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WHY IS TODAY'S YOUTH SO ATTRACTED TO BUSINESS?

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Abstract This paper investigates why entrepreneurship has become an unusually visible and attractive aspiration amongtoday's college-age youth in India, and why the appeal appears stronger than the job-centred career idealassociated with the previous generation. It studies the historical growth of salaried employment and later startupculture, psychological needs for autonomy, status, competence and control, digital access to markets, institutionalsupport, and social-media portrayals of wealth and freedom. Its central original evidence is the author's survey of100 students: the author reports that 80-90% showed addictive or problematic social-media use and that studentsaspiring to entrepreneurship cited social media as their sole stated reason. Published research is used to situatethis result. Crucially, comparable time-series evidence is limited: a 2013 student survey already found stronglong-term entrepreneurial aspiration, while a 2023-24 national student survey found that employment remains themost common immediate post-graduation plan but entrepreneurship grows as a five-year aspiration. Differentmethods prevent a direct numerical trend claim. The paper therefore asks what makes business ownership salientand psychologically appealing today, not whether every student has stopped wanting a job. It concludes that socialmedia may be a powerful source of role models and lifestyle expectations, while real aspiration also reflectsperceived opportunity, identity, education, policy and changing work options.

Keywords: youth; student entrepreneurship; aspiration; social media; luxury lifestyle; self-efficacy; India; career imagination Executive summary The core question is why business ownership has become so attractive and culturally visible to today's youth.Historical comparison gives a more complex answer than "young people used to want only jobs." In 2013, anISEED survey of 1,117 students found that 30% wanted entrepreneurship immediately after study and 66% withinfive years, even though a large share initially preferred established employers. In GUESSS India 2023, 14%planned entrepreneurship immediately after graduation and 31.4% within five years; 69.7% planned employmentimmediately, falling to 52.2% as a five-year plan. Since samples and methods differ, these numbers cannot provea decade-long rise or decline. They do show that job-first plans and entrepreneurial attraction coexist. The morerevealing shift may be the visibility, cultural prestige and perceived attainability of entrepreneurship, accelerated bysocial media, digital platforms and startup support. The author's 100-student survey provides a local clue aboutsocial-media influence, but needs exact counts and instrument details for a strong final submission.

Central thesis: today's youth are drawn to entrepreneurship because business ownership is increasinglypresented as a route to independence, wealth, identity and social recognition. Social media intensifies thatappeal by making exceptional lifestyles visible, while digital tools and a changing startup ecosystem makethe path seem more reachable. The appeal is real; whether the perceived ease and rewards are realistic isthe research problem. 1. Introduction A decade ago, the conventional career image for many students was a degree followed by a stable job, often ingovernment or a respected company. Today, students routinely see founders, creators and online sellerspresented as successful, independent and wealthy. Business ownership has become not only an economic activitybut also a highly visible identity. This raises a focused question: what makes entrepreneurship especially attractiveto today's youth, and what role do psychological motives and social media play in that attraction?

Research question Why has entrepreneurship become a particularly attractive aspiration among today's youth, and how dosocial media, psychological motives, historical change and the startup environment shape this attraction?

Supporting questions How did the job become the socially preferred model of security? What changed over roughly the last decade inthe visibility and perceived accessibility of entrepreneurship? How do autonomy, status, self-efficacy, socialcomparison and fear of missing out shape student aspirations? Does the author's survey suggest thatsocial-media lifestyles are a leading stated influence, and what are the limits of that evidence?

Objectives Explain the historical backdrop to today's entrepreneurial appeal; compare available student survey findingsacross time without overstating comparability; analyze social media as a source of role models and lifestyleexpectations; interpret the author's 100-student survey; and identify what students and colleges can do to turnattraction into informed, value-creating exploration. 2. Concepts and scope Job, self-employment, small business and startup A job generally means working for an employer in exchange for wages or salary. Self-employment means workingon one's own account or in a business, but can include a farmer, street vendor, freelancer, shopkeeper,family-business helper or professional. A startup is commonly understood as a young venture seeking arepeatable model, often with innovation and growth potential; legal recognition uses specific administrative criteria.The terms overlap but are not interchangeable.

Entrepreneurship here means identifying an opportunity or unmet need, organising resources under uncertainty,and creating value for customers or society. It can occur in a technology startup, local service, social enterprise orfamily firm. Not every business must scale rapidly to be worthwhile, and not every self-employed activity beginsfrom a freely chosen opportunity. 3. A brief history of work and entrepreneurship Before industrial wage employment For most of human history, economic life centred on

household production, agriculture, pastoral work, craft, tradeand local exchange. The modern idea of a career-long salaried job was not the universal norm. People oftencombined activities across seasons and relied on family or community networks. Entrepreneurship in a broadsense - organising labour, taking commercial risks and serving markets - predates the modern corporation bycenturies. Industrialisation and the rise of the job

Industrialisation concentrated production in factories and larger firms. Urbanisation and division of labourincreased dependence on wages. The employer-employee relationship offered regular cash income and access tospecialised work, but also made workers dependent on organisations and market demand. Education increasinglybecame linked to occupational credentials and formal employment. India: colonial economy, independence and the salaried ideal In India, livelihoods historically included agriculture, artisanal production, trade and household enterprises.Colonial-era changes in land revenue, transport, urban markets and industrial development altered localeconomies and expanded wage employment in selected sectors. After independence, planned development andpublic-sector expansion strengthened the appeal of government and organised-sector jobs. For many families, astable salaried post represented predictable income, social respect and protection against uncertainty; competitiveexaminations and degrees became routes to mobility.

Liberalisation, services and the digital economy Economic reforms beginning in 1991 expanded private-sector activity and exposure to global markets. Growth inIT, telecommunications, finance, education, healthcare, retail and professional services broadened both salariedand entrepreneurial possibilities. Mobile internet, digital payments, e-commerce and low-cost creator tools reducedsome barriers to reaching customers. Startup policy and university incubation initiatives gave entrepreneurship amore visible place in public discussion. These changes made ventures more feasible for some students whileexposing them to new competition and uncertainty.

Jobs and business ownership are not opposite camps. Employees can innovate inside organisations;entrepreneurs hire employees; students can test ideas alongside study or employment. The economy includeshybrid paths such as freelancing, family ventures, side businesses and platform work. The important question isthe quality, choice and sustainability of work, not merely its label. 4. A decade of changing aspiration: what can the surveystell us? Two Indian student surveys offer a useful historical comparison, while requiring a strong caution about methods.The 2013 Indian Students Entrepreneurship Aspirations Survey (I-SEAS), conducted by ISEED with 1,117students across more than 50 cities, reported that 30% wanted to become entrepreneurs immediately after theirstudies and 66% wanted to start within five years. Yet 43% preferred joining a large multinational immediately,12% preferred government jobs, and 65% said a job was safer. Entrepreneurial ambition therefore existed evenwhen immediate career plans leaned toward employment [18].

GUESSS India 2023, based on 13,896 responses from students at 1,298 higher-education institutions, reported asimilar distinction between immediate plans and later aspiration: 14% intended to found a venture directly aftergraduation, rising to 31.4% as a five-year plan. Employment was selected by 69.7% for immediately aftergraduation and 52.2% as a five-year plan. About 32.5% were nascent entrepreneurs, while 4.8% were operatingrevenue-generating businesses [19]. The figures indicate that entrepreneurship is a salient future ambition, but thejob remains the dominant immediate plan for many students.

Table 1. Comparison of selected Indian student aspiration surveys

Survey	Sample	Entrepreneur immediately	Entrepreneur within 5 years	Employment immediately
I-SEAS, 2013	1,117 students	30%	66%	57% large company, government or SME*
GUESSS India, 2023	13,896 students	14%	31.4%	69.7%

*In I-SEAS, 43% preferred a large multinational, 12% a government job, and 2% a small or medium enterprise immediately after study. Categories are not identical across the two surveys.

current ecosystem makes that aspiration more visible and actionable. A true claim that attraction has increasedneeds repeated comparable student surveys. The gap between imagining and doing is also informative. GUESSS reports a much larger share at the nascentstage than in revenue-generating operation. This suggests that attraction can be high while execution, marketvalidation and sustainable business formation remain more difficult. It gives the paper a sharper question: whatcreates the appeal, and what happens when the lifestyle image meets the work of building a venture? Labour-market data provide background but are not direct measures of attraction. India's self-employedworkforce share rose from 52.1% in 2018-19 to 58.4% in 2023-24, but that category includes farming,own-account work and unpaid family-enterprise helpers, not just startup founders [1]. Similarly, DPIIT's140,803 recognised startups by June 2024 indicate ecosystem scale, not student preference [3].

Why the change can feel sudden Entrepreneurial ambition is not new; its cultural visibility has accelerated. Smartphones and creator platforms placefounder stories in students' daily feeds. Startup policy, campus incubators and digital payment or commerce toolsmake business creation seem closer at hand. Influencer culture turns a founder's income into a visible lifestyle.Together these changes can make business ownership feel more normal, prestigious and achievable, even whenactual startup creation has not risen at the same pace.

5.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour explains intention through three linked influences. Attitude is whetherstarting a venture seems desirable (autonomy or impact versus stress and financial exposure). Subjective normsare perceived expectations from family, peers, teachers and society. Perceived behavioural control is the beliefthat one can perform the required tasks, given skills and resources. Intention is more likely when a venture seemsattractive, important people are supportive, and steps seem manageable. Intention predicts behaviour imperfectlybecause money, time, regulation and opportunity intervene. 5.2 Self-efficacy and competence Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is confidence in specific tasks such as interviewing customers, pricing, selling,building a prototype, managing cash and recovering from setbacks. General confidence is not enough. Studentswho complete small projects, internships or sales experiments may develop more realistic confidence than thosewhose only exposure is motivational content. Education can raise capability when it includes practice, feedbackand real customers.

5.3 Autonomy, competence and relatedness Self-Determination Theory describes needs for autonomy (meaningful choice), competence (feeling capable) andrelatedness (connection). Entrepreneurship may appear to meet these needs: founders choose direction, solveproblems and build teams. Yet early founders can have less freedom than expected because customers,investors, suppliers and cash constraints impose demands. A realistic choice weighs the work itself, not only thesymbol of being one's own boss. 5.4 Risk, loss aversion and uncertainty People do not evaluate risk purely mathematically. Loss aversion makes potential losses feel especially painful;ambiguity aversion makes unknown outcomes uncomfortable. Students with family responsibilities may rationallyvalue steady income over uncertain upside. Others may tolerate risk when costs are limited, support is available orexpected learning is high. Good entrepreneurship is not recklessness: it reduces uncertainty through experiments,staged investment and contingency plans.

5.5 Identity, status and social learning Young adults form career identities partly by observing people around them. A founder can represent creativity,independence, status or modernity. In a social-media environment, "entrepreneur" can become a public identityassociated with being ambitious, self-made and successful. Peer groups and family narratives affect what seemsnormal and attainable. Social learning is constructive when students observe the process - customer discovery,persistence, teamwork and ethical trade-offs - not only the outcome. It misleads when a visible exception is treatedas typical. 5.6 Achievement, purpose and control Some aspiring entrepreneurs are motivated by achievement: setting difficult goals and receiving direct feedback.Others seek purpose, community impact or control over work. These motives can sustain effort, but do notguarantee market demand. A socially useful idea still needs an operating model; a profitable idea still carriesresponsibilities to customers, workers and the environment.

5.7 Family context and security Family businesses, savings, networks and mentorship can reduce entry barriers. Family expectations can alsoencourage a secure job, discourage failure or create pressure to continue a legacy business. Class, gender,geography and access to capital shape perceived freedom and actual options. Aspirations should be understoodwithin these conditions rather than attributed only to personality. 6. Why social media makes entrepreneurship attractive Social media does more than provide business information: it stages success as a visible, repeatable lifestyle. Astudent may see travel, luxury goods, flexible schedules, confident founders and income claims, while not seeingthe capital, years of work, failed attempts, family support, debt or small profit margins behind them. Short-formvideo turns a complex process into an appealing story: "I built this, I am free, you can do it too." This can makeentrepreneurship attractive as an identity and route to status, even before a student has a tested business idea.

Several psychological mechanisms can intensify the appeal. Social comparison encourages students to comparetheir ordinary student life with a creator's curated highlight reel. Availability bias makes memorable successstories seem common. Survivorship bias hides ventures that failed or stayed small. Social proof makesentrepreneurship appear approved when peers and influencers praise it. Parasocial influence can create a senseof trust or closeness with creators whose advice is commercial. Fear of missing out may make conventionalcareer paths feel slow or inadequate. Together, these can inflate perceived rewards and understate uncertainty. Social media also has practical value: students can learn skills, access networks, test demand, market low-costofferings and discover role models. Its influence is therefore not automatically harmful. The key distinction isbetween using social media as a

A balanced interpretation Social-media influence is neither wholly harmful nor wholly beneficial. The useful question is what studentsconsume and how they evaluate it. Educational content showing unit economics, customer interviews, compliance,failed attempts and wellbeing can improve judgment. Content promising guaranteed income, effortless passiveearnings or fast wealth should prompt verification. Students should check creators' incentives and seekindependent evidence. Practical media-literacy test: When a post claims a business is easy or highly profitable, ask: What is thedenominator (how many tried)? What costs are omitted? Is revenue confused with profit? How long did ittake? Is the creator selling a course or recruiting others? Can customers independently confirm the value? 7. Author survey: findings from 100 college students The author reports conducting a survey of 100 college students. According to the author's preliminary summary,approximately 80-90 respondents (80-90%) were identified as showing "addictive" social-media use, and studentswho expressed a desire to become entrepreneurs attributed that aspiration to what they saw on social media. Theauthor describes social media as the sole stated reason for those respondents' entrepreneurial aspiration. This is anotable local finding and gives the paper a useful original research dimension.

The result should be reported as an author-conducted, self-reported survey finding, not a clinical diagnosis orproof of cause. The exact number within the 80-90 range, the survey dates, college/location, recruitment method,question wording, response options, and the number of students who actually aspired to entrepreneurship werenot provided in the summary available for this draft. "Addiction" should therefore be written as "reported orsurvey-classified addictive/problematic use" unless a validated scale and cut-off were applied. This is importantbecause frequent use alone does not establish addiction. The claim that social media was

the "only reason" also needs careful interpretation. If respondents selected it astheir sole answer to a motivation question, report that as their stated answer. It does not establish that socialmedia is the only psychological or social cause: respondents may also be influenced by income expectations, peernorms, family, education, lack of job options or personal autonomy without naming those influences. A one-timesurvey can identify reported associations and explanations, but cannot establish that social-media exposurecaused intention.

How to strengthen and present this result Before submission, replace the range with the exact count and percentage (for example, n/100 = x%). Statewhether the same respondents were both classified as having problematic use and interested in entrepreneurship.Include the exact question and answer choices, the definition or scale used for "addictive," sampling approach,collection dates and response rate. If asking whether social media was the only reason, allow multiple motives andan "other" option, then show the frequency for each. A crosstab can compare social-media use level withentrepreneurial intention; it still shows association, not causation. Preserve the anonymised questionnaire and rawcounts for verification. Careful result statement for the paper: "In the author's survey of 100 college students, 80-90respondents were reported as showing addictive or problematic social-media use. Among respondentswho expressed entrepreneurial aspirations, the author reports that social-media content was selected astheir sole stated motivation. Because the precise item wording, measure and subgroup count requireconfirmation, these preliminary self-reports suggest a possible influence but do not demonstrate that socialmedia alone caused entrepreneurial intention."

8. What other surveys show The author's local finding can be compared with published studies, while keeping their samples and measuresdistinct. Huang and Zhang surveyed 524 undergraduates at three Chinese public universities and found thatsocial-media use was indirectly related to entrepreneurial intention through self-efficacy. This supports a plausiblepathway: exposure may strengthen perceived capability, which can relate to intention; it does not show that socialmedia is the sole motive or that addictive use produces entrepreneurship [13]. A study of business and engineering students in Chile found that frequency of using particular social-mediaplatforms correlated with some entrepreneurial perceptions and intentions, with patterns varying by platform,gender and age. The authors describe correlational results and caution that their design does not confirm causality[14]. A 2023 survey study of 362 students in two Vietnamese provinces likewise reported a positive relationshipbetween social-media use and entrepreneurial intention while considering perceived risk and planned-behaviourvariables [15]. These international studies are useful comparisons, not substitutes for evidence from the author'scollege or India.

Indian studies on social-media use/addiction measure a different outcome from entrepreneurial motivation. Forexample, a cross-sectional study of 717 medical students across Punjab reported 8.64% as meeting its addictionclassification, while

9. Attraction is not the same as readiness The purpose here is to explain what attracts young people to entrepreneurship, not to decide whether jobs orbusinesses are universally better. A student may be attracted by independence, identity, status, possible wealth,creativity, social impact, family role models or social-media visibility. Those attractions can motivate learning andexperimentation. They become fragile when the student wants the lifestyle but has not yet identified a customerproblem, developed relevant skills or understood the risk. The distinction between attraction and readiness is central to the author's topic. A person can admire anentrepreneur without wanting the daily work of selling, managing cash, dealing with uncertainty and servingcustomers. A student can be highly influenced by online founders and still discover that entrepreneurship is a poorfit - or use that exposure to find a genuine problem worth solving. Attraction should therefore be treated as astarting point for investigation, not as evidence of likely success.

The most useful test Ask students what specifically attracts them: the problem they want to solve, independence, expected income,social recognition, a creator's displayed lifestyle, or frustration with conventional career paths. Then ask whatconcrete business action they have taken. Comparing the stated attraction with customer interviews, prototypes orearly sales can show whether aspiration is moving toward informed entrepreneurial behaviour. 10. What students and colleges can do

For students Use attraction as a reason to learn, not as proof that success is easy. Follow creators who show customerresearch, expenses, failed attempts and operational work as well as outcomes. Identify a real problem, interviewpotential users, try a low-cost prototype and keep track of actual spending and customer response. Build skills insales, communication, finance and problem-solving. Discuss plans with trusted mentors and avoid debt or majorcommitments based only on online claims.

Avoid Do not borrow heavily, quit studies or spend family savings solely because a social-media story looks persuasive.Avoid confusing followers, downloads or compliments with paying demand. Do not promise outcomes you cannotdeliver, copy protected work, misuse customer data, evade tax or regulatory duties, or treat unpaid student labouras free. Avoid co-founder arrangements with unclear ownership and decision rights. Do not interpret a failedexperiment as personal failure; learn from it, but set limits so sunk costs do not dictate further spending.

A 90-day student experiment Weeks 1-2: select one user group and interview 15-20 people using open questions. Weeks 3-4: define theproblem and compare alternatives; state assumptions that could invalidate the idea. Weeks 5-8: create thesmallest safe prototype or service and invite real use. Weeks 9-10: test willingness to pay or another meaningfulcommitment. Weeks 11-12: review retention, costs, feedback, time burden and ethical risks. Decide to continue,adjust, pause or stop using pre-set criteria. This is a learning experiment, not a guarantee of success. 11. Research design and method This paper combines secondary research with the author's reported cross-sectional survey of 100 collegestudents. Since the questionnaire, raw counts and sampling details were not supplied with the summary, thisversion treats the 80-90% figure and stated motive as preliminary author-reported findings. Before submission,insert the exact method and results from the original survey. Do not invent questionnaire details, dates, location,sampling procedure or statistical tests.

Design and sample Report that the existing sample comprised 100 college students. Specify their college/location, age or study-yearrange, recruitment and sampling approach, survey dates, completion rate and whether the questionnaire wasanonymous. Because this appears to be a local sample, do not present it as representative of all Indian collegestudents or youth. A future extension could sample across years, disciplines and colleges, with permission and adocumented recruitment plan.

Name the exact measure used to classify problematic or addictive social-media use and its threshold. If novalidated scale was used, describe the questions as self-reported usage patterns, not a clinical addiction measure.State how entrepreneurial aspiration was measured and whether participants could select more than one reason.Report the exact numerator and denominator for every percentage; distinguish all 100 respondents from thesmaller subgroup that expressed entrepreneurial intention. Keep aspiration separate from action: idea explored,customer interviewed, prototype built, first sale, registered entity.

Recommended follow-up items For a replication or extension, ask: "Have you thought seriously about starting a business?"; "Which factorsinfluence this interest? Select all that apply: social-media content, income potential, independence, social impact,family business, peer/family encouragement, lack of suitable jobs, entrepreneurship education, or other"; "Howoften do you view entrepreneurship or luxury-lifestyle content?"; "Have you taken any concrete step such asinterviewing a customer, testing a prototype or making a sale?" If social-media-use problems are being assessed,use a validated scale and report its source and scoring rather than relying only on time spent online.

Analysis plan Report counts and percentages for categorical questions, and means or medians with variability for rating scales.Compare intention by prior venture exposure, family-business background, education exposure and media literacy,while stating that cross-sectional association does not prove causation. For a small sample, avoid overfittedregression and grand causal claims. Summarise interview themes with anonymised quotations only with consent.Include nonresponse, sampling limitations and exact field dates. A useful contrast is intention versus action: howmany want to start, and how many interviewed a customer, tested a prototype or made a sale?

Ethics Tell participants the purpose, voluntary nature and approximate time. Avoid collecting names unless needed. Storeresponses securely, avoid sensitive financial or family questions unless justified, and obtain permission forquotations. If participants are minors, follow institutional requirements. Present aggregate findings and do notimply that a small campus sample represents India. 12. Discussion and implications The evidence suggests that contemporary entrepreneurial attraction is shaped by interacting forces. Historicalchanges made self-employment and private enterprise more feasible; policy and campus support gaveentrepreneurship institutional legitimacy; social media gave founders visibility and made success look immediate;and psychological needs for autonomy, achievement, recognition and control made the founder identitycompelling. Economic uncertainty and concern about career prospects may also make self-directed workattractive, but the paper's primary emphasis is the pull of entrepreneurship, not a claim that every aspiring studentis pushed out of jobs.

The strongest historical insight is that student entrepreneurship is not a brand-new desire. I-SEAS in 2013 reportednotable long-term aspiration alongside a stronger preference for established employment immediately after study.GUESSS India 2023 similarly found that employment remained the leading immediate plan while entrepreneurialintention increased for a five-year horizon. This pattern suggests a lasting tension between security now andindependence later. What appears newly intensified is the cultural visibility and lifestyle branding ofentrepreneurship, along with more platforms and institutional pathways for trying it. The author's survey gives this topic an original local angle: respondents reportedly linked their entrepreneurialaspirations to social-media exposure, and a large share were classified as showing addictive or problematic use.That is a strong hypothesis for follow-up. To make it judge-ready, the final paper should show exact counts, itemwording, sample characteristics and a measure-based definition. The 100-student result should be described as alocal self-report rather than generalized to all Indian youth or interpreted as proof of cause. Publishedcross-sectional surveys reinforce plausibility of a social-media link but likewise cannot settle causation.

Colleges can respond by teaching media literacy alongside entrepreneurship. Students should learn to distinguishrevenue from profit, founder branding from business evidence, and aspiration from customer demand. Campusprogrammes can use social media constructively for customer discovery and low-cost experiments, while showingoperational realities, failed tests and ethical duties. This approach respects the attraction while helping studentsevaluate it critically. 13. Conclusion Today's youth are attracted to entrepreneurship because it has become more than a career option: it is presentedas a route to independence, achievement, wealth, identity and public recognition. Digital tools make starting seemmore accessible, startup institutions lend legitimacy, and social media supplies vivid founder role models andluxury-lifestyle images. Human motives for autonomy, competence, status, belonging and control help explain whythis image resonates.

The paper's central conclusion is that the modern youth attraction to business is a product of real opportunity andpowerful imagination. Social media can inspire students to build, but its curated success stories can also makewealth and freedom seem automatic. The most meaningful response is to convert attraction into informedcuriosity: identify a real need, develop skills, test an idea and judge progress by value created, not by the lifestyledisplayed online. Closing line for presentation: "The new generation is not simply rejecting jobs; it is increasinglyimagining itself as capable of creating the opportunity. Our task is to help turn that attractive image intotested ideas, real customer value and responsible enterprise."

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