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# Gendered Aspect of Entrepreneurial Orientation: The Role of Mindfulness



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## ABSTRACT

*A developing country like India has realized the vital role of Entrepreneurship in economic growth, and mindfulness is very crucial for becoming a successful entrepreneur. The paper examines the relationship of mindfulness with Entrepreneurial orientation and all of its dimensions. The data was collected from 152 working professionals using a purposive sampling technique. MANOVA is performed to measure the impact of independent variables (gender, thought of doing business and level of mindfulness) on dependent variables, i.e., Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk. Firstly, the results conclude that interaction among the combination of mindfulness, thought of doing business and gender variables have an impact on combined entrepreneurial orientation. Secondly, it is found that mindful females who have thought of doing their own business have a stronger entrepreneurial orientation. The presence of more women in leadership roles will contribute to business growth; thus, such*

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*talent must be educated and trained for the benefit of the organization and the nation as a whole.*

**KEYWORDS:** *entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurs and mindfulness, business*

## **Introduction**

Mindfulness is nowadays becoming a buzzword in organizations as well as in individual life settings. Mindfulness practices have enabled individuals to strengthen their problem-solving abilities through careful examination of the present ongoing challenges (Penman, 2015). Mindfulness is a cognitive technique that helps in being aware of our surroundings (Langer, 2016) and living in the present moment with careful scrutiny of all the positives and negatives. Baer (2003) has described mindfulness as a process of paying attention to the present with purpose without being judgmental to unfold any experience. It has stimulated divergent thinking and built cognitive pathways for innovative solutions and competitive advantage. Because of the complex and dynamic business environment, mindfulness offers a state of mental awareness and coping mechanisms. Mindfulness is often used with interventions, but mindfulness as a trait is more stable over time (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Organizations are ascertaining the role of mindful practices in creating a balanced and positive work culture. Firms are using their strategies with mindfulness. One such strategy is an entrepreneurial orientation which includes risk-taking propensity, proactiveness and innovation. Such integration not only helps in socioeconomic growth but also leads to the prosperity of the nation. Langer and Piper (1987) state that in order to achieve reliable performance in a dynamic environment, organizations and individuals are dependent on how they think, perceive the competition in their surroundings and respond to it. Such ability to choose the best out of existing opportunities requires mindfulness-based approaches. Moreover, mindfulness has been positively associated with employee well-being and performance in occupational settings (Reb et al., 2015).

The following study is an attempt to identify the relationship of mindfulness with Entrepreneurial orientation and all of its dimensions as a company-level strategy to gain a competitive advantage.

## **Literature Review**

Mindfulness is the concept of being attentive and aware of our actions in the present (Vidal-Melia et al., 2022). It is a psychological process that helps an individual to pay complete attention to ongoing life experiences. It is a learned skill to live in the present moment without the fear of being judged by other people. With meditation, yoga and mental exercises, one can excel in the art of mindfulness, which will help in giving equal attention to one's internal and external body occurrences (Prakash, 2021). It does not only reduce stress but increases empathy, compassion and awareness in an individual (Murnieks et al., 2020). Mindfulness has been studied from both individual and group perspectives (Capel, 2014). Mindfulness includes Intention, Attention and Attitude. These are considered the building blocks of mindfulness developed by Shapiro et al. (2006). Intention plays a major role in an individual's life, which answers the "why" of doing something, 'intentions' in mindfulness depict the willingness and reason to do a particular thing with attention. 'Attitude' describes the "how" of mindfulness. With this understanding of the model, it gained relevance in an individual's day-to-day life as it proved to be influencing individual, group and organizational relationships as well (Christopher & Maris, 2010). Not only the individual aspect but mindfulness has been studied in organizational and entrepreneurial aspects too. In entrepreneurship, an entrepreneur recognizes a new set of opportunities and is aware of one's strengths and weaknesses (Baron & Ensley, 2006). In this context, recognizing and utilizing new opportunities requires mindfulness to facilitate the pattern recognition process effectively. Gordon and Schaller (2014) reported a direct relationship between mindfulness with market analysis and opportunity recognition necessary for the entrepreneurial process and idea creation. An entrepreneur should be aware of his external conditions as well as his internal capabilities, entrepreneurship being a cognitive task (Pryor et al., 2016). Additionally, mindfulness also has an influence on individual decision-making processes and abilities. Therefore, in order to understand the motivation behind any entrepreneurial venture, it is equally important to identify the mindfulness process behind each entrepreneurial activity (Krueger, 2000). Deciding whether the opportunity is going to reap benefits or add to liabilities is a decision that involves risk and demands mindful decision-making. An entrepreneur is likely to evaluate risk and be proactive with such decisions. Moreover, in order to be a successful entrepreneur, it is important to identify the cultural,

technological, societal, financial, behavioral and other barriers through the self-assessment process (Manjaly et al., 2022). There comes the pertinent role of mindfulness in regulating entrepreneurial thinking and actions. An individual with a high level of mindfulness seems to be having more proactive ability to differentiate relevant and irrelevant information. Individuals, who have undergone mindfulness training, have developed the ability to be aware and self-observing (Mukherjee, 2019).

Organizations nowadays are focusing more on having an entrepreneurial orientation. It is a strategy-making practice that helps organizations to launch their corporate ventures (Muindi & Masurel, 2022). For enhancing a firm's performance Miller (1983) has derived five dimensions of entrepreneurship: "risk-taking ability", "proactiveness", "autonomy", "innovativeness" and "competitive aggressiveness". These dimensions are positively correlated with entrepreneurial orientations and tend to impact the firm's performance (Dess & Lumpkin, 2005). Innovativeness is considered to be a major component of entrepreneurship strategy. Yang (2014) investigated mindfulness in organizations with innovation from a cognitive perspective and reported a positive relationship between the two. Moreover, managerial mindfulness has a positive impact on Research and Innovation (Hu et. al., 2019). Rerup (2005) argued that mindfulness enables entrepreneurs to be proactive and better anticipate and exploit threats and unexpected events. Moreover, more mindful use of prior experience can be used to rebuild and sustain in ambiguous, ill-structured and complex situations. Mindfulness also helps individuals to take risks and manage their investments well (Dayton, 2014). Entrepreneurs should have risk-taking abilities to work in a dynamic environment for sustainable growth, which can be enabled with the help of mindfulness as it helps make financial decisions, which involves high-risk tolerance (Elma & Baydas, 2020). An individual with high mindfulness has more potential to increase their earnings performance.

It is pertinent to mention that the literature has highlighted the gender identity and differences between males and females while exploring entrepreneurial orientation (Marlow & Patton, 2005). Females tend to experience more challenges in different cultural settings and contexts (Muindi & Masurel, 2022) than their male counterparts. Moreover, entrepreneurial motivation is also influenced by push and pull factors. However, pull factors, i.e., intrinsic positive forces such as self-fulfillment, self-awareness and need-recognition, tend to have more impact on

entrepreneurial intent among individuals (Dhar et al., 2022). This gap and difference can be reduced by innovative socialization processes and mindfulness training. Various organizations like Google (Kelly, 2012) and General Mills have started offering mindfulness training and programs for their workforce (Jackson, 2018). This will result in improving cognitive flexibility and attentiveness among individuals, especially females (Good et al., 2015). Moreover, acting under uncertainty and managing a wide span of external environment requires selective attention and proactive trait. Therefore, with such training, individuals' entrepreneurial actions and intention of starting their own ventures are accelerated among those who are high in mindfulness, as it plays a significant role in increasing engagement of entrepreneurial behavior and orientation (Gelderen et al., 2019; Penman, 2015).

## **Research Methodology**

The study examines the relationship between Mindfulness and Entrepreneurial Orientation. The research has been carried out using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire has four items, namely Entrepreneurial Orientation, Risk, Innovativeness and Proactiveness. The questionnaire has three parts. Part A was primarily focused on collecting the demographic details. It included Gender and whether they thought of doing business or not. Part B mapped the level of Mindfulness among people in terms of High/ Low using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). The questionnaire was constructed on a five-point Likert scale for measuring the variables. Part C measured the Entrepreneurial Orientation by using the Entrepreneurial Orientation scale.

A total of 231 questionnaires were circulated, and 159 responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 68.8%. After removing the incomplete questionnaire, a total sample of 152 working professionals from Delhi NCR who have a minimum of one year of experience were taken for this study. The distribution and collection of data was from June to September 2022. The study used a purposive sampling technique to select samples that were from IT, Banking and Retail. The following instruments were used for collecting the primary data.

**Five Facet Mindfulness Scale** – It is a psychological measurement created by Baer et al., (2006) to describe Mindfulness. The questionnaire has 39 items divided into 5 dimensions:

- Observing: it measures an individual's inner experience and reaction to a particular stimulus.
- Describing: it describes an individual's ability to express feelings and thoughts.
- Acting with awareness: these measures one's ability to take conscious and rational actions without being influenced by thoughts or reflections.
- Non-Judging: it measures the tendency of not judging our inner experience as good or bad and admitting our inner self as it is.
- Non-reactivity to inner experience: it assesses the tendency to allow the release of any provocative, emotional stimuli easily.

**Entrepreneurial Orientation Scale:** It was used to measure innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness. The scale was developed by Covin & Slevin (1989).

- Innovativeness depicts the tendency to support new ideas. It means creating something new in products or services.
- Proactiveness is the far-sightedness and strategy-making ability to anticipate future opportunities and use them to get a competitive advantage.
- Risk-taking is the risk of utilizing the available resources in uncertainty.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The internal consistencies of FFMQ coefficients were as follows: Observing: .72, Describing: .73, Acting with awareness: .69, non-judging: .69 and non-reactivity: .84.

Cronbach alpha for Entrepreneurial Orientation was found to be 0.9. The Five Facet Mindfulness Scale and Entrepreneurial Orientation Scale is a widely accepted research instrument, yet it was validated again by using the expert validity method.

### **Data Analysis**

MANOVA (Multivariate analysis of variance) technique was used to explore the relationship among gender, thought of doing business (asking the respondents whether they have ever thought of starting their own

business/enterprise/startup) and the level of mindfulness with entrepreneurial orientation and its components (innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking).

*Table 1: Sample distribution of study*

Subject Factor	Value Label	N
gender	male	82
	female	70
thought of doing business	yes	113
	no	39
mindfulness	Low	70
	High	82

Table 1 shows the sample distribution of the study. Out of 152 respondents, 82 were males and 70 were females, 113 responded yes and 39 responded no regarding the question if they had thought of doing business before, 70 respondents reported a low level of mindfulness and 82 respondents reported a high level of mindfulness.

*Table 2: Multivariate test results of significant impact factors*

Multivariate Tests						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Wilks' Lambda	0.00	17491.382	3.00	142.00	0.00
Mindfulness	Wilks' Lambda	0.37	81.265	3.00	142.00	0.00
thought of doing business *	Wilks' Lambda	0.94	3.027	3.00	142.00	0.03
mindfulness gender *						
thought of doing business* mindfulness	Wilks' Lambda	0.93	3.358	3.00	142.00	0.02

A three-way MANOVA test is undertaken to analyze the impact of independent variables (gender, thought of doing business and level of mindfulness) on dependent variables, i.e., Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk at a 95 percent level of significance. Table 2 represents Wilk's Lambda values for each independent variable and interactions among them. It is interpreted that mindfulness (Wilk's Lambda = 0.37, F value (3, 142) = 81.26, p value = 0.00); thought of doing business\*mindfulness (Wilk's Lambda = 0.94, F value (3, 142) = 3.02, p value = 0.03); gender\*thought of doing business\*mindfulness (Wilk's Lambda = 0.93, F value (3, 142) = 3.35, p value = 0.02) has impacted significantly on the combined dependent variable i.e., entrepreneurial orientation, innovativeness, proactiveness and risk. The remaining gender, thought of doing business, gender \* thought of doing business, gender \* mindfulness has not impacted significantly on the combined dependent variables.

*Table 3: Summary of analysis of variables of significant factors on Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)*

<b>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</b>						
<b>Source</b>	<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Type III Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Mindfulness	Innovativeness	3.15	1	3.15	83.20	0.00
	Proactiveness	5.69	1	5.69	116.52	0.00
	Risk	4.30	1	4.30	173.52	0.00
	Entrepreneurial Orientation	4.32	1	4.32	136.45	0.00
thought of doing business * mindfulness	Innovativeness	0.18	1	0.18	4.86	0.03
	Proactiveness	0.28	1	0.28	5.67	0.02
	Risk	0.20	1	0.20	8.03	0.01
	Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.22	1	0.22	6.89	0.01
gender * thought of doing business * mindfulness	Proactiveness	0.24	1	0.24	4.98	0.03
	Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.12	1	0.12	3.71	0.05

*\*Represents intersection among two or more variables, this table contains only significant values*



Further scrutiny of the MANOVA (Table 3) inferred that mindfulness and thought of doing business\*mindfulness were found to have statistically significant differences on dependent factors, i.e., Innovativeness, Proactiveness, Risk and overall Entrepreneurial Orientation ( $p < 0.05$ ). Further, it is inferred that gender \* thought of doing business \* mindfulness has a statistically significant difference on only Proactiveness and Entrepreneurial Orientation. The post-doc analysis will provide an in-depth understanding of the difference in the impact of the independent variables on combined dependent variables.

*Table 4a: Results of significant mean difference of Mindfulness on Entrepreneurial Orientation*

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>mindfulness</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Innovativeness	Low	2.80
	High	3.15
Proactiveness	Low	2.70
	High	3.17
Risk	Low	2.80
	High	3.20
Entrepreneurial Orientation	Low	2.77
	High	3.17

*Table 4b: Results of significant mean difference of thought of doing business \*mindfulness on Entrepreneurial Orientation*

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>thought of doing business</b>	<b>mindfulness</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Innovativeness	Yes	Low	2.73
		High	3.16
	No	Low	2.87
		High	3.13
Proactiveness	Yes	Low	2.64
		High	3.20
	No	Low	2.77
		High	3.13
Risk	Yes	Low	2.73
		High	3.22
	No	Low	2.86
		High	3.18

Dependent Variable	thought of doing business	mindfulness	Mean
Entrepreneurial Orientation	Yes	Low	2.70
		High	3.19
	No	Low	2.83
		High	3.15

*Table 4c: Results of significant mean difference of gender\*thought of doing business \*mindfulness on Entrepreneurial Orientation*

Dependent Variable	gender	thought of doing business	mindfulness	Mean
Proactiveness	male	Yes	Low	2.74
			High	3.12
		No	Low	2.69
			High	3.06
	female	Yes	Low	2.54
			High	3.28
		No	Low	2.85
			High	3.20
Entrepreneurial Orientation	male	Yes	High	3.24
			Low	2.78
		No	High	3.12
			Low	2.79
	female	Yes	High	3.08
			Low	2.62
		No	High	3.26
			Low	2.88

Table 4a shows that there exists a statistically significant difference of mean among dependent variables with respect to levels of mindfulness at a 95 percent confidence level. In other terms, it infers that a respondent who has a high level of mindfulness is found to possess greater innovativeness, proactiveness, risk factors and entrepreneurial orientation as compared to those who have a low level of mindfulness. In addition, it is found that individuals with a high level of mindfulness are highest in the risk-taking component of entrepreneurial orientation as the mean score of risk and high level of mindfulness is highest.

Table 4b represents that there exists a statistically significant mean difference among dependent variables with respect to the interaction of two

independent variables, i.e., levels of mindfulness and outcome of thought of doing business of each respondent at a 95 percent confidence level. It concludes that, given an individual has thought of doing business and is on a high level of mindfulness, this individual is found to be highest at all dependent factors, i.e., Innovativeness (3.16), Proactiveness (3.28), Risk (3.22) and Entrepreneurial Orientation (3.19).

Table 4c represents that there exists a statistically significant mean difference among dependent variables with respect to the interaction of three independent variables i.e., gender, levels of mindfulness and outcome of thought of doing business of each respondent at a 95 percent confidence level. It shows that a female individual who has thought of doing business and is on a high level of mindfulness is found to be high on dependent factors, i.e., Proactiveness (3.20) and Entrepreneurial Orientation (3.26) when compared to men who have thought of doing business and are high level of mindfulness.

The MANOVA results show the importance of mindfulness among entrepreneurs for possessing higher entrepreneurial orientation. Numerous research examines the influence and relationship between mindfulness and entrepreneurship (Mukherjee, 2019). The study concludes that when mindfulness is combined with the thought of opening one's own business, the overall entrepreneurial orientation of females is found to be higher than males. Hence, there is a much greater need for diverging the focus on female entrepreneurs as they possess greater entrepreneurial orientation than males, provided a high mindfulness level. The entrepreneurial market must explore opportunities through the lens of young female entrepreneurs by providing adequate facilities and knowledge for becoming successful, especially in developing countries where females are still struggling for equality.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

Results show that mindfulness; interaction of thought of doing business and mindfulness; and interaction among gender, thought of doing business and mindfulness independent variables have an impact on combined entrepreneurial orientation. It is found that a high level of mindfulness in females who have thought of doing their own business has a greater entrepreneurial orientation. Also, females are found to be the highest in the proactiveness dimension of entrepreneurial orientation. Women

professionals may have a stronger ability to trust their instincts and intuition in comparison to their male counterparts, and this makes them proactive in making decisions that are based on analysis and rationality. Women professionals are perceived to be more supportive which may encourage the design and implementation of entrepreneurial initiatives in an organization. The results of the study are consistent with the few studies that stated there is a difference in gender identity and the difference between males and females while exploring entrepreneurial orientation (Marlow & Patton, 2005; Gelderen et al., 2019; Kundu & Rani, 2004; Martinez Jimenez, 2009). Thus, we suggest that women play a pivotal role in enhancing entrepreneurial activities in an organization. In the age of equal opportunity, this makes complete sense. In a country like India, female leadership still lacks the potential and mindfulness can help to fill this gap. The presence of more women in leadership roles will contribute to business growth, thus organizations need to recruit and train such talent for the benefit of the organization.

Researchers and professionals from across the world are considering a variety of measures to help build a more happy, healthy, productive and balanced work-life environment. Physical and mental health are the most important problems faced by MNCs and policymakers. In such a scenario, mindfulness practices have enabled individuals to strengthen their problem-solving abilities by careful examination of the present ongoing challenges. Mindfulness will result in more self-acceptance, including one's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, numerous researchers have demonstrated that mindfulness helps people feel replenished, less stressed, and happier. The study adds to the current literature that the level of mindfulness has a significant impact on innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial orientation. Entrepreneurial orientation defines entrepreneurial activity in a number of aspects and is frequently referred to as a precursor to an organization's success. Thus, mindfulness enables entrepreneurs to cope with the pressures of instigating something new. Organizations should train their employees through mindfulness for necessary behavioral changes as a part of their daily operations to get the dual benefit, i.e., increased employee well-being and better performance of the company.

A developing nation like India has great entrepreneurial opportunities, and policymakers are undertaking initiatives such as Skill India to promote the Startup India campaign. Educational institutes are being set up, and

entrepreneurial education has gained importance in recent times. These institutions can focus on developing training programs, especially for women and including mindfulness in their modules. Higher mindfulness and entrepreneurial orientation will result in higher innovation and research opportunities. Schemes and opportunities must be molded in a way that promotes female participation in the entrepreneurs' market by providing an environment that contains prerequisites and adequate facilities for becoming an entrepreneur, such as knowledge, skills and financial assistance. Women entrepreneurs can be involved in mentoring female trainees. A kind of hand-holding will keep up the morale of trainees and will manifold their efforts in the organization.

### **Future Research**

The study further states the scope of analyzing the relationship of entrepreneurial orientation through the lens of government assistance, gender identity perspective and different categorial development status of the respective economies provided by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Further, a study for examining the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the success of an entrepreneur through longitudinal data in the presence of high and low mindfulness levels can be undertaken for an in-depth understanding of entrepreneurial behaviors (Gaikwad & Pandey, 2022).

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