

# Commercial Proficiency is the Key to Success: An Analytical Purview of Women Agropreneurs

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## Abstract

Women entrepreneurs are often motivated by a deep desire to positively impact the world and create something meaningful. They are driven by a clear vision of how their products, services, or ideas can solve problems, improve their lives, or contribute to society. Entrepreneurial motives vary across gender, culture, and the economy (Fauziah et al., 2023)<sup>1</sup>. This study investigates the motivational factors underlying the selection of entrepreneurship by female Agropreneurs from the Kanyakumari District. Primary data were collected from a group of 240 women using an Interview Schedule. Cronbach's alpha coefficient derived here was 0.943 for the 20 variables under consideration and proved to be reliable for further analysis. The SPSS and AMOS packages were used for the analytical model, along with the Sobel calculator. The 20 variables were filtered into three major components with the help of factor analysis: Commercial Proficiency (.921), self-subsistent (.826), and Technical Proficiency (.820), consisting of 10, 4, and 4 variables, respectively. The association is significantly strong and positive between Technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency (.722\*\*), Self-Subsistent and Commercial Proficiency (.627\*\*), and Self-Subsistent and Technical Proficiency (.617\*\*). The value of the Sobel test is 4.57, which is highly significant as the p value becomes 0.000 which is within the standard limit of 0.05, and the value of the VAF value is .23, which is within the limit of .20 to .80, and the same is proved through the interaction chart. It is concluded that the mediation is prominent between technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency, and so it is suggested that women Agropreneurs should improve their proficiencies both commercially and technically to possess self-sustained entrepreneurship. Future studies can be carried out to probe the generation gap and technology adoption by women entrepreneurs in the prime areas of agricultural production and business.

**Keywords:** Agropreneurs, Commercial Proficiency, Motivators, Technical Proficiency, Self-Subsistent

## Introduction

The phrase women entrepreneur is defined as a woman or group of women who initiate, organise, adopt business activities, and run a business enterprise. According to Schumpeter (1947)<sup>2</sup>, women entrepreneurship is based on female participation in the equity and employment of a business enterprise. Women entrepreneurs are often motivated by a deep desire to make a positive impact on the world and create something meaningful. They are driven by a clear vision of how their products, services, or ideas can solve problems, improve lives, or contribute to society. Entrepreneurial motives vary across gender, culture, and economy (Fauziah F et al., 2023)<sup>1</sup>.

In general, women and men decide to launch entrepreneurial start-up ventures for extrinsic, intrinsic, and transcendental reasons (Mas-Tur et al. 2015)<sup>3</sup>. In another research done by (Nguyen et al., 2020)<sup>4</sup> a qualitative research study was done to the business context and the role of women entrepreneurs in Vietnam and they have identified five motivators such as increasing incomes, being one's own boss, providing jobs for family members, using previous experience and training, and ensuring job security. Mas-Tur et al. (2015)<sup>3</sup> explains the differences between extrinsic, intrinsic, and transcendental factors and discussed the motivations associated with push and pull factors. Meyer and Hamilton (2020)<sup>5</sup> study highlighted the importance of entrepreneurial training, especially within the female cohort, as it could potentially enhance the growth ambitions of these entrepreneurs. Study done by (DiRienzo C.E., & Das J., 2021)<sup>6</sup> had examined the relationship between the size of a country's informal sector and the prevalence of female entrepreneurship in the formal economy. The analysis results indicate a significant inverse relationship between the size of the informal sector and the prevalence of female entrepreneurship in the formal sector. Although the presence of women in entrepreneurial activities is increasing, several impediments have been reported (Davidson and Burke, 2004)<sup>7</sup>. With some regional variations, women across developing countries face constraints in accessing economic opportunities, productive resources, markets, information, infrastructure, technology, human capital and adequate networks, affecting their business performances and viability (Bardasi et al., 2011<sup>8</sup>; Ahmad, 2011<sup>9</sup>; Holland, 2014<sup>10</sup>; Adom and Asare-Yeboah, 2016<sup>11</sup>). In terms of their motivations to start a business, studies suggest that females in the UK tend to be more motivated by making a difference in the world or earning a living than by building wealth and income or continuing a family tradition (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003<sup>12</sup>; Hart et al., 2020<sup>13</sup>). Personal aspirations usually help determine the various factors in accomplishing goals. Attitudes and motives are inextricably linked and will reveal the need for inspiration to satisfy the behavioural traits that a business must exhibit, namely (Adiza et al. 2020)<sup>14</sup>: effort, never quit, enthusiasm, and strong dedication combination of

dynamic influences that determine work attitudes and arise in and around the individual. Motivation is defined as the inclination to do something for a specific reason, such as need, want, drive, or urge. Furthermore, previous related reviews showed that the motivational factors were limited to agriculture production, risk, and job opportunities, and they also concentrated on particular nations. While previous studies have dealt with the execution and management of entrepreneurial activities, barriers, and hurdles encountered along with societal pressures and circumstances, this study highlights the motivational factors that make them take up agropreneurship as a venture. The motivational studies carried out were focused on the traditional and basic motivational factors, whereas the present study aimed to evaluate the motivational factors at higher-order levels. In this context, researchers have attempted to evaluate the motivational factors of Women Agropreneurs from Kanyakumari District from various angles so as to probe into the answer to the question of what constitutes women to delve into entrepreneurship in general and agropreneurship in particular.

### Literature Review

A growing body of research indicates that entrepreneurship has the potential to empower and liberate women in developing nations, leading to economic benefits and positive transformations in society (Kamberidou 2020)<sup>15</sup>. Female entrepreneurs effectively manage and synchronise various factors related to production, make informed decisions by evaluating risks, and generate employment opportunities for others (Rajeh et al., 2019)<sup>16</sup>. In recent years, there has been a notable surge in scholarly interest in female entrepreneurs, owing to their remarkable growth as a significant segment of business proprietors worldwide. Women entrepreneurs have a pivotal impact on nurturing the societal and economic welfare of a nation, as they create job opportunities and contribute to their financial prosperity (Bullough et al., 2022)<sup>17</sup>. Over the past few years, numerous researchers have extensively explored the realm of female entrepreneurship, focusing particularly on emerging economies and the inherent challenges they entail (Shoma, 2019<sup>18</sup>; Isaga, 2019<sup>19</sup>). It is essential to

shed light on emerging nations because they exhibit unique factors that contribute to the low involvement of women in entrepreneurial endeavours compared to developed countries. Research findings suggest that women entrepreneurs in these contexts encounter heightened barriers and are often discouraged from initiating business ventures (Panda, 2018)<sup>20</sup> Prejudices and societal expectations affect a woman entrepreneur's ability to build a successful business (Adom & Anambane, 2019)<sup>21</sup>. Agripreneurship and entrepreneurship are similar in their exploration of opportunities, motivation, risk-taking abilities, and the desire to succeed. Nonetheless, the first has a unique characteristic that is distinct from the agricultural sector. (Bannor et al., 2021<sup>22</sup>; Lans et al., 2017<sup>23</sup>; Pindado & Sánchez, 2017<sup>24</sup>). Agripreneurs can take risks and always seek new information in agriculture. (Bairwa et al., 2014)<sup>25</sup>. Several researchers (Murali and Jhamtani, 2003<sup>26</sup>; Singh et al., 2013<sup>27</sup>) reached different conclusions on farmers' risk orientation; most farmers concluded that they were at a medium risk level. "The entrepreneurial behaviour of dairy farmers comprises nine components: innovativeness, achievement motivation, decision-making ability, risk orientation, coordinating ability, planning ability, information seeking, cosmopolites, and self-confidence" (Benjamin, 2018)<sup>28</sup>. Depending on circumstances, such as society, location, and cultural variables, female entrepreneurs may require distinct competencies to succeed in business. For instance, female business owners in developing nations face greater societal challenges than their counterparts in developed nations (Etim & Iwu, 2019)<sup>29</sup>. Consequently, female entrepreneurs may require different competencies to succeed in these circumstances than they would in more developed nations. While the previous studies dealt with the execution and management of entrepreneurial activities, barriers and hurdles encountered along with the societal pressures and circumstances, this study narrows to highlight the motivational factors that made them to take up agropreneurship as the venture. In this study, 20 motivational factors were considered for the analysis and validation.

## Research Methods

This study intends to probe the motivational factors underlying the selection of entrepreneurship by women Agropreneurs from Kanyakumari District. In Kanyakumari district, out of the Marginal Agricultural laborers (17212), only 3347 (19%) are female workers. Hence,  $p$  is taken as 0.19, and  $q$  is 0.81, which gives a sample size of 240 by applying Cochran's formula. These 240 sample entrepreneurs are taken from four taluks based on the magnitude of the number of families engaged in agriculture. The primary data were collected from a group of 240 women with the help of an Interview Schedule. Twenty tested and filtered variables were used by following a five-point Likert-type scale (from 5 = "Strongly Agree" to 1 = "Strongly Disagree") to measure the motivational perspectives of the participants. Here, the stratified proportionate random sampling method is used to approach women Agropreneurs. For internal consistency and reliability, we measured Cronbach's alpha, which is a method of estimating internal reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient derived here is 0.943 for the twenty variables under consideration and proves them to be reliable for further analysis. The SPSS and AMOS packages were used for the analytical model, along with the Sobel calculator.

## Motivating Factors

Women entrepreneurs are driven by a variety of motivational factors, including the desire for financial independence, autonomy, and work-life balance. They are also motivated by personal fulfilment, such as the opportunity to use their creativity and skills and to achieve recognition of their contributions. Additionally, family support and social factors can play significant roles in their entrepreneurial journey. A Globally, women represent about one in three high-growth entrepreneurs and one in three innovation entrepreneurs that are focused on national and international markets (Elam, A. & GEM, 2021)<sup>30</sup>. Altogether, 20 variables were considered to analyse the motivational perception of female Agropreneurs after cleaning the data.

**Table 1 KMO and Bartlett's Test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.847
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3153.331
	df	153
	Sig.	.000
Reliability Statistics	Cronbach's Alpha	.943
	N of Items	20

**Source:** Calculated

The value obtained for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.847 which is sufficient to conduct the test. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is proved through Chi-Square (3153.331), degrees of freedom, and the test is proved to be statistically significant as the p value (0.000) is within the standard limit of 0.05. Hence, these variables were considered eligible for further analysis. The value of Cronbach's alpha was .943 which indicates high reliability for the 20 variables used in the study.

**Factor Analysis for the Motivating Factors**

Factor analysis is a statistical method used to identify the underlying factors that explain the relationships between a set of observed variables, such as the motivating factors behind women's entrepreneurship. By applying factor analysis, researchers can reduce a large number of observed

variables to a smaller set of underlying factors, which can then be interpreted and understood more easily. Sukhjeet et al. (2016)<sup>31</sup> studied the motivational factors of women entrepreneurs and revealed that ambition, support, professional competence, confidence, affluence, independence, responsiveness, and work environment influence women entrepreneurs to start a business. Identification of the motivational factors of women entrepreneurs will help foster entrepreneurial growth by framing suitable entrepreneurship development strategies. It will be helpful for entrepreneurs in particular, and policymakers in general. (Bhavani M, 2018)<sup>32</sup> the study reveals the motivational factors such as self-accomplishment, hygiene factors, utilization of their knowledge and skills, support from their families and government influencing them to start their business.

**Table 2 Factor Analysis for the Motivating Factors**

Rotated Component Matrix				
Variables	Components			Cronbach's Alpha
	Commercial Proficiency	Self-subsistent	Technical Proficiency	
Taking care of Family Needs	.830			.921
Business expertise	.775			
Conducive Environment	.737			
Joint family background	.718			
Previous Experience	.692			
Impressive profit attraction	.658			
Need for dominance	.610			
To overcome Unemployment	.520			
To Safeguard against uncertainty in life	.484			
Innovation motive	.484			

Common good of the nation		.801		.826
To have self-dependent life		.773		
Vitality of rural areas		.763		
Good Support and encouragement		.586		
Expertise in technical Know-how			.751	.820
Favourable Demographic and economic factors			.749	
Passion for work			.704	
Availability of Ample Opportunities			.556	
% of Variance	28.114	19.464	17.936	
Cumulative %	28.114	47.578	65.515	
% to total	43	30	27	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.				

Source: Primary Survey

**Commercial Proficiency:** This factor filtered ten variables namely Taking care of Family Needs (.830), Business expertise (.775), Conducive Environment (.737), Joint family background (.718), Previous Experience (.692), Impressive profit attraction (.658), Need for dominance (.610), to overcome Unemployment (.520), To Safeguard against uncertainty in life (.484), and Innovation motive (.484). The value of the variance of this factor was 28.114, which accounted for 43 percent out of the total. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was .921 stating a good measure of reliability.

**Self-subsistence:** This factor filtered four variables, namely the common good of the nation (.801), self-dependent life (.773), vitality of rural areas (.763), and Good Support and encouragement (.586). The value of the variance of this factor was 19.464, which is 30 percent out of the total. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .826, which is a good measure of reliability.

**Technical Proficiency:** This factor filtered four variables: expertise in technical know-how (.751), Favourable Demographic and economic factors (.749), passion for work (.704), and Availability of Ample Opportunities (.556). The value of the variance of this factor was 17.936, which represents 27 percent out of the total. Cronbach's alpha for

this factor was .820, which is a good measure of reliability.

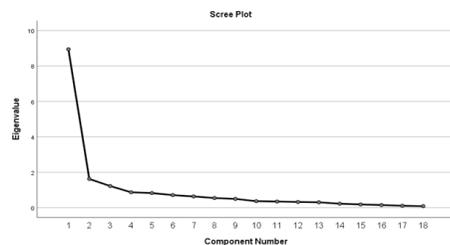


Figure A

### Correlation Analysis for the Motivating Factors

A correlation analysis of women entrepreneurs' motivations can reveal the factors that are most strongly linked to their decision to start and run a business. (Debnath et al., 2020)<sup>33</sup> studied the motivational factors that encourage women to become successful entrepreneurs and their contribution to the growth of sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (Caballero C.2024)<sup>34</sup> shows the results of correlation analysis of the relationship among factors that motivated women to enter into business and their business performance. Hence, motivational factors are positively correlated with business performance ( $r = 0.280$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the motivation to

become an entrepreneur and the performance of women entrepreneurs in Aizawl City. This study attempts to highlight the correlations among the motivating factors.

**Table 3 Correlation Analysis for the Motivating Factors**

Factors	Commercial Proficiency	Self-Subsistent	Technical Proficiency	
Commercial Proficiency	r	1		
	Sig.			
Self-Subsistent	r	.627**	1	
	Sig.	.000		
Technical Proficiency	r	.722**	.617**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

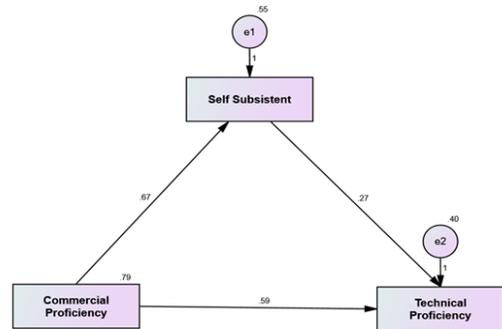
Source: Primary Survey

The association is significantly strong and positive between Technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency (.722\*\*), between Self-Subsistent and Commercial Proficiency (.627\*\*), and between Self-Subsistent and Technical Proficiency (.617\*\*). The analysis shows that commercial and technical proficiencies make them self-subsistent and help them to be successful in their endeavours.

**Mediation and Moderator Analysis for the Motivators**

Mediation and moderation analyses are valuable tools for understanding the complex relationships between motivators and the success of female entrepreneurs. Mediation explores how one variable transmits the effect of another on the final outcome. Moderation examines whether the relationship between two variables is influenced by a third variable. These analyses can help identify the key factors that drive women’s entrepreneurial journeys and how these factors interact with each other. The influence of obstacles on the ML of women’s entrepreneurship in India is significant (Coleman et al., 2019<sup>35</sup>; Nayak et al., 2023<sup>36</sup>). This suggests that if challenges are not removed or reduced, it would be difficult for them to stay motivated, improve, and grow their enterprises. Challenges include mediating between the factors and ML of female entrepreneurship in India. Push and Pull factors mediate the challenges in achieving motivation for entrepreneurship. This research reveals a fresh insight that indicates that obstacles not only impede the growth, performance,

and development of their enterprises but also have an impact on the necessity and opportunity-driven factors that persuade them to start their enterprises. Through training and education, women can acquire the essential skills, ingenuity, and competencies needed to overcome obstacles and improve their quality and standard of living (Jan et al., 2023)<sup>37</sup>.



**Figure B Mediation Analysis for the Motivators**

Here, commercial proficiency was considered an independent variable, technical proficiency as a dependent variable, and self-stent as the mediator. The following hypotheses were proposed to substantiate this analysis:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significance difference between Self-Subsistent and Commercial Proficiency
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significance difference between Technical Proficiency and Self-Subsistent
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is no significance difference between Technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency.

**Table 4 Hypotheses Testing for the Motivators**

Hypotheses	Constructs	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remarks		
H1	Self-Subsistent	<---	Commercial Proficiency	.674	.054	12.450	0.000	Accepted
H2	Technical Proficiency	<---	Self-Subsistent	.270	.055	4.933	0.000	Accepted
H3	Technical Proficiency	<---	Commercial Proficiency	.595	.059	10.113	0.000	Accepted

Source: Primary Survey

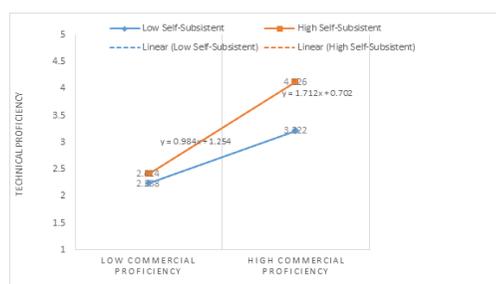
All the hypotheses taken for the study have been accepted as the p-value lies within the threshold limit of 0.05, and the critical ratio is above 1.96 with (Z value of 5% of significance). For the association between Self-Subsistent and Commercial Proficiency (t:.674, S.E: .054, C.R: 12.45, p: 0.000), technical proficiency and self-subsistent (t:.270, S.E: .055, C.R: 4.933, p: 0.000), and Technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency (t:.595, S.E: .059, C.R: 10.113, p: 0.000).

**Table 5 Mediation Effect of Motivational Factors**

Factors	Commercial Proficiency	Self-Subsistent	Sobel Test
Total Effects			Test Statistic: 4.57, Standard Error: 0.04 p-value: 0.000
Self-Subsistent	.674	.000	
Technical Proficiency	.777	.270	
Direct Effects			
Self-Subsistent	.674	.000	
Technical Proficiency	.595	.270	
Indirect Effects			
Self-Subsistent	.000	.000	
Technical Proficiency	.182	.000	
VAF	.234		

Source: Primary Survey

The value of the Sobel test is 4.57 and is highly significant as the p-value becomes 0.000 which is within the standard limit of 0.05. Further, Commercial Proficiency has a more direct, indirect, and total effect on technical proficiency than the Self-Subsistent factor. The variance accounted for (VAF) computed the magnitude of the indirect effect on the total effect. The VAF calculates the proportion of variance of a dependent variable indirectly explained by an independent variable via a mediator variable. The values of VAF stressed the existence of partial mediation between technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency since the calculated VAF value is .23, which is within the limit of .20 to .80. Hence, it is concluded that mediation is prominent between technical and commercial proficiency. The effect of the mediation is illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure C Moderation Effect of the Motivators**

### Suggestions

**Enhanced Proficiency:** The 20 variables taken for the study were filtered into three major components with the help of factor analysis: Commercial Proficiency (.921), self-subsistent (.826), and Technical Proficiency (.820). Through

Correlation analysis, it is observed that the commercial and technical proficiencies make them self-substantial and help them to be successful in their endeavours. To improve the proficiency of women entrepreneurs, a multifaceted approach is needed that focuses on skill development, access to resources, and fostering a supportive ecosystem. This includes providing access to tailored training programs, mentorship opportunities, and financial resources as well as promoting networking and role models.

**Networking and Support Systems:** To update and upskill the technological expertise of women entrepreneurs, it is essential to foster networking events, workshops, and online platforms where women can connect with peers, share experiences, and build valuable business networks to learn, learn, and relearn technology. Linking women entrepreneurs with experienced mentors and coaches can provide guidance, support, and advice to nourish the support system.

### Conclusion

Female entrepreneurs effectively manage and synchronise various factors related to production, make informed decisions by evaluating risks, and generate employment opportunities for others. The survey, which was conducted among 240 women Agropreneurs who are directly and indirectly involved in agricultural work, was analysed in this research paper. The main objective of this research is to explore the motivational factors that lead them to choose entrepreneurship. Fourteen variables were considered to evaluate motives and were found to be reliable, as per the value of Cronbach's alpha. The 20 variables were filtered into three major components with the help of factor analysis: Commercial Proficiency (.921), self-subsistent (.826), and Technical Proficiency (.820), consisting of 10, 4, and 4 variables, respectively. Through Correlation analysis it is observed that the proficiencies of commercial and technical make them Self-Subsistent and help them to be successful in their endeavours. The three hypotheses taken for the study have been accepted as the p value lies within the threshold limit of 0.05, and the critical ratio is above 1.96 (Z value). The effect of mediation is tested through the

Sobel Test and VAF analysis, and the test reveals that there exists partial mediation between technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency since the calculated VAF value is .23, which is within the limit of .20 to .80. The value of the Sobel test is 4.57 and is highly significant as the as the p value turned to be 0.000 which is within the standard limit of 0.05. The interaction effect chart proves the same. Hence, it is concluded that the mediation is prominent between technical Proficiency and Commercial Proficiency, so it is suggested that the women Agropreneurs should enhance their proficiencies both commercially and technically to possess self-sustained entrepreneurship along with nourishing networking and supportive systems. This study has been conducted only among the women Agropreneurs, that is, among those who carried out entrepreneurship in agriculture and agro-based products, who have been scattered in different areas of Kanyakumari District and hence have the limitation of generalisation of results. Future studies can be carried out to probe into the generation gap and technology adoption by women entrepreneurs in the prime areas of Agriculture production and business.

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