

# **Cultivation of Entrepreneurial Mindset in Design Education**

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## **Abstract**

The footprint of design is increasing in the industry, and the roles of designers are expanding beyond the conventional functions. As a result, industry expectations from designers are continuously increasing, and companies are seeking talent that possesses not just core design skills but also a holistic understanding of the problem at hand, business concepts, and organizational structure. Many scholars highlight that today's design education is still rooted in the traditional pedagogical approaches and has not been able to match the pace and requirements of the industry. Some previous studies emphasize that design education should be trans-disciplinary and include concepts of business and technology. One way to address this challenge is to make the Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM) an integral part of design education.

Entrepreneurial Mindset is a multi-dimensional construct used to explain individual abilities to pursue value-creation goals amidst uncertainty. It includes personality, cognition, and behavioral attributes of an individual that act together to drive individuals towards value creation. Research informs that EM is associated not just with entrepreneurs, but it is an important performance driver for everyone, including corporate employees. This thesis aims to identify pedagogical ways of cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset in Indian design education, leading to new generation design graduates who are good at acquiring new skills and also adapting their existing skills to the industry requirements. In this work, an understanding of EM is defined first and assessed in the context of design education. Specifically, EM attributes that the fresh graduates need to possess are identified. Finally, pedagogical methods to imbibe these attributes in students are explored and tested.

A qualitative approach was followed for the studies, where one study formed the basis for the subsequent study. Several semi-structured interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs and experts to understand their interpretations of EM and its manifestation in their work. The data collected from these interviews was thematically coded and later validated with another set of entrepreneurship experts. The EM attributes derived were then

assessed for their relevance in the design practice through a qualitative study with many senior designers. These interviews also captured their assessment of the performance of design graduates on EM attributes. Next, several senior design educators were interviewed to identify methods to cultivate EM attributes in design students. Lastly, using the experimental design approach, the proposed pedagogical methods for improving EM scores were tested with the final-year undergraduate design students and fresh graduates in design.

The thesis contributes to an improved understanding of EM by identifying EM attributes. It proposes a conceptual model, called the Bird's Beak model of EM, to aid the understanding of EM and its various dimensions – innate traits, developable orientations, and learnable skills. The thesis also provides insights on the evolving nature of the design practice in India and the expectations of the industry from young designers entering the industry. It highlights significant gaps in the design graduates on the EM attributes that design education needs to critically address. The final outcome of the thesis is a new framework, called the PRISM Framework, for design educators to follow in order to cultivate EM in their design students. The framework primarily comprises of themes on pedagogical methods, curriculum add-ons, learning environment, and assessment methods in design education. The thesis offers a framework for curriculum designers and educators to embed EM meaningfully into design education.