Education, Training and the Entrepreneurial Mindset: A Psychometric Study of Entrepreneurs in Aizawl, Mizoram

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Abstract

This is a study conducted using the Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile (EMP). It is a psychometric instrument for analyzing entrepreneurial characteristics developed by Davis et al., (2016). It studies randomly selected 274 entrepreneurs in Aizawl, Mizoram. This paper attempts to explain the effect of an entrepreneur's educational qualification and training participation on his 'entrepreneurial mindset'. Significant differences are found between entrepreneurs with different educational backgrounds. The differences are prevalent in traits like 'independence', 'nonconformity', 'risk acceptance' and also in skills like 'idea generation' and 'persistence'. The entrepreneurs with training experience are also found to display essential entrepreneurial characteristics compared to those without formal training exposure.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Mindset, Traits, Skills, Educational Qualification, Training, MSME.

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship may mean different things to different people. The approaches taken by thinkers also varied in defining the term. Gartner (1998) classify the concept as the study of activities and behaviour performed by an entrepreneur. Bruyat & Julien (2000) regards the concept as value creation. Other researchers also try to explain it as the exploitation of opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurship is thus difficult to conceptualize because it demands specific skills and it ranges across activities performed using non-human and human resources and qualities to be successfully exploited. The concept may be explained as a process explored with distinct personality traits with the objective of building a business that increases its worth over time (Malsawmtluangi, 2024).

What constitutes a 'mindset'? It may refer to the collection of attitudes and way of thinking by a person. This helps in explaining an 'entrepreneurial mindset' as the meaningful interplay of intentions,

capabilities and perspectives that differentiates entrepreneurs from other professional individuals (Davis et al., 2016). Over the years, study on the entrepreneurial mindset shows three important aspects – the entrepreneurial cognitive aspect, the entrepreneurial behavioural aspect, and the entrepreneurial emotional aspects (Kuratko et al., 2021)

Models commonly used in studying personality characteristics of individuals and eventually entrepreneurs are the Five-Factor Model (FFM) by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) given by Ajzen (Malsawmtluangi, 2024).

The FFM which comprised of 'openness to experience', 'conscientiousness', 'extraversion', 'agreeableness' and 'neuroticism' is prevalent in research from the 1980's. Modern investigations on entrepreneurial characteristics are commonly done by employing this model. Essential aspects of personality however cannot be completely identified using only these models. This situation demands a comprehensive approach to identify additional personality characteristics needed to be possessed by successful entrepreneurs. In Mizoram context, the General Enterprising Tendency (GET) test developed by Caird & Johnson (1988) and the Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile (EMP) developed by Davis et al. (2016) are commonly used during the past recent years (Malsawmtluangi, 2024).

The population of Mizoram in the latest official record is 10,97,206, making up 0.09% of India's population (Census of India, 2011). This study focus on selected Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) located in Aizawl district, Mizoram. According to research estimates, more than 90 per cent of global businesses can be classified as MSMEs with the capacity to provide employment opportunities in the private sector to more than 50 per cent (Berry et al., 2001). They play crucial role in becoming wealth generators, job providers, innovation leaders and engineers of development. In this connection, it is identified that a large proportion of the entrepreneurship community in Mizoram comprised of MSMEs. The state government of Mizoram took active measures and allocate budgets under various departments.

Literature Review

Gaddam (2008) writes that one's belief in the control they have over the outcomes of their lives is what differentiates between successful entrepreneurs and unsuccessful ones. Three types of strengths are identified by McClelland (1987) as being dominant among successful entrepreneurs. They are the ones who are quick to execute; people with strong desire to accomplish goals; and the individuals who commit their efforts for the benefit of others. The FFM relates to both entrepreneurial intentions and its successful performance according to Zhao et al. (2010).

Existing literature supported that successful entrepreneurs display attributes such as the ability to take risk, being resilient in hardships, the ability to discipline oneself, the strent to work consistently, believing in one's hard work to get success, grit and the ability to handle people and difficult times (Vodã & Florea, 2019). Frese (2009) identify that the gained experience and knowledge are important determinants in entrepreneurship. Van Hugten et al. (2021) stressed that an effort to remain flexible according to situations is important to achieve good performance in business. It is believed by Caliendo et al. (2014) that the ability to strongly belief in one's hard work for success outcomes is the best potent of a successful entrepreneur. Autio et al. (1997) highlights that for an individual to lean towards entrepreneurship, his perspectives play a crucial role. In Thomas &

Mueller (2000), the required traits reported are strong sense of enthusiasm, belief in one's own effort as a predeterminant of success coupled with the ability to take calculated risks as and when required. Singh (2024) found that more than demographic variables, an individual's personality characteristics played a significant role in entrepreneurial inclination. The importance of access to resources, support systems and cultural values to entrepreneurial preparation are highlighted by Phabhakar & Singh (2025).

The motives of starting a business may not be same across cultures. Lalhunthara & Jyoti Kumar (2013) found that Mizo entrepreneurs' main motive to run a business is 'to earn money'. They also found that 'unemployment' plays a great role in influencing a person to take up entrepreneurship. In Vanlalhriati et al., (2022), having an entrepreneurial way of thinking is believed to correlate education and intention of students to pursue entrepreneurship. A student's general perception on sustainability, perceived behavioural control and support institutions are believed to be strong predictors of entrepreneurial intention among students in Odisha (Das & Pandey, 2025). Bag & Omrane (2021) provides evidence on how an entrepreneur's personality impacts their decision making process. Their study report from 182 entrepreneurs proved the role played by an entrepreneur's personality characteristics in the approach they use to solve problems and take decisions.

Research Gap

Studying a person's psychological characteristics is assumed to increase the ability to understand the behaviour of people in different environment. It is also expected to explain the extent to which differences in characteristics exists among different individuals (Malsawmtluangi, 2024). In this process, it is important to acknowledge the fact that every individual is different. Personality traits influence how a person reacts to opportunities lying ahead of him and hence more inquiries into the same may be encouraged (Roberts et al., 2007)

Recent examinations are done by authors like Vanlalhriati et al. (2022), Lalhunthara & Jyoti-Kumar (2013), Lalzuitluangi & Ramswamy (2019), Laldinliana (2022) and Daizova (2016) during the past 10 years. These authors reflect studies conducted in Mizoram context and focus only on limited factors like 'intentions to start enterprises'. Although they examined the motivating factors to run a business, the mentioned studies are mostly confined to school and college students. An important identification is the need to conduct a study based on individuals who actually run a business. This is supported by Salmony & Kanbach (2022) where they reported the need to include more active entrepreneurs in the mission to assess entrepreneurial personalities.

Research Objectives

Conducted among selected entrepreneurs in Aizawl Mizoram, the study aims to find out the influence of:

- Educational qualification on entrepreneurial mindset.
- Training participation on entrepreneurial mindset.

Research Methodology

A psychometric instrument developed in 2016 by Leadership Development Institute (LDI) of Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida, United States, called the Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile (EMP) is employed in this study. This instrument has been mainly used by professionals for helping clients like business persons and corporate leaders with a goal to enhance their capacity to think and act as an

entrepreneur (Davis et al., 2016).

The 14 dimensions/scales of EMP provided by Davis et al., (2016) are given under –

Traits

i. 'Independence'
ii. 'Preference for Limited Structure'
iii. 'Nonconformity'
iv. 'Risk acceptance'
v. 'Action Orientation'
vi. 'Passion'
vii. 'Need to Achieve'

Skills

i. 'Future Focus'
ii. 'Idea Generation'
iii. 'Execution'
iv. 'Self-Confidence'
v. 'Optimism'
vi. 'Persistence'
vii. 'Interpersonal Sensitivity'

Primary data in this study was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was formulated and then carefully analysed using guidelines of the EMP. To accurately measure the EMP scales, a questionnaire that comprised of 70 statements are formulated (wherein 5 sentences/statement for each trait/skill). Mean EMP score for each dimension/scale is calculated using the respondents' responses to a 5-point Likert scale items. Statistical tools – descriptive statistics like mean, and inferential statistics like one-way ANOVA and independent samples t-test – were used for analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. Sources of secondary data are conference papers, research journal articles, books and officially published government data.

Registration records extracted from the records maintained by the Department of Commerce & Industries, Govt. of Mizoram indicates that under Udyog Adhaar Memorandum (UAM) registration system, a total of 870 enterprises were registered at DIC, Aizawl between the year 2016-17 and 2019-20 (Malsawmtluangi, 2024). The UAM operates under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act of 2006. From a population of 870 enterprises, 274 sample respondents are selected using random sampling method, the sample size being calculated using Slovin's formula.

Analysis & Discussion

The 274 entrepreneurs in the study have a mean age of 35.6, ranging from 19 to 67 years. A total of 157 males (57 per cent) and 117 females (43 per cent) participated in the study who engaged in various business activities like:

- tailoring
- agriculture & livestock farming
- mechanical & technical works
- handloom
- baking
- beauty culture, etc.

The respondent entrepreneurs comprised of first generation (those who assume all risk and start their own venture) and second generation (the ones taking over their family run business) (Fraboni & Saltstone, 1990). Entrepreneurs from the first generation are individuals venturing into a completely new business of their own, without any help (inheritance or otherwise) from their family (Venkatapathy, 1983). 79.6 per cent of entrepreneurs in this study are first generation while 20.4 per cent are entrepreneurs whose family already paved their way into the business world.

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Educational Qualification

A study conducted in South Africa by Peters & Bridjlal (2011) revealed that an entrepreneur's education level and his capacity to manage business is strongly related and can eventually increase revenue from sales by employing more skilled labour.

Educational Qualification of Respondents

Table 1: Education of Respondents

Qualification	No.	%
Below HSLC	26	9.5
HSLC	50	18.2
HSSLC	65	23.7
Graduate	66	24.1
Post-graduate & above	67	24.5
Total	274	100.0

(Source: Primary Source)

The educational qualifications shown in Table 1 are explained under –

'Below HSLC':

The respondents who are either uneducated/illiterate or did not pass Class-X exam. 9.5 per cent of them fall in this category.

'HSLC':

The ones who cleared High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC)/Class-X exam. 18.2 per cent of them are HSLC qualified.

'HSSLC':

Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC)/Class-XII exam qualified. There are 65 entrepreneurs (23.7 per cent) who passed Class-XII.

'Graduate':

They are entrepreneurs who finished Bachelor degree courses in various subjects. 66 entrepreneurs (24.1 per cent) qualified as graduates

'Post-graduate & above':

They are the highest educated among the respondents, who completed their Master degree programmes across various disciplines. They make up 24.5 per cent of the sample entrepreneurs

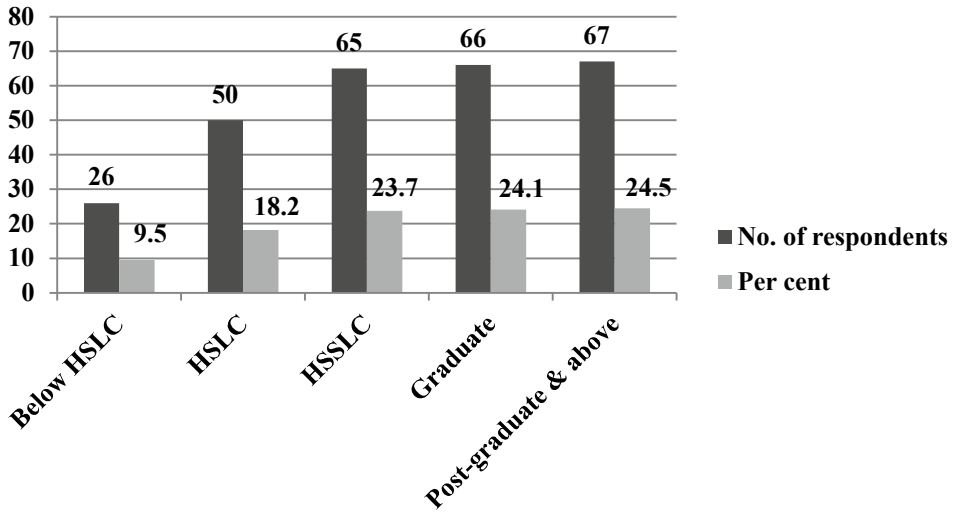

Figure 1: Educational Qualification

A graphical presentation of the educational qualification is displayed in Figure 1 above.

EMP Scores of Entrepreneurs and their Educational Qualification

In this section, mean EMP scores are tested with educational qualification using a one-way ANOVA test. This process is carried out to identify the differences that exist between Mizo entrepreneurs with diverse backgrounds.

Table 2: ANOVA1

Trait	df	F	Sig.
Independence	4	5.402	0.000338
Preference for Limited Structure	4	18.241	0.000021
Nonconformity	4	5.871	0.000152
Risk Acceptance	4	2.835	0.025
Passion	4	5.778	0.000178
Need to Achieve	4	4.039	0.003
Future Focus	4	4.102	0.003
Idea Generation	4	4.958	0.001
Execution	4	4.307	0.002
Persistence	4	5.759	0.000184

(Source: Primary Source)

A list presented below indicates the characteristics in which the score of $p<0.05$ (refer Table 2) –

a) 'independence'
b) 'preference for limited structure'
c) 'nonconformity'
d) 'risk acceptance'
e) 'passion'
f) 'need to achieve'
g) 'future focus'
h) 'idea generation'
i) 'execution'
j) 'persistence'

This finding is evidence that entrepreneurs with varying educational degrees have different mindset in starting and operating their entrepreneurial undertaking. To investigate the education level groups where these difference prevails, Post hoc Tukey HSD test is employed. The results displayed in Tables 3 and 4 provides detailed findings on the dimensions that showed statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) between the entrepreneurs with varying educational degrees –

Table 3: Tukey HSD - Traits

Traits	Qualification (A)	Qualification (B)	Mean Difference (A-B)	Sig.
Independence	Below HSLC	Post-graduate & above	2.05511*	0.019
	HSSLC	Graduate	1.58485*	0.016
		Post-graduate & above	1.80896*	0.003
Preference for Limited Structure	Below HSLC	Graduate	1.97669*	0.025
		Post-graduate & above	3.85706*	0.00001
	HSLC	Post-graduate & above	3.11552*	0.00001
	HSSLC	Graduate	1.83054*	0.003
Nonconformity	Below HSLC	Post-graduate & above	-2.35419*	0.002
	HSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.93881*	0.001
	HSSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.46958*	0.015
Risk Acceptance	HSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.68179*	0.042
Passion	HLSC	Graduate	-1.58727*	0.020
		Post-graduate & above	-2.39731*	0.000051
Need to Achieve	Below HSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.88117*	0.020
	HSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.39194*	0.042
*Mean difference is significant at the level of 0.05.				

(Source: Primary Source)

Results presented in Table 3 above indicate that how entrepreneurs exercise their 'independence' is not similar between entrepreneurs with low level of education and high level of education. This difference exist in between –

- Between below Class-X and PG & above.
- Between Class-XII and Graduates.
- Between HSSLC and PG & above.

In another observation, the entrepreneurs' 'preference for limited structure' is different –

- Between entrepreneurs below Class-X and Graduates.
- Between entrepreneurs below Class-X and PG & above.
- Between entrepreneurs who passed Class-X and PG & above.
- Between entrepreneurs who passed Class-XII and Graduates.

The entrepreneurs under study show significant variations in how they are comfortable to 'nonconformity'. The variations are noticed between the following levels –

- Below Class-X and PG & above.
- Class-X and PG & above.
- Class-XII and PG & above.

There is not much variations identified with 'risk acceptance' trait of the entrepreneur, except between entrepreneurs who passed Class-X and who finished post-graduation. No important variation between the entrepreneurs is observed with their 'action orientation' attribute.

Between entrepreneurs who passed Class-X and are graduates, significant differences are noted in how passionate they are with their ventures. Difference in 'passion' is also found between the ones who passed Class-X and the ones who finished Post-graduation.

'Need to achieve' is another important attribute needed to become a successful entrepreneur. In this study, the entrepreneurs show meaningful variances in their desire for continued achievements and these variances exists between entrepreneurs–

- Who did not pass Class-X and PG & above.
- Who passed Class-X and Post-G & above.

Table 4: Tukey HSD – Skills

Skills	Qualification (A)	Qualification (B)	Mean Difference (A-B)	Sig.
Future Focus	HSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.67463*	0.004
	HSSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.33617*	0.019
Idea Generation	Below HSLC	Graduate	-1.92191*	0.040
		Post-graduate & above	-2.27153*	0.008
	HSLC	Post-graduate & above	-1.72537*	0.016
Execution	HSLC	Graduate	-1.17455*	0.046
		Post-graduate & above	-1.71254*	0.001
Persistence	Below HLSC	Graduate	-1.85082*	0.040
		Post-graduate & above	-2.04191*	0.017
	HSLC	Graduate	-1.79697*	0.007
		Post-graduate & above	-1.98806*	0.002
*Mean difference is significant at the level of 0.05.				

(Source: Primary Source)

Displayed in the above Table 4 are test figures to help identify what significant relationships occurred between respondents with different education degrees. This is done with reference to the entrepreneurial skills they possess. In the attribute 'future focus', significant difference have been noticed between entrepreneurs who –

- Passed Class-X and PG & above.
- Passed Class-XII and PG & above.

High educated individuals are assumed to generate more innovative ideas compared to individuals with low level of education. For 'idea generation' characteristic, there are significant differences between entrepreneurs who –

- Did not pass Class-X and Graduates.
- Did not pass Class-X and PG & above.
- Passed Class-X and PG & above.

'Execution' skills of entrepreneurs are also found to be significantly different between the following entrepreneur groups –

- Class-X passed and Graduates.
- Class-X passed and Post-graduates.

The entrepreneurs' level of 'persistence' are observed to be significantly different in these groups –

- Below Class-X and Graduates.
- Below Class-X and Post-graduates.
- Class-X and Graduates.
- Class-X and Post-graduates.

It may be noted that no meaningful statistical differences are identified between the respondents with differing educational backgrounds in attributes like:

- 'self-confidence'
- 'optimism'
- 'interpersonal sensitivity'.

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Training Participation

Education, training with specific purposes and industry experiences are known to be vital for preparing entrepreneurs with the required capabilities, so as to equip them with the courage to navigate the challenges of managing a business (Cooney, 2012). Lee et al. (2021) also acknowledged that entrepreneurship knowledge and exposure to trainings have a high chance to positively nurture hidden passion and desire among students. A study based in Kerala by Karikkan & Nikhitha (2025) reported a growing need to sensitize undergraduate and postgraduate students to information on training and entrepreneurship programmes available.

Training Participation of Respondents

Table 5: Training Participation

Participation	No.	%
Yes	151	55.1
No	123	44.9
Total	274	100.0

(Source: Primary Source)

To promote entrepreneurial mindset along with technical and managerial knowhow in Mizoram, under the initiatives of various agencies, many training programmes are conducted in the past and present. 55.1 per cent of the entrepreneurs under study acknowledge their exposure to the said programmes while 44.9 per cent have not been these kind of trainings.

EMP Score of Entrepreneurs and their Training Participation

This section is an assessment of mean EMP scores which are tested with the entrepreneurs' participation in training, using an independent samples t-test. This is done to check what differences relay among entrepreneurs with diverse backgrounds.

Table 6: Mean EMP Scores

Traits/Skills	Training Participation	No.	Mean
Independence	Yes	151	18.8411
	No	123	18.5285
Preference for Limited Structure	Yes	151	17.4503
	No	123	17.2764
Nonconformity	Yes	151	16.9470
	No	123	16.9675
Risk Acceptance	Yes	151	17.8212
	No	123	17.3415
Action Orientation	Yes	151	17.7815
	No	123	17.7236
Passion	Yes	151	17.5960
	No	123	17.3008
Need to Achieve	Yes	151	17.7682
	No	123	17.3577
Future Focus	Yes	151	17.5166
	No	123	16.8943
Idea Generation	Yes	151	17.4040
	No	123	16.4715
Execution	Yes	151	16.9338
	No	123	16.5772
Self-confidence	Yes	151	17.6424
	No	123	16.9268
Optimism	Yes	151	18.6821
	No	123	18.5366
Persistence	Yes	151	17.7351
	No	123	17.2439
Interpersonal Sensitivity	Yes	151	18.9536
	No	123	18.2520

(Source: Primary Source)

According to Table 6, higher mean EMP scores are achieved in most of the dimensions by entrepreneurs with training experience. These traits are –

- independence
- preference for limited structure
- risk acceptance
- action orientation
- passion
- need to achieve
- future focus
- idea generation
- execution
- self-confidence
- optimism
- persistence
- interpersonal sensitivity

An important observation is that the entrepreneurs with participation history in tranings scored higher EMP means. Those without training experience depict higher EMP mean in one trait only – in 'nonconformity'.

In Table 7, highlighted are the figures presenting the scales that achieved statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) between respondents of different training exposures –

Table 7: t-test1

Skill/Trait	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Future Focus	2.020	0.044
Idea Generation	2.566	0.011
Self-confidence	2.098	0.037
Interpersonal Sensitivity	2.050	0.041

(Source: Primary Source)

It is observed from t-test results given in the above table that there occurs a significant difference between respondents with and without training experience on how focused they are on the future opportunities and threats (future focus). The respondents with training attendance are more future-oriented. A significant difference between trained and untrained entrepreneurs is also detected with 'idea generation' ability. Trained entrepreneurs are significantly better in coming up with innovative ideas than lesser trained entrepreneurs.

Trained entrepreneurs are found to be more self-confident than untrained entrepreneurs. The trained entrepreneurs have 'interpersonal sensitivity' towards other people to a larger extent than the untrained ones. This implied that the entrepreneurs who attended trainings have better chance to improve their tendency to control their emotions when needed. It indicates possession of a high emotional intelligence as well.

Research Findings

The level of education attained by an entrepreneur is found to be an important determinant of their entrepreneurial mindset. Inequalities in mindset among entrepreneurs exist mostly between entrepreneurs with lower education and higher qualified ones. In this study, more than 40 per cent of the entrepreneurs considered are highly educated (having graduate and post-graduate degrees). No significant differences are

observed between the entrepreneurs in lower education levels as well as in between entrepreneurs in higher education levels. In the following traits/skills, no significant differences are observed –

'

a) action orientation"
b) self-confidence"
c) optimism"
d) interpersonal sensitivity'.

Majority of the respondents reported to have participated in training programmes. These programmes are assumed to enhance their capacity building and business performance. It is however surprising that as much as 44. 9 per cent of registered MSME units in this study are fund to have not taken part in any single training programme since their commencement.

Participation in training programmes have a positive influence on improving and enhancing entrepreneurial mindset, and the influence is significant in the following characteristics –

'

a) future focus"
b) idea generation"
c) self-confidence"
d) interpersonal sensitivity'.

Conclusion

The spirit of entrepreneurship and ecosystem shows considerable improvement in the recent years and across various demographic factors in Mizoram. High literacy rate of the state along with possession of entrepreneurial qualities significantly influence the entrepreneur's level of education and their participation in business related training programmes. How the entrepreneurial mindset is being exercised by the entrepreneurs however differs across entrepreneurs with varying levels of educational qualification.

An important highlight of this study is the role played by specialized training in business for entrepreneurs in order to inculcate required entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurs who actively participated in the said programmes are found to exhibit significantly higher levels in their entrepreneurial skills. It proves that formal training programmes (apart from providing technical knowledge) improves emotional intelligence of entrepreneurs and their ability to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics existing within a business.

Recommendations

Prior studies concluded that the motives to start a business may be common among entrepreneurs. The present study added that their entrepreneurial mindset is notably enhanced by education and training. Policies should focus on making specialized business training more accessible by ensuring that entrepreneurs (especially those with lower formal education) are equipped with the cognitive tools and confidence required to sustain and grow their ventures in a competitive market. This is expected to maximize the success rate of MSMEs in the region to a measurable extent. Corrective measures have to be adopted by DICs to ensure better involvement and participation of registered members in these programmes so that they do not miss out on opportunities and incentives formulated for them. A more dedicated role of government institutions in promoting entrepreneurial innovation is also suggested in line with the findings of Qureshi & Baijal (2024).

Scope for Future Research

The study did not measure business performance. It is confined only to the assessment of entrepreneurial mindset of the Mizo entrepreneurs, irrespective of their earnings and performance. For

future research, it is suggested that relationships between variables like entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneur's educational background and their business performance be built.

Limitations

The sample entrepreneurs of the study are a group of successful and unsuccessful ones, or a combination of active and non-active entrepreneurs. This is because all MSMEs registered are not indicative of success or operative units. The study is limited to the employment of only one psychometric tool only.

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