

University Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Entrepreneurship in Indian Higher Educational Institutes

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is pivotal in fostering economic and social growth, prompting policymakers worldwide to focus on developing robust entrepreneurial ecosystems. The university entrepreneurial ecosystem (UEE) has garnered substantial interest among scholars and policymakers due to its potential as a breeding ground for future entrepreneurs. University Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (UEE) is a complex web of components that empowers students to develop entrepreneurial behaviour and create new ventures. UEE provides the students with the resources and environment where they are supported to take up entrepreneurship. This research presents a comprehensive four-phase study to examine different aspects of UEE viz components, outcomes, conceptual framework, measurement scales, and influence on entrepreneurial process.

In the first phase, we aimed to develop a preliminary understanding of the components and outcomes of the UEE. We employed the Fuzzy DEMATEL and Fuzzy TOPSIS methods to analyse the interdependencies and rank the success components of UEE which indicated Entrepreneurial Education & Training, Supportive Culture, Mentors, and Network as the most impactful components. Moving to the second phase, we conducted an exploratory study using the Gioia method to develop a conceptual framework for the UEE. In addition to the eight components identified from the existing literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems, our thematic analysis revealed unique sub-components specific to UEE. Using multi-case study approach and drawing on data from documents and interviews, we study this complex system and develop a framework of UEE by drawing parallels with the ecological ecosystem components, i.e., Biotic and Abiotic components. We formulate the UEE as a composite of the biotic component, i.e., the Student Entrepreneurs, and two abiotic components, i.e., resources available in the university as the Edaphic Abiotic component and the university's culture as the Climatic Abiotic components. The third phase involved the development of measurement scales for the identified components. Through a rigorous four-step process of item generation, scale purification, scale finalisation, and scale validation, we ensured the accuracy and reliability of our scales. The multi-level structure of the scale allowed for a nuanced understanding of the reflective and formative nature of the UEE components and their

interrelations. Finally, in the fourth phase, adopt fuzzy cognitive modelling and simulation to analyse the impact of the components of UEE on three crucial phases of the entrepreneurial process, i.e., Entrepreneurial Intention Development, Entrepreneurial Exploration and Entrepreneurial Exploitation.

The contributions of this research are multi-faceted. First, it offers a holistic framework for establishing and nurturing the UEE, integrating diverse components and their influence on entrepreneurial process. Second, this study challenges conventional policies and practices by revealing the unique requirements of the UEE compared to regional entrepreneurial ecosystems. Policymakers can now prioritise fostering entrepreneurial education, networks, mentors, and supportive culture within universities to effectively catalyse entrepreneurial ventures among students. Third, our measurement scales enable precise assessments of the UEE components, guiding universities in refining their entrepreneurial support systems. This research provides a comprehensive understanding of the University Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, filling a critical gap in the entrepreneurship literature. The findings empower policymakers, educators, and university administrators to foster an environment conducive to entrepreneurship, thus driving economic growth and social progress through innovative ventures.

Keywords: entrepreneurial ecosystem, university entrepreneurial ecosystem, UEE measurement, framework of UEE, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial exploration, entrepreneurial exploitation