds. These methodological refinements strengthen the rigor and replicability of the study.

Five NAAC and NIRF-rated Arts and Science colleges in Coimbatore district were selected for the study. Stratified random sampling was used for data collection from the selected colleges. 50 students from five (5) colleges constitute the total sample of 250. Accordingly, the collected data were analyzed using various statistical methods such as multiple correlation, regression analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 1: Factors of Incubation Activities

Factor and Variance Explained	Components	Rotated Factor Loadings
Entrepreneurial Capacity	I am resourceful enough to be an entrepreneur	.832
	I have the capacity to become an entrepreneur	.730
	I have a part-time/internship experience	.736
	I have social and leadership skills required for entrepreneurship	.806
	Starting a firm and sustaining it would be easy for me	.636
	I have the knowledge to develop an entrepreneurial project	.873
Entrepreneurial Attitude	Trust in self to be an honest and reliable entrepreneur	.638
	High energy level that can be maintained over a long time	.540
	Good understanding of managing the business aspects	.809
	Adequate abilities and skills to be an entrepreneur	.769

Factor and Variance Explained	Components	Rotated Factor Loadings
	Great deal of pride when completing a project successfully	.551
Pre-incubation activities	Entrepreneurship course in the syllabus	.637
	Technology and research resources (library & internet) available in the institution	.720
	Journals regarding entrepreneurship available in the institution	.852
	Entrepreneurship seminars are conducted regularly	.743
	Workshop on entrepreneurship are conducted	.807
	Availability of Entrepreneurship Development Cell	.792
Perceived Feasibility	Entrepreneurship Seminar /counselling / workshops are conducted periodically	.750
	Fundraising suggestions are needed to fulfill an entrepreneurial dream	.522
	Local Incubator Support encourages understanding the entrepreneurship ecosystem	.722
	Moral support for Start-up by institutions is essential to start own firm	.445
	Redefined business model, as well as the idea, will enhance the confidence level	.598
	Incubation and acceleration program will give confidence to start own firm	.644
Entrepreneurial Barriers	Lack of in-depth knowledge in starting a firm	.700
	Unavailability of funds to start a firm	.703
	Not knowing the strategy to convert my innovative ideas into business process	.556
	Less support from the family to be an entrepreneur	.814
	Fear of failures	.596

Source: primary data

Table 1 shows the results of the factor extraction. Using principal component analysis, 28 statements were loaded to identify 5 factors. The factors were given names based on the agreement with the statements. The first factor identified is 'entrepreneurial capacity', the second factor is 'entrepreneurial attitude', the third factor is 'pre-startup activities', the fourth factor is 'perceived feasibility' and the fifth factor is 'entrepreneurial obstacles'.

B. Correlation Analysis

Relationship between Incubation Activities and Entrepreneurial Intention of the Female Students

H_{01} There is no significant relationship between Incubation activities on the Entrepreneurial Intention of Female students

Table 2: Coefficients of Correlation between Incubation Activities and Entrepreneurial Intention of the Female Students

S.No	Incubation Activities	Pearson Correlation	P Value
1	Entrepreneurial Capacity	0.856	0.007
2	Entrepreneurial Attitude	0.631	0.000
3	Pre Incubation Activities in Institutions	0.693	0.029
4	Perceived Feasibility	0.506	0.011
5	Entrepreneurial Barriers	0.750	0.014

Note: Significant at 5 % level

Source: Primary Data

The table above shows the relationship between the independent variable - Incubation activities and the dependent variable - Entrepreneurial intention of female students. The strongest relationship is between entrepreneurial capacity (0.856) perceived feasibility (0.506) and entrepreneurial intention of female students. The results are significant at a 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant relationship between the factors of start-up activities and entrepreneurial intention.

C. Regression Analysis

Impact of Incubation Activities on Entrepreneurial Intention of the Female Students'

H_{01} There are no significant impact of Incubation Activities on Entrepreneurial Intention.

Table 3: Impact of Incubation Activities on Entrepreneurial Intention of the Female Students

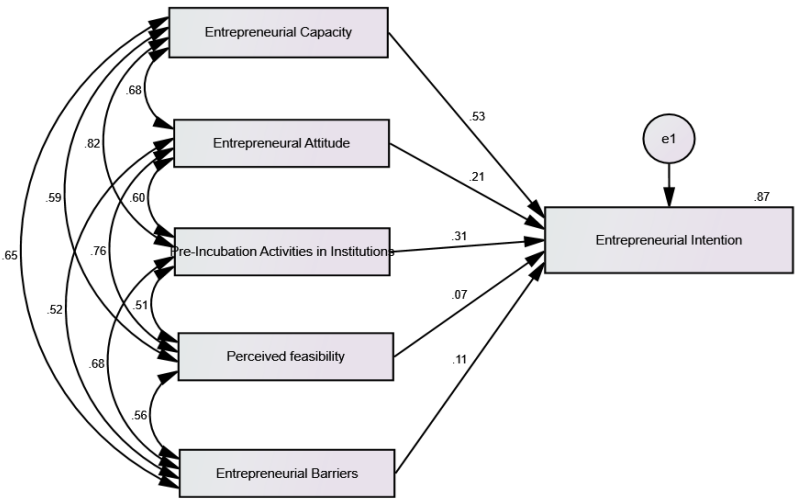
Model	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Sig.
Incubation Activities on the Female Students' Entrepreneurial Intention	.809	.803	.000[b]

Predictors: Entrepreneurial Capacity, Entrepreneurial Attitude, Perceived Feasibility, Entrepreneurial Barriers, Pre-Incubation Activities
Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial Intention
Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows the result of the regression analysis. The entrepreneurial intention of female students is considered as the dependent variable and the start-up activities in some higher educational institutions are considered as predictors. The result shows that each change in the selected predictors leads to an 80.9% change in the dependent variable, i.e. the entrepreneurial intention of female students in some higher educational institutions. The significance level is 5%, which reflects the significance of the regression effect.

D. Structural Equation Modeling

Effect of Incubation Activities on Female Students' Entrepreneurial Intention



Final SEM Model of Incubation Activities on Female Students' Entrepreneurial Intention

Table 4: Results of Goodness of Fit

Indices	X^2/df	P	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	RMR
Fit Value	1.241	.411	.911	.914	.921	.954	.971	.032	.041
Recomm. Value	<3.0	>0.05	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.95	<0.05	<0.05

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 shows the values for the goodness of fit indices. The X^2/df values are 1.241, the P-value is 0.411, the GFI is 0.911, the AGFI is 0.914, the NFI is 921, the TLI is 0.954, the CFI is 971, the RMSEA is 0.032 and the RMR is 0.041. All these values are well within the acceptable limits and thus prove that the results are acceptable for the validity of the specified model. This confirms that the data set adequately fits the proposed structural model of incubation activities on entrepreneurial intention.

Table 5: Regression Weights

DIM	INF	DIM	SE	UE	S.E.	C.R.	P
Entrepreneurial Intention	←	Entrepreneurial Capacity	.531	0.014	0.030	0.641	0.005
Entrepreneurial Intention	←	Entrepreneurial Attitude	.210	1.558	0.044	32.371	0.036
Entrepreneurial Intention	←	Pre Incubation Activities in Institutions	.311	0.032	0.031	1.013	***
Entrepreneurial Intention	←	Perceived Feasibility	.078	0.172	0.040	5.380	***
Entrepreneurial Intention	←	Entrepreneurial Barriers	.117	0.057	0.031	2.261	0.004

*** Significant at 0.05percent Level
UE – Unstandardized Estimate
SE – Standardized Estimate
S.E – Standard Error
C.R – Critical Ratio
P – Probability Value
DIM – Dimensions
INF – Influence

Source: Primary Data

Standardized estimation is used for regression weights to determine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. In this context, all five variables were found to positively influence entrepreneurial intention. It is described as:

1. If entrepreneurial capacity increases by one percent in a positive direction, then entrepreneurial intention may also increase by 0.531.
2. If entrepreneurial attitude has increased by one percent in a positive direction, then entrepreneurial intention has increased by 0.210.
3. If pre-incubation activities in institutions increased by one percent in a positive direction, then entrepreneurial intention increased by 0.311.
4. If perceived feasibility has increased by one percent in the positive direction, then entrepreneurial intention has obviously increased by 0.078.
5. If the awareness on entrepreneurial barriers has increased by one percent in a positive direction, then the entrepreneurial intention has increased by 0.117.

Table 6: Squared Multiple Correlation

Dimensions	Estimate
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.871

Source: Primary Data

All the variables of Incubation Activities including entrepreneurial capacity, entrepreneurial attitude, perceived feasibility, entrepreneurial barriers, and Pre-incubation activities in institutions, account for an 87 percent variance in Entrepreneurial Intention.

Findings and Suggestions for the Study

The results of the study show that entrepreneurial capacity is the most significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.531$), as Wardana et al. (2020) and Anwar et al. (2020), who discovered self-efficacy and perceived behavioral control as important factors in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Yet, this research builds on existing work by breaking

down ability into precise, concrete components such as leadership skills and resourcefulness that are even more applicable in gendered entrepreneurial environments (Brush et al., 2018). Similarly, the positive location of pre-incubation activities ($\beta = 0.311$) supports Padmaja and Madhooha's (2023) study on institutional support and differs from Shabnaz and Islam's (2021) case from Bangladesh, where issues of access dominated. This dichotomy underscores the influence of regional differences on entrepreneurial ecosystems. The low correlation of perceived feasibility ($r = 0.506$) compared to Ajzen's (1991) TPB model is perhaps indicative of systemic failures among Indian women, such as limited access to capital (Kelley et al., 2017) and further emphasizes the need for targeted interventions.

The focus of this research on experiential learning through internships and on-the-job training meets Nabi et al.'s (2017) objection to overly theoretical curricula on the head. While the geographical limitation to Coimbatore adds depth, it also echoes Xanthopoulou and Sahinidis' (2024) plea for a broader regional study. By placing these findings in the context of current debates, such as between individual capabilities (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015) and structural barriers (Marlow & McAdam, 2013), the study not only justifies its findings, but also makes a dual contribution to the literature: (1) measuring the extent to which start-up-specific variables bridge the gap between intention and action among women, and (2) calling for tailored mentoring models, a key gap highlighted by Henry et al. (2016).

Practical Implications

To put these findings into practice, the research sets out a multi-dimensional strategy for higher education institutions. First, they should emphasize entrepreneurial skills by developing problem-solving and leadership capacities through experiential learning - e.g. through start-up competitions and mini-incubators. Second, develop an entrepreneurial mindset by providing resilience workshops and exposure to female role models to overcome psychological barriers such as fear of failure. Third, reinforce pre-incubation activities by integrating entrepreneurship into core curricula and establishing Entrepreneurship Development Cells (EDCs) for continuous mentoring. Fourth, increase perceived feasibility through visible success stories (e.g. alumni networks) and pitch competitions with seed funding. Finally, overcome entrepreneurial barriers through financial literacy workshops, micro-loans and family support programs to dispel socio-cultural myths.

Together, these activities can create a space that supports women to move from intention to action, addressing systemic gaps and sparking economic and social innovation. Future longitudinal studies will assess the long-term impact of such interventions with continued refinement and measurable outcomes.

Conclusion

This study is based on the idea of promoting entrepreneurship; a study on how incubation activities influence female students' entrepreneurial intentions. The result of the study shows that entrepreneurial capacity, entrepreneurial attitude, pre-incubation activities, perceived feasibility, and entrepreneurial barriers strongly influence female students' entrepreneurial intentions. By removing barriers in the system and implementing start-up activities on campus, higher education institutions can create a climate that helps female students take entrepreneurial initiatives. Incorporating structured startup activities in conjunction with technological innovations and policies can bridge the gap between intention and action in entrepreneurship. This in turn will lead to economic growth, social empowerment, and gender balance in India's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Further, the study concludes that it is important to emphasize the need for collaboration between educational institutions, policymakers, and business stakeholders. Through the entrepreneurial spirit of female students, India can leverage a huge untapped potential that can drive innovation and sustainable growth in the future.

Limitations of the Study and the Scope for Future Research

The study on the impact of incubation efforts on female students' entrepreneurship spirit has its own limitations and leaves room for further research. It is limited to only five arts and science colleges in the Coimbatore district and hence may not be representative of the entire diverse educational landscape of India. Future research can also expand the geographical scope to include institutions from other regions and types, such as technical and professional colleges, to achieve broader coverage. The study also relies on self-reporting through structured questionnaires, which may lead to response bias. Future research could use qualitative methods such as interviews or case studies to confirm the findings. The study also

focuses mainly on institutional factors and encourages for further research on socio-cultural and family factors that determine women's entrepreneurship.

References

[1] **Ahamed, W.M., & Jegadeeshwaran M.** (2024). Impact of Knowledge Management Practices on Job Performance of Faculties with Special Reference to Select Higher Educational Institutions in Coimbatore District. *GBS Impact: Journal of MultiDisciplinary Research, 9*(2), 91-103.

[2] **Ajzen, I.** (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *50*(2), 179–211.

[3] **Anwar, I., Saleem, I., Islam, K. M. B., Thoudam, P., & Khan, R.** (2020). Entrepreneurial intention among female university students: Examining the moderating role of entrepreneurial education. *Journal of International Business and Entrepreneurship Development, 12*(4), 217–234. https://doi.org/10.1504/JIBED.2020.10032497

[4] **Bandura, A**. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.

[5] **Bhandari, P., Sigdel, B., Hye, A. M., Bhandari, S., & Bhattarai, A**. (2024). Fostering women entrepreneurs: Psychological capital, psychological empowerment and entrepreneurial spirit. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, (1-2), 1-18.

[6] **Bøllingtoft, A., &Ulhøi, J. P.** (2005). The networked business incubator—leveraging entrepreneurial agency? *Journal of Business Venturing, 20(2),* 265–290. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2003.12.005

[7] **Brush, C. G., Edelman, L. F., Manolova, T., & Welter, F.** (2018). A gendered look at entrepreneurship ecosystems. *Small Business Economics, 53(2),* 393–408. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-018-9992-9

[8] **Brush, C. G., Greene, P. G., & Welter, F.** (2009). A gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, 1(1),* 8–24.

[9] **Fayolle, A., &Gailly, B.** (2015). The impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial attitudes and intention: Hysteresis and persistence. *Journal of Small Business Management, 53(1),* 75–93. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12065

[10] **Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Global Report** (2022-23). https://www.gemconsortium.org/file/open?fileId=51380

[11] **Gupta, V. K., Turban, D. B., Wasti, S. A., &Sikdar, A.** (2009). The role of gender stereotypes in perceptions of entrepreneurs and intentions to become an entrepreneur. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 33(2),* 397-417. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2009.00296.x

[12] **Henry, C., Foss, L., &Ahl, H.** (2016). Gender and entrepreneurship research: A review of methodological approaches. *International Small Business Journal, 34(3),* 217–241. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242614549779

[13] **Kelley, D. J., Brush, C. G., Greene, P. G., & Litovsky, Y.** (2017). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 2016/2017 Women's Report. Global Entrepreneurship Research Association.

[14] **Liñán, F., &Fayolle, A.** (2015). A systematic literature review on entrepreneurial intentions: Citation, thematic analyses, and research agenda. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal, 11(4),* 907–933. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-015-0356-5

[15] **Maes, J., Leroy, H. & Sels, L.** (2015). Gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions: A TPB multi-group analysis at factor and indicator level. *European Management Journal*. *32*(5). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2014.01.001

[16] **Manjaly, N. B., Joseph, G., & Kailash NadhK. S.** (2022). Entrepreneurial Intention of Indian Women University Students. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, (3-4), 273-290. https://doi.org/10.28934/jwee22.34.pp273-290

[17] **Marlow, S., & McAdam, M.** (2013). Gender and entrepreneurship: Advancing debate and challenging myths; exploring the mystery of the under-performing female entrepreneur. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior& Research, 19(1),* 114–124. https://doi.org/10.1108/13552551311299288

[18] **Marlow, S., & McAdam, M. (2015)**. Incubation or Induction? Gendered Identity Work in the Context of Technology Business Incubation. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *39*(4), 791-816. https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12062

[19] **Nabi, G., Liñán, F., Fayolle, A., Krueger, N., &Walmsley, A.** (2017). The impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education: A systematic review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 16(2),* 277–299. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0026

[20] **Padmaja, R., &Madhooha, P. K.** (2023). Promoting entrepreneurship in higher education: A study on strategies, outcomes, challenges, and opportunities in India. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 25*(8), 11-16. https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-2508081116

[21] **Paunović, I., & Musial, J. (2024).** Gender gap in entrepreneurial intention, reasoning, self-efficacy, and education preferences among university students: An entrepreneurial event theory perspective. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, (3/4), 93-111.

[22] **Rahman, M. M., Salamzadeh, A., & Tabash, M. I. (2022)**. Antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions of female undergraduate students in Bangladesh: a

covariance-based structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, (1-2), 137-153.

[23] **Shabnaz, S., & Islam, N.** (2021). A study on entrepreneurial intention of university students in Bangladesh. *International Business Research*, *14*(10), 13-24. https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v14n10p13

[24] **Shinnar, R. S., Giacomin, O., & Janssen, F.** (2012). Entrepreneurial perceptions and intentions: The role of gender and culture. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 36(3), 465–493. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2012.00509.x

[25] **Wardana, L. W., Narmaditya, B. S., Wibowo, A., Mahendra, A. M., Wibowo, N. A., Harwida, G., &Rohman, A. N.** (2020). The impact of entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial mindset: The mediating role of attitude and self-efficacy. *Heliyon, 6*(6), e04922. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04922

[26] **Wilson, F., Kickul, J., &Marlino, D.** (2007). Gender, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial career intentions: Implications for entrepreneurship education. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 31(3), 387–406. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2007.00179.x

[27] **Xanthopoulou, P., &Sahinidis, A.** (2024). Students' entrepreneurial intention and its influencing factors: A systematic literature review. *Administrative Sciences, 14*(98). https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14050098

Article history: Received: February 26th, 2025

Accepted: May 14th, 2025

First Online: May 15th, 2025