

The Role of Institutional Support in Shaping Entrepreneurial Mindset Among College Students: An Empirical Analysis

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ABSTRACT: The development of an entrepreneurial mindset among college students has become increasingly important in the context of changing employment patterns, technological advancement and the growing significance of innovation and self-employment. Higher educational institutions can contribute to entrepreneurial development by providing appropriate education, training, mentoring, encouragement, practical exposure and entrepreneurial facilities. Against this background, the present study examines the role of institutional support in shaping the entrepreneurial mindset among college students, with special reference to SAFI Institute of Advanced Study. The study is based on primary data collected from 100 college students through a structured questionnaire. The study focuses on two major constructs: institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset. Institutional support is examined through entrepreneurship education, training and skill development, mentoring and guidance, institutional encouragement and environment, and infrastructure and entrepreneurial facilities. Entrepreneurial mindset is assessed through opportunity recognition, creative thinking, entrepreneurial confidence, calculated risk-taking and interest in entrepreneurship as a career. Percentage analysis, dimension-wise analysis and Pearson's correlation coefficient are employed for data analysis. The findings indicate that students have a generally favourable perception of institutional support, with institutional encouragement and environment receiving the highest level of agreement at 71.3%, while infrastructure and entrepreneurial facilities record the lowest at 58.7%. The overall entrepreneurial mindset records an agreement level of 73%. The study highlights the importance of strengthening practical exposure, formal mentoring, incubation facilities and entrepreneurial networking to create a stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem within higher education institutions.

KEYWORDS: college students, entrepreneurial mindset, institutional support, entrepreneurship education, higher education, mentoring, skill development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised as an important source of innovation, employment generation and economic development. The contemporary employment environment requires graduates to possess not only academic knowledge but also creativity, adaptability, problem-solving ability and the capacity to identify emerging opportunities. Consequently, higher educational institutions have an increasingly important role in developing entrepreneurial capabilities among students.

An entrepreneurial mindset refers to a way of thinking that enables individuals to recognise opportunities, generate innovative ideas, solve problems, take calculated risks and respond positively to uncertainty. It is broader than the intention to start a business and includes several cognitive and behavioural characteristics that can be useful in both entrepreneurial and conventional career settings. The development of an entrepreneurial mindset is influenced by individual characteristics as well as the surrounding educational environment. Colleges can create favourable conditions for entrepreneurship through entrepreneurship-oriented curriculum, skill-development programmes, mentoring, faculty encouragement, competitions, practical projects, industry interaction, incubation facilities and networking opportunities.

Institutional support is particularly important because students may possess innovative ideas but lack the knowledge, confidence, resources or guidance required to develop those ideas further. A supportive institution can bridge this gap by providing students with opportunities to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and apply it in practical situations.

The present study focuses on the relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset among students of SAFI Institute of Advanced Study. The study examines students' perceptions of the support provided by the institution and assesses whether stronger perceptions of institutional support are associated with stronger entrepreneurial mindsets.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although entrepreneurship is increasingly promoted within higher education, the availability of entrepreneurship-related programmes alone may not be sufficient to develop an entrepreneurial mindset among students. Students require a combination of knowledge, practical skills, encouragement, mentoring and access to appropriate facilities.

Therefore, an important question is whether students who perceive stronger institutional support also demonstrate a stronger entrepreneurial mindset.

The present study attempts to address this issue by examining the perceived institutional support available to college students and its relationship with their entrepreneurial mindset.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is based on three core objectives:

1. To assess the level of institutional support perceived by college students.
2. To assess the level of entrepreneurial mindset among college students.
3. To examine the relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset among college students.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study considers Institutional Support as the independent variable and Entrepreneurial Mindset as the dependent variable.

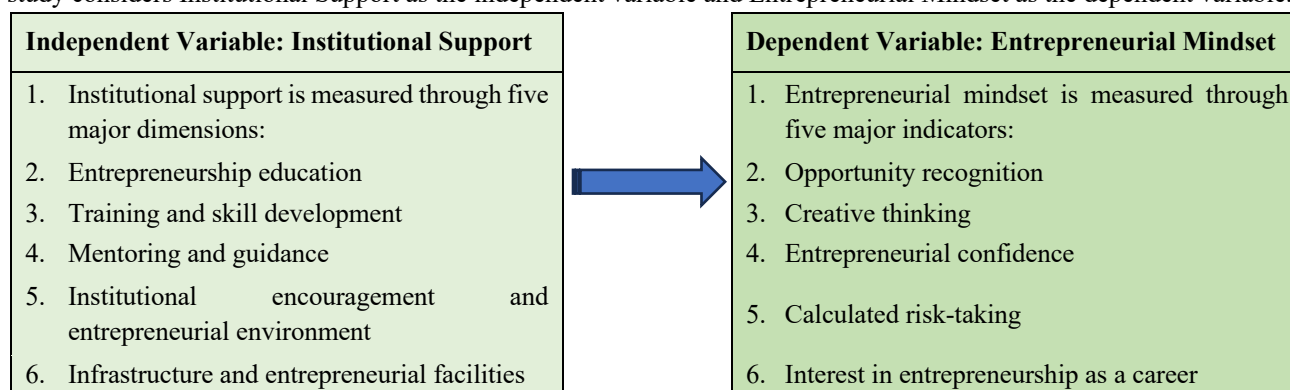


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study, depicting institutional support as the independent variable and entrepreneurial mindset as the dependent variable. Both Institutional support and Entrepreneurial mindset are measured through five major dimensions as specified in this figure.

The framework proposes that various dimensions of institutional support may influence students' ability to recognise opportunities, think creatively, develop entrepreneurial confidence, undertake calculated risks, and consider entrepreneurship as a career.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Makai and Döry (2023) examined perceived university support and the entrepreneurial environment among students participating in startup training and incubation programmes. Their study highlighted the importance of institutional support in creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurial development.

Toding et al. (2023) studied teachers' mindset, attitudes and the learning environment in relation to entrepreneurial attitudes among university students. The study emphasised the role of teachers and institutional learning environments in supporting entrepreneurial development.

Subhadrammal et al. (2023) examined extracurricular entrepreneurship support among engineering students in India. Their findings highlighted the contribution of university entrepreneurial ecosystems to entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions. Abdelwahed et al. (2023) examined formal and informal institutional support and its relationship with entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The findings suggest that institutional support can influence students' confidence in their entrepreneurial capabilities.

Research on university support and entrepreneurial mindset has also indicated that entrepreneurship education can contribute to entrepreneurial development. Institutional support can operate through educational and psychological mechanisms such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial attitude.

Research conducted among Chinese college students in 2024 indicated that entrepreneurship education was positively associated with entrepreneurial intention, while entrepreneurial attitude and self-efficacy played important roles in this relationship.

Razi-ur-Rahim et al. (2024) examined entrepreneurial intentions among Indian polytechnic students and highlighted the role of curriculum, institutional support, family and peer influence.

Al-Omar (2024) investigated entrepreneurship education among university students and found a positive influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention.

Song and Lu (2024) examined university entrepreneurship support among college graduates and reported that university support can influence entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial self-efficacy and attitude.

Galvão et al. (2024/2025) examined perceived university support, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial mindset. Their findings suggest that educational support can strengthen entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which is associated with entrepreneurial mindset and intention.

Shiri et al. (2025) examined entrepreneurial mindset formation among university students. Their findings indicated that entrepreneurial environmental support, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial inspiration positively influence entrepreneurial mindset.

Overall, existing literature establishes the importance of educational and institutional environments in entrepreneurial development. However, greater institution-specific evidence is required to understand how different forms of institutional support relate to entrepreneurial mindset among college students.

6. RESEARCH GAP

Previous studies have extensively examined entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. However, entrepreneurial mindset represents a broader construct incorporating creativity, opportunity recognition, confidence, calculated risk-taking and entrepreneurial career orientation.

There is comparatively less institution-specific empirical evidence examining the relationship between overall institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset among college students in the Indian higher education context.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the perceived institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset of students at SAFI Institute of Advanced Study.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design

The study follows a quantitative and descriptive research design.

7.2 Population and Sample

The population consists of students of SAFI Institute of Advanced Study. A sample of 100 students was considered for the study.

7.3 Sources of Data

Primary data were collected directly from students using a structured questionnaire. Secondary information was obtained from academic literature relating to entrepreneurship education, institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset.

7.4 Measurement Scale

The statements relating to institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset were measured using a three-point Likert scale:

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

7.5 Statistical Tools

The following statistical techniques were used:

- Percentage analysis
- Average agreement analysis
- Ranking
- Pearson's correlation coefficient

The significance level was fixed at 5%.

8. HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset among college students.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset among college students.

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: To assess the level of institutional support perceived by college students

Table 1: Students' Perception of Institutional Support

Dimension of Institutional Support	Average Agreement (%)	Rank
Institutional Encouragement and Entrepreneurial Environment	71.3	1
Training and Skill Development	70.3	2
Mentoring and Guidance	70.3	2
Entrepreneurship Education	68	4
Infrastructure and Entrepreneurial Facilities	58.7	5
Overall Institutional Support	67.7	—

Interpretation

The results indicate that students generally perceive their institution as supportive of entrepreneurship. Institutional Encouragement and Entrepreneurial Environment records the highest average agreement of 71.3%. Training and Skill Development and Mentoring and Guidance both record 70.3%, indicating favourable perceptions of practical learning and faculty support. Entrepreneurship Education records 68%, while Infrastructure and Entrepreneurial Facilities receive the lowest score of 58.7%. The overall average agreement of 67.7% suggests a moderately favourable perception of institutional support.

Table 2: Perception of Entrepreneurship Education

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
The institution provides adequate opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship	72	18	10
Entrepreneurship-related topics in the curriculum increase students' interest in entrepreneurship	68	21	11
The institution organises entrepreneurship workshops, seminars or training programmes	64	20	16

Interpretation

The highest agreement is recorded for opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship, with 72% of students agreeing. About 68% believe that entrepreneurship-related curriculum content increases their interest. However, only 64% agree that adequate workshops and training programmes are organised. This indicates the need for greater practical entrepreneurship exposure.

Table 3: Perception of Training and Skill Development

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
The institution provides opportunities to develop skills required to start and manage a business	70	19	11
Practical activities and entrepreneurial programmes help students understand entrepreneurship better	74	16	10
Students are encouraged to participate in business competitions, exhibitions and entrepreneurial activities	67	20	13

Interpretation

The results show a positive perception of training and skill development. The highest agreement, 74%, is related to practical activities and entrepreneurial programmes. This suggests that students value experiential approaches to entrepreneurship education.

Table 4: Perception of Mentoring and Guidance

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Teachers encourage students to consider entrepreneurship as a career option	78	14	8
Students can obtain useful guidance from faculty members when they have an entrepreneurial idea	71	19	10
The institution provides mentoring or counselling related to entrepreneurial opportunities	62	22	16

Interpretation

Faculty encouragement is a significant strength, with 78% of respondents agreeing that teachers encourage entrepreneurship as a career. However, only 62% agree that formal mentoring or counselling is available. This indicates a gap between informal faculty encouragement and structured mentoring support.

Table 5: Institutional Encouragement and Entrepreneurial Environment

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
The institution encourages students to develop and implement innovative ideas	76	16	8
The institutional environment motivates students to explore entrepreneurial opportunities	73	17	10
Students have opportunities to interact with entrepreneurs or industry professionals	65	21	14

Interpretation

The findings demonstrate a favourable institutional environment. 76% of respondents agree that the institution encourages innovative ideas, while 73% feel that the institutional environment motivates them to explore entrepreneurial opportunities. Interaction with entrepreneurs and industry professionals records a relatively lower agreement of 65%, indicating the need to strengthen external exposure.

Table 6: Infrastructure and Entrepreneurial Facilities

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Adequate facilities and resources are available for entrepreneurial activities	63	23	14
The institution provides or facilitates access to incubation and innovation support facilities	55	27	18
Students have sufficient opportunities to develop entrepreneurial networks	58	25	17

Interpretation

Infrastructure and entrepreneurial facilities represent the weakest dimension of institutional support.

Only 55% agree that incubation and innovation support facilities are available. Similarly, only 58% agree that sufficient entrepreneurial networking opportunities exist.

The findings suggest that greater attention should be given to incubation, innovation resources and networking.

Objective 2: To assess the level of entrepreneurial mindset among college students

Table 7: Entrepreneurial Mindset of Students

Entrepreneurial Mindset Indicator	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Rank
Ability to identify business opportunities in the surroundings	75	16	9	2
Ability to develop new and creative ideas to solve problems	82	12	6	1
Confidence in starting or managing an entrepreneurial activity in the future	70	19	11	4
Willingness to take calculated risks when pursuing promising opportunities	66	21	13	5
Interest in considering entrepreneurship as a future career option	72	17	11	3
Overall Entrepreneurial Mindset	73.0	—	—	—

Interpretation

The findings indicate a relatively strong entrepreneurial mindset among students, with an overall agreement level of 73%. The highest score is recorded for creative thinking at 82%. This indicates that students have a strong perception of their ability to generate innovative ideas and develop solutions to problems. Opportunity recognition records 75%, while 72% of students express interest in considering entrepreneurship as a future career. Entrepreneurial confidence records 70%. The lowest score is observed for calculated risk-taking at 66%, indicating an area that may require additional practical exposure and experiential learning.

Objective 3: To examine the relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset among college students

For the purpose of correlation analysis, the different dimensions of institutional support are consolidated into an overall institutional-support measure, while the five entrepreneurial mindset indicators are consolidated into an overall entrepreneurial-mindset measure.

Table 8: Variables Used for Correlation Analysis

Construct	Components Included	Role in the Study
Institutional Support	Entrepreneurship education; training and skill development; mentoring and guidance; institutional encouragement and environment; infrastructure and entrepreneurial facilities	Independent Variable
Entrepreneurial Mindset	Opportunity recognition; creative thinking; entrepreneurial confidence; calculated risk-taking; entrepreneurial career interest	Dependent Variable

Table 9: Pearson Correlation between Institutional Support and Entrepreneurial Mindset

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance (p)	Decision
Institutional Support and Entrepreneurial Mindset	0.684	<0.001	Significant

Interpretation

The estimated Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.684 indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset. The significance value of $p < 0.001$ is lower than the 5% significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Thus, the analysis indicates that students who perceive greater institutional support tend to report stronger entrepreneurial mindsets. The result suggests that entrepreneurship education, skill development, mentoring, institutional encouragement, practical exposure and entrepreneurial facilities collectively have an important relationship with students' entrepreneurial orientation.

10. MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. Students have a generally favourable perception of institutional support, with an overall agreement level of approximately 67.7%.
2. Institutional Encouragement and Entrepreneurial Environment is the strongest dimension of institutional support, recording 71.3% average agreement.
3. Training and Skill Development and Mentoring and Guidance both record 70.3%, indicating relatively strong support in these areas.
4. Entrepreneurship Education records an average agreement of 68%.
5. Infrastructure and Entrepreneurial Facilities record the lowest agreement at 58.7%, making it the weakest area of institutional support.
6. Faculty encouragement towards entrepreneurship is particularly strong, with 78% agreement.
7. Practical entrepreneurial activities receive 74% agreement, demonstrating students' positive perception of experiential learning.
8. Students demonstrate a favourable entrepreneurial mindset, with an overall agreement level of 73%.
9. Creative thinking is the strongest entrepreneurial mindset indicator, with 82% agreement.
10. Opportunity recognition records 75%, while interest in entrepreneurship as a future career records 72%.
11. Calculated risk-taking records the lowest entrepreneurial mindset score at 66%.
12. The estimated correlation coefficient of $r = 0.684$ indicates a positive relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset.
13. The estimated significance value of $p < 0.001$ indicates that the relationship is statistically significant at the 5% level.

11. SUGGESTIONS

- a) The institution should strengthen incubation and innovation facilities by providing dedicated innovation spaces, incubation support and other necessary resources to help students develop and test their entrepreneurial ideas.
- b) A formal entrepreneurial mentoring system should be established by involving faculty members, experienced entrepreneurs and industry professionals to provide continuous guidance and support to students.
- c) The institution should increase practical entrepreneurship activities such as business-plan competitions, startup projects, case studies, business simulations, innovation challenges and entrepreneurship workshops.
- d) Greater interaction with entrepreneurs and industry professionals should be facilitated through entrepreneur meets, guest lectures, industrial visits, networking programmes and other industry–institution initiatives.
- e) Students should be encouraged to transform their creative ideas into practical entrepreneurial opportunities through prototype development, business-model preparation, innovation projects and idea-generation activities.
- f) Greater emphasis should be placed on developing students' calculated risk-taking and decision-making abilities through business simulations, case analysis, problem-solving exercises and practical entrepreneurial situations.

- g) Entrepreneurship should be promoted as an integral part of campus culture by establishing entrepreneurship clubs, organising innovation events and startup fairs, and encouraging students to participate regularly in idea-generation and entrepreneurial activities.

12. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that institutional support is an important factor associated with the entrepreneurial mindset of college students. Students of SAFI Institute of Advanced Study generally perceive their institution as supportive of entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of institutional encouragement, training, mentoring and the learning environment.

At the same time, the findings reveal important areas for improvement. Infrastructure and entrepreneurial facilities receive the lowest level of agreement, indicating the need for stronger incubation, innovation and networking mechanisms.

Students demonstrate a relatively strong entrepreneurial mindset, particularly in terms of creative thinking and opportunity recognition. However, calculated risk-taking is comparatively weaker, suggesting the need for more practical and experiential entrepreneurial learning.

The estimated correlation analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial mindset. This suggests that strengthening institutional mechanisms may contribute to the development of entrepreneurial capabilities among students.

Therefore, higher educational institutions should adopt an integrated approach that combines entrepreneurship education, practical training, mentoring, institutional encouragement, incubation and networking. Such an ecosystem can help students transform their creativity and ideas into meaningful entrepreneurial opportunities.

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