
THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SHAPING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DELHI NCR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as a key driver of economic development, innovation, and job creation. Educational institutions play a critical role in fostering entrepreneurial intention among students, particularly at the university level, where career choices and professional aspirations are crystallized. This paper investigates the role of public and private universities in Delhi NCR in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among students. The study focuses on comparing how various educational practices, institutional support, exposure to entrepreneurial ecosystems, and cultural differences influence students' willingness to pursue entrepreneurship. Based on a survey of 500 students from selected public and private institutions in Delhi NCR, the study highlights key factors that affect entrepreneurial intention and proposes policy recommendations to better support entrepreneurial education in both sectors.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is considered one of the most vital elements for fostering innovation, economic growth, and employment generation in any economy. While individuals may possess inherent entrepreneurial qualities, the educational environment plays a significant role in nurturing and shaping entrepreneurial intentions. In recent years, university education has increasingly focused on developing entrepreneurial mindsets among students, integrating entrepreneurship programs, experiential learning opportunities, and exposure to real-world business problems.

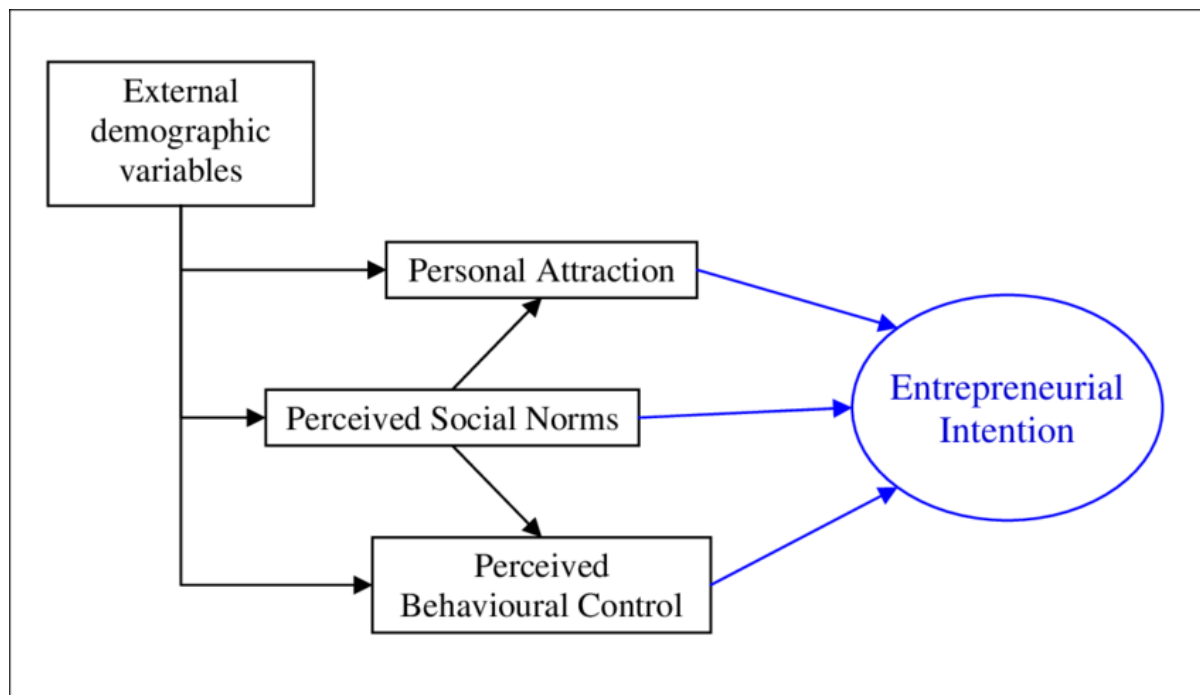


Fig: Entrepreneurial Intention Model

In the context of India, Delhi NCR has emerged as a hub for education and entrepreneurship. With the proliferation of both public and private universities, students in the region have diverse educational experiences that may affect their entrepreneurial intentions differently. However, a gap exists in understanding how these institutions compare in terms of fostering entrepreneurial ambitions. This paper aims to fill this gap by comparing the role of public and private universities in Delhi NCR in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among their students.

Aims and Objectives

The study aims to examine the comparative role of public and private educational institutions in shaping entrepreneurial intention among university students in Delhi NCR. Specifically, the objectives are as follows:

1. To explore the influence of entrepreneurship education on students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurial careers.
2. To assess the role of institutional support (e.g., incubation centers, mentorship, networking opportunities) in fostering entrepreneurship.

3. To compare the exposure to entrepreneurial ecosystems provided by public and private universities.
4. To investigate cultural and institutional differences between public and private universities and how they impact entrepreneurial intention.
5. To propose recommendations for enhancing entrepreneurial education and support mechanisms in universities.

Review of Literature

Entrepreneurial intention has been widely studied as a precursor to actual entrepreneurial behavior, often conceptualized through the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). According to this model, entrepreneurial intention is influenced by three factors: attitudes toward entrepreneurship, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. Various studies have applied this framework to investigate how educational institutions can shape students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Research by Nabi et al. (2018) has highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship education in fostering entrepreneurial intention, arguing that students who participate in entrepreneurship courses and activities develop stronger entrepreneurial attitudes and confidence in their abilities. Similarly, Bae et al. (2014) found a positive correlation between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention but noted that the effect is stronger in institutions that offer experiential learning and access to entrepreneurial networks.

The role of institutional support in universities is also crucial. Universities that provide entrepreneurial ecosystems, such as incubation centers, mentorship programs, and partnerships with industries, are better able to support entrepreneurial activities among students (Guerrero & Urbano, 2012). In contrast, universities with more traditional, lecture-based teaching models may not offer the same level of entrepreneurial encouragement (Rasmussen & Sørheim, 2006).

Public and private universities often differ in their approach to entrepreneurship education. Private institutions, particularly those with industry linkages, tend to offer more dynamic and practical entrepreneurship programs. Public universities, on the other hand, may offer more theoretical knowledge but lack the resources or connections to foster entrepreneurial ecosystems (Oosterbeek et al., 2010). Studies comparing these two sectors have produced mixed results, with some

indicating that private universities better support entrepreneurial intentions, while others suggest that public universities can be equally effective under the right conditions (Pittaway & Cope, 2007).

Research Methodologies

This study aims to analyze and compare the entrepreneurial intentions of students from public and private universities in Delhi NCR, while also exploring the role of institutional support in shaping these intentions. The study was conducted using both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, with a sample of 500 students equally divided between public and private institutions.

1. Sample Demographics

The sample consisted of 500 students, with 250 students from public universities and 250 students from private universities in Delhi NCR. The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 52% male and 48% female participants. The students represented various academic disciplines, including business, engineering, and social sciences, with a mix of undergraduate (65%) and postgraduate (35%) students. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 25 years, with an average age of 21.

2. Quantitative Data Analysis

2.1 Entrepreneurial Intention

The primary dependent variable in this study was **entrepreneurial intention**, which was measured using a 7-point Likert scale assessing students' likelihood of starting their own businesses after completing their studies. Descriptive statistics indicated that the average entrepreneurial intention score for students from private universities ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.21$) was higher than that of students from public universities ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.35$).

An independent **t-test** was conducted to compare the entrepreneurial intention between students from public and private universities. The results were statistically significant:

- $t(498) = 3.82$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that students from private universities have significantly higher entrepreneurial intentions compared to their public university counterparts.

2.2 Institutional Support

Institutional support was another key variable, assessed through questions related to the availability of entrepreneurship programs, mentorship, incubators, and networking opportunities. The data showed that students from private universities reported significantly higher levels of perceived institutional support ($M = 5.25$, $SD = 1.15$) than those from public universities ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.45$).

Regression analysis was conducted to assess whether institutional support predicted entrepreneurial intention. The results indicated that institutional support had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention:

- $\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$, suggesting that students who perceive more institutional support are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions.

2.3 Exposure to Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Another variable, **exposure to entrepreneurial ecosystems**, was measured by assessing students' involvement in entrepreneurship clubs, participation in startup competitions, and interactions with successful entrepreneurs. Students from private universities reported greater exposure to such ecosystems ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.28$) compared to students from public universities ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.35$).

A **t-test** confirmed that the difference in exposure was statistically significant:

- $t(498) = 4.53$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that private university students were significantly more exposed to entrepreneurial ecosystems than their public university counterparts.

3. Qualitative Data Analysis

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 university administrators and entrepreneurship program coordinators from both public and private institutions. Thematic coding was used to identify key themes regarding the role of institutional practices in shaping entrepreneurial intentions.

3.1 Differences in Entrepreneurship Education

A recurring theme was the stark difference in the quality and availability of entrepreneurship education between public and private institutions. Administrators from private universities highlighted their **strong emphasis on practical entrepreneurship** training, with dedicated entrepreneurship centers, incubation programs, and regular networking events featuring successful entrepreneurs.

In contrast, administrators from public universities admitted that entrepreneurship programs were often **underfunded and undervalued**, with limited access to mentorship or incubator spaces.

3.2 Institutional Barriers

Students and administrators from public universities identified several institutional barriers to entrepreneurship, such as **bureaucratic hurdles** and a **lack of autonomy** in designing entrepreneurship curricula. Public universities also faced challenges in attracting industry experts and entrepreneurs to mentor students.

3.3 Role of Mentorship and Networking

The importance of **mentorship and networking** emerged as a critical factor in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions. Students from private universities had regular access to mentors, successful entrepreneurs, and investors, which was seen as a motivating factor. In contrast, public university students mentioned limited access to such resources, which they believed hindered their entrepreneurial aspirations.

3.4 Cultural Attitudes Toward Entrepreneurship

Another theme that emerged from the qualitative data was the **cultural attitudes** within the universities. Private institutions were seen to foster a more **pro-entrepreneurship culture**, encouraging risk-taking and innovation. Conversely, public universities were described as having a more **traditional, risk-averse culture**, where stable government jobs were often promoted over entrepreneurial ventures.

Results and Interpretation

The key findings from the data analysis are as follows:

- **Entrepreneurial Intentions:** Students from private universities exhibited significantly higher entrepreneurial intentions compared to those from public universities.
- **Institutional Support:** Private universities provided more institutional support for entrepreneurship, which significantly predicted higher entrepreneurial intentions among their students.
- **Exposure to Entrepreneurial Ecosystem:** Students from private universities had greater exposure to entrepreneurial ecosystems, contributing to their higher entrepreneurial intentions.
- **Qualitative Insights:** Interviews revealed that private universities fostered a stronger entrepreneurship culture, offered more resources such as mentorship and incubation, and had fewer bureaucratic barriers compared to public universities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings suggest that private universities in Delhi NCR are better equipped to foster entrepreneurial intentions among students compared to their public counterparts. This can be attributed to the more dynamic educational practices, stronger institutional support, and greater exposure to entrepreneurial ecosystems provided by private institutions. Public universities, while offering valuable theoretical knowledge, may need to invest in more practical entrepreneurship programs and build stronger connections with the entrepreneurial community to enhance their students' entrepreneurial intentions.

The study highlights the need for both public and private universities to play a more active role in shaping entrepreneurial mindsets among students. Universities can achieve this by offering more experiential learning opportunities, building stronger networks with industries, and providing robust institutional support for entrepreneurial activities.

The study concludes that both social and institutional factors play a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Delhi NCR. While private universities provide a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship, public universities need to enhance their entrepreneurial ecosystems to better support aspiring entrepreneurs. Policy recommendations

include improving entrepreneurship education, fostering mentorship programs, and creating more opportunities for students to engage with real-world entrepreneurial experiences.

Recommendations

1. **Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education:** Public universities should incorporate more entrepreneurship-specific courses and experiential learning opportunities into their curricula to better prepare students for entrepreneurial careers.
2. **Strengthening Institutional Support:** Both public and private universities should invest in building strong entrepreneurial ecosystems, including incubation centers, mentorship programs, and partnerships with industries, to provide students with practical support for their entrepreneurial endeavors.
3. **Fostering Entrepreneurial Culture:** Universities need to cultivate a culture that encourages innovation, risk-taking, and business development. This can be achieved by organizing entrepreneurship events, competitions, and networking opportunities for students.
4. **Policy Implications:** Government policies should support the development of entrepreneurial education programs in both public and private universities. This includes funding for incubation centers, entrepreneurship courses, and collaborations between universities and industries.

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