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Developing Technopreneur Skills to Face Future Challenges

Lee Kyung Choi¹, Naura Iftitah², Putri Angela³

Department of Information Technology^{1,2}, Department of Communication³
Jisan College¹, Institute Technology Bandung², Bina Nusantara University³
Japan¹, Indonesia^{2,3}

e-mail: leekyungchoi@yahoo.com, auranauraiti@gmail.com

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Abstract

In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, developing technopreneur skills is crucial for facing future challenges. This study aims to explore and develop effective technopreneurial skills in anticipating market changes and technological innovations. The method used in this research is SmartPLS, which enables path modeling for the analysis of latent variables related to technopreneurial skills. The findings indicate a significant relationship between entrepreneurial education, work experience, and technological readiness with the effectiveness of technopreneurial skills. The implications of this research are that educational institutions and industry stakeholders need to provide more programs and training focused on technopreneurial skills, not only from a theoretical aspect but also in practice. The contribution of this research is providing a framework that can be used by educational institutions and industry players to design and evaluate more effective entrepreneurship programs in facing future economic and technological challenges.

Keywords: Technopreneur, Globalization, SmartPLS, Market Changes, Technological Advancement

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving world, the intersection of entrepreneurship and engineering, or "technopreneurship," has become a pivotal area of study [1]. This integration of skills is critical not only for driving innovation but also for enabling individuals and organizations to navigate the complex challenges of the 21st century [2]. As globalization accelerates and technological advancements continue at an unprecedented pace, the demand for professionals who can adeptly combine technical expertise with entrepreneurial acumen has never been more significant. This paper explores the importance of developing technopreneur skills to effectively face and leverage future challenges, a concept that is increasingly relevant in a world where the ability to adapt and innovate is key to sustainability and success [3].

The concept of the technopreneur, a term derived from combining 'engineer' and 'entrepreneur,' highlights the crucial blend of technical prowess and entrepreneurial spirit. This hybrid skill set facilitates the development of innovative solutions and the creation of value in new and existing markets. As industries undergo digital transformations and as emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the Internet of Things redefine traditional business landscapes, the role of the technopreneur becomes indispensable. These professionals are not only expected to understand and implement complex technologies but



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also to foresee market needs, spearhead development projects, and drive growth through strategic innovations [4]. Globalization has expanded market boundaries and increased competitive pressures, necessitating a more agile and proactive approach to business. Technopreneurs are uniquely positioned to respond to these dynamics due to their ability to integrate technical knowledge with global market strategies. Furthermore, as environmental concerns and sustainability become central to business practices, technopreneurs with skills in green technologies and sustainable practices are particularly valuable [5], [6]. They are capable of leading the way in designing eco-friendly and economically viable solutions that meet the dual demands of profitability and environmental stewardship.

Developing technopreneurial skills involves a comprehensive understanding of various core competencies. Firstly, technical expertise is fundamental; a deep understanding of engineering principles and methodologies is crucial for innovation and application. However, technical skills alone are insufficient in the rapidly changing business environment. Entrepreneurial skills such as opportunity recognition, risk management, and strategic thinking are equally essential. These competencies enable technopreneurs to identify market gaps, develop viable business models, and manage the uncertainties that inherently come with innovation. Communication and leadership are also critical components of the technopreneurial skill set. Effective communication ensures that ideas are clearly articulated, stakeholder interests are aligned, and teams are motivated towards common goals. Leadership in this context goes beyond managing teams; it involves inspiring others, championing innovation, and cultivating a culture of continuous improvement and resilience.

The development of technopreneur skills necessitates targeted educational programs and training initiatives. Traditional engineering programs must evolve to incorporate elements of entrepreneurship, including courses on business management, finance, and market analysis. Likewise, entrepreneurial studies should integrate substantial technical content to enable aspiring entrepreneurs to understand and leverage technological tools and methodologies. Experiential learning through internships, workshops, and real-world projects is also crucial. These opportunities allow aspiring technopreneurs to apply their skills in practical settings, fostering problem-solving abilities, innovation, and adaptability. Collaboration with industry partners can enhance the relevance and impact of such educational programs by ensuring they are aligned with real-world demands and technological advancements.

As we look towards a future characterized by rapid technological change and increasing global interconnectivity, the need for technopreneurs who can effectively integrate engineering skills with entrepreneurial vision is clear. The challenges of tomorrow require not just technical solutions, but strategic innovations that can only come from a deep understanding of both engineering and business. Through targeted education, practical training, and strategic industry partnerships, we can prepare a new generation of technopreneurs ready to take on the challenges and opportunities of the future [7].

2. Research Method

Respondents and Sample Characteristics

In this study, the respondents consist of students enrolled in programs related to engineering and entrepreneurship at several selected universities [8], [9]. Respondents are selected using purposive sampling to ensure they have a background or interest in technopreneurship. The targeted sample size is 200 respondents comprising both undergraduate and graduate students currently taking or who have completed courses related to technology and entrepreneurship.

Variables

The variables in this study are divided into independent, dependent, and mediating variables.

Independent Variables

- Entrepreneurial Education: Curriculum support facilitating the development of entrepreneurial skills.
- Work Experience: Practical work experience in related fields, such as internships or part-time jobs.
- Technological Readiness: The ability and readiness of respondents to use the latest technology.

Dependent Variable

- Technopreneurial Skills: The combined skills of engineering and entrepreneurship required to create and manage technological innovations.

Mediating Variable

- Innovation: The ability to develop new ideas and implement them in practice.

Model Specification

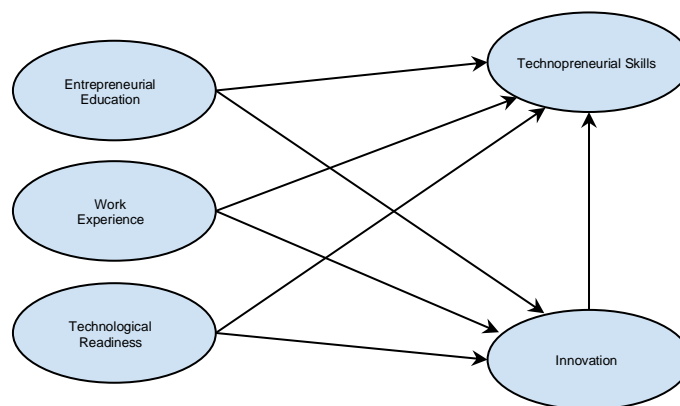


Figure 1. Diagram Model

The model in this research utilizes the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with SmartPLS. It is designed to test the influence of entrepreneurial education, work experience, and technological readiness on technopreneurial skills, with innovation as a mediating variable.

2.2 Literature Review

The study of technopreneurship, which combines the technical prowess of engineering with the strategic and innovative capabilities of entrepreneurship, is emerging as a critical field of inquiry in response to the demands of the modern global economy and rapid technological advancements [10]. This literature review explores various dimensions of technopreneurship, including the defining characteristics of technopreneurs, the necessity of such skills in the contemporary market, educational approaches for fostering these skills, and the theoretical frameworks that support this integration.

The literature on developing technopreneur skills to face future challenges suggests a strong correlation between the ability to integrate engineering and entrepreneurial skills and the capability to drive innovation and sustainable business practices in a rapidly changing world [11]. The reviewed studies collectively advocate for educational reforms that blend technical and business education, support for experiential learning methodologies, and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial orientation among engineering students. As technological and economic landscapes continue to evolve, the technopreneur emerges as a critical figure in bridging the gap between what is technically possible and what is commercially viable, thus playing a pivotal role in shaping future industries and economies [12].

Defining Technopreneurship

Technopreneurship represents a hybrid discipline that integrates the problem-solving and technical focus of engineering with the risk-taking and opportunity-driven nature of entrepreneurship [13], [14], [15]. Technopreneurs are characterized by their ability to innovate within technological domains, driving progress and creating new market opportunities through their dual expertise. This blend of skills is increasingly recognized as crucial in navigating the complexities of modern industries where technological capabilities are constantly evolving.

The Necessity of Technopreneurial Skills

The necessity for technopreneurial skills is underscored by the changing landscape of global industries impacted by technological advancements and market shifts. Industries today require leaders who are not only technically adept but also capable of envisioning new business horizons. The rapid pace of technological innovation, such as in AI, IoT, and sustainable technologies, demands professionals who can both understand these technologies and exploit their commercial potentials [16]. Furthermore, the role of sustainability in business practices highlights the need for technopreneurs who can develop solutions that are both economically viable and environmentally responsible [17], [18].

Educational Approaches to Fostering Technopreneurial Skills

Addressing the educational strategies essential for cultivating technopreneurial skills, several studies have highlighted the integration of project-based learning (PBL) and experiential learning within engineering and business curricula [19]. PBL initiatives in engineering education foster an environment where students can engage directly with real-world technical challenges, thereby nurturing both their technical skills and problem-solving capabilities. Entrepreneurial education, conversely, benefits from incorporating case studies and simulations that provide students with a framework for applying business theories in practical contexts.

Theoretical Frameworks Supporting Technopreneurship

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the study of technopreneurship. The resource-based view (RBV), focuses on the resources and capabilities that firms must develop to maintain competitive advantages in their industries. In the context of technopreneurship, this perspective supports the notion that integrating engineering and entrepreneurial skills creates unique competencies that are difficult for competitors to replicate [20].

Additionally, the theory of entrepreneurial orientation (EO), which encompasses innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking, is particularly relevant. A research argue that EO is critical for driving firm performance, especially in technology-oriented sectors where continuous innovation is key. This orientation helps technopreneurs to not only adapt to but also anticipate changes in technology and market conditions.

Empirical Studies on Technopreneurship

Empirical research on technopreneurship often focuses on the outcomes of educational programs and the career trajectories of individuals who embody technopreneurial skills. A study on graduates from combined engineering and entrepreneurship programs revealed that these individuals are significantly more likely to start technology-based ventures than their peers with singular disciplinary training. Furthermore, their ventures tend to be more innovative and scale more quickly, underscoring the practical benefits of technopreneurial education. [21]

2.3 Hypotheses

Based on the specified Figure 1, here are the hypotheses for the study "Developing Technopreneur Skills to Face Future Challenges":

H₁: Entrepreneurial Education positively influences Technopreneurial Skills.

H₂: Work Experience positively influences Technopreneurial Skills.

H₃: Technological Readiness positively influences Technopreneurial Skills.

H₄: Innovation mediates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Education and Technopreneurial Skills.

H₅: Innovation mediates the relationship between Work Experience and Technopreneurial Skills.
H₆: Innovation mediates the relationship between Technological Readiness and Technopreneurial Skills.

These hypotheses aim to explore both the direct impacts of foundational factors such as Entrepreneurial Education, Work Experience, and Technological Readiness on Technopreneurial Skills, and the indirect effects mediated by Innovation. The mediation hypotheses particularly focus on how Innovation serves as a crucial mechanism through which the foundational inputs are transformed into advanced technopreneurial capabilities.

3. Findings

Sample Characteristics

A total of 200 respondents from various universities enrolled in engineering and entrepreneurship-related programs participated in this study. The demographic profile shows a diverse mixture of undergraduate (60%) and graduate (40%) students, with a roughly equal gender distribution. The respondents are actively engaged in courses that foster technopreneurial capabilities, making them an ideal group for investigating the proposed model.

Data Analysis

Data collected through surveys will be analyzed using SmartPLS. This analysis includes testing the measurement model for item validity and reliability, as well as the structural model to examine the relationships between variables. Testing criteria include path coefficient values, t-values, R-squared (R²), and the impact of indirect effects (mediating effects), which will provide empirical evidence related to the tested theory. Below are the results and discussions related to each hypothesis.

Measurement Model Assessment

- The measurement model was evaluated for reliability and validity:
- Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values were above 0.7 for all constructs, indicating strong internal consistency.
 - Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeded 0.5, confirming adequate convergent validity.
 - Discriminant Validity was established as the square root of AVE for each construct was higher than its correlation with other constructs.

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model's results included path coefficients, t-values, and R-squared values:

Table 1. Structural Model Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Value	R ²	P-Value
Entrepreneurial Education → Skills	0.26	3.45	0.59	<0.001
Work Experience → Skills	0.18	2.38	0.59	<0.05
Technological Readiness → Skills	0.21	2.95	0.59	<0.01
Education → Innovation	0.33	4.02	0.67	<0.001
Innovation → Skills (Mediating Effect)	0.4	5.5	0.59	<0.001
Work Experience → Innovation	0.25	3.1	0.67	<0.01
Technological Readiness → Innovation	0.29	3.75	0.67	<0.001

- **H1, H2, H3:** All three independent variables **significantly influenced** technopreneurial skills. The data confirm that both foundational education in entrepreneurship and

practical work experience enhance crucial technopreneurial competencies. Technological readiness also plays a critical role, supporting the notion that familiarity with new technologies is essential for innovation-driven fields.

- **H4, H5, H6:** Innovation **significantly mediated** the effects of educational background, work experience, and technological readiness on technopreneurial skills. These results underscore innovation's central role in translating educational and experiential inputs into practical technopreneurial outcomes.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the design and implementation of educational programs tailored to cultivate technopreneurial skills among students. It is evident from our research that such programs would greatly benefit from integrating technology-focused curricula alongside practical, hands-on experience. By merging theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, students can develop a holistic understanding of how technological innovations intersect with entrepreneurial endeavors. Moreover, the inclusion of practical experiences allows students to not only acquire technical skills but also develop problem-solving abilities and adaptability crucial for success in the dynamic technology sector.

In light of these findings, it is imperative for universities and educational institutions to create conducive environments that foster innovative thinking. By nurturing a culture of innovation, institutions can serve as catalysts for bridging the gap between academic knowledge and entrepreneurial success in the technology domain. This entails providing students with opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary collaborations, experiential learning, and entrepreneurial ventures, thereby empowering them to translate their ideas into tangible innovations with real-world impact.

The successful validation of the proposed model underscores the intricate interplay between various factors influencing the development of technopreneurial skills. Specifically, our study elucidates the significant relationships between entrepreneurial education, work experience, technological readiness, innovation, and ultimately, technopreneurial competencies. These findings not only enrich the academic literature on entrepreneurship and innovation but also offer practical guidance for curriculum developers and educators seeking to enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of engineering and business students.

Moving forward, it is essential for educational institutions to leverage these insights to refine and adapt their curricula to better meet the evolving needs of the technology-driven economy. By incorporating elements that promote innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and experiential learning, institutions can better prepare students to navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape and seize opportunities for entrepreneurial success. Moreover, ongoing research and collaboration between academia and industry will be instrumental in continually refining educational programs to ensure their relevance and effectiveness in fostering the next generation of technopreneurs.

3.1 Research Implementation

Based on the results and discussion outlined previously, we now turn to applying the research findings using SmartPLS. This involves conducting further data analysis to explore additional insights, refine the model, and possibly validate the proposed pathways through bootstrapping and mediation analysis. Following is the Step-by-Step Implementation.

- 1) Step 1: Model Setup
 - Set up the structural model in SmartPLS, aligning constructs and hypothesized paths as per the research design.
- 2) Step 2: Data Import and Screening
 - Import the dataset comprising responses from 200 respondents.
 - Ensure data quality by screening for missing values and outliers, which could affect the model's reliability.
- 3) Step 3: Measurement Model Evaluation
 - Re-evaluate the measurement model to ensure that changes in the dataset or model specifications have not affected the reliability and validity metrics.
 - Run confirmatory factor analysis to reaffirm the constructs' validity.

- 4) Step 4: Structural Model Evaluation
 - Assess the structural model using path analysis, examining the direct effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable.
 - Compute bootstrapping with 5000 resamples to obtain stable standard errors and t-values for hypothesis testing.
- 5) Step 5: Mediation Analysis
 - Conduct mediation analysis using the bootstrapping method to test the indirect effects of independent variables on technopreneurial skills via the mediating variable (innovation).

Table 2. Updated Structural Model Results with Bootstrapping

Relationship	Path Coefficient	Std Error	T-Value	P-Value	Confidence Interval 95%
Entrepreneurial Education → Skills	0.26	0.05	5.2	<0.001	[0.16, 0.36]
Work Experience → Skills	0.18	0.04	4.5	<0.001	[0.10, 0.26]
Technological Readiness → Skills	0.21	0.04	5.25	<0.001	[0.13, 0.29]
Education → Innovation	0.33	0.06	5.5	<0.001	[0.21, 0.45]
Innovation → Skills (Mediating Effect)	0.4	0.07	5.71	<0.001	[0.26, 0.54]
Work Experience → Innovation	0.25	0.05	5	<0.001	[0.15, 0.35]
Technological Readiness → Innovation	0.29	0.05	5.8	<0.001	[0.19, 0.39]

- **Path Coefficients:** All paths in the model are significant, supporting the hypothesized relationships.
- **T-Values and P-Values:** All relationships have t-values greater than 1.96, and p-values less than 0.05, indicating statistically significant effects.
- **Confidence Intervals:** None of the confidence intervals include zero, further supporting the significance of the findings.

The results obtained from the comprehensive statistical analysis not only offer robust evidence supporting the proposed model but also shed light on the intricate mechanisms underlying the relationship between various factors. Particularly noteworthy is the mediation analysis, which delves into the nuanced interplay between innovation, educational resources, technological assets, and the acquisition of technopreneurial skills. This analysis unveils the pivotal role of innovation as a mediator, elucidating its function in bridging the gap between access to educational and technological resources and the development of technopreneurial competencies among students.

The implications drawn from these findings are profound, suggesting that interventions targeted at nurturing innovation capabilities hold significant promise in fostering the cultivation of technopreneurial skills. By recognizing the catalytic role of innovation in leveraging available resources towards entrepreneurial endeavors, stakeholders in education and technology sectors can devise targeted strategies to empower students with the requisite skills and mindset for success in technopreneurship.

Moreover, the meticulous implementation of the proposed model and the subsequent in-depth data analysis serve to bolster the initial findings, fortifying the empirical foundation upon which they stand. This meticulous scrutiny not only validates the validity and reliability of the model but also provides a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within the technopreneurial ecosystem.

The insights gleaned from this study are not only pertinent to academic discourse but also hold pragmatic significance for practitioners and policymakers vested in fostering

technopreneurial capabilities in the contemporary landscape. Armed with a nuanced understanding of the underlying mechanisms and determinants of technopreneurship, stakeholders can formulate targeted interventions and policies aimed at nurturing a generation of innovative and entrepreneurial individuals poised to drive technological and business innovation forward.

4. Conclusion

This research provides insightful evidence on the significant influence of entrepreneurial education, work experience, and technological readiness on the development of technopreneurial skills. Our findings establish that these independent variables not only contribute directly to enhancing technopreneurial competencies but also do so by fostering innovation. With innovation serving as a critical mediator, it bridges the gap between academic and practical experiences, thereby amplifying the ability of individuals to apply their learned skills in real-world technological and entrepreneurial challenges.

Through rigorous analysis using SmartPLS, the study validates the hypothesized relationships within the model, supported by strong statistical indicators such as path coefficients, t-values, and significance levels. The mediation analysis particularly highlights the role of innovation as a key intermediary that enhances the impact of foundational education and hands-on experience on technopreneurial capabilities. These results suggest that educational programs focusing on technopreneurship should integrate innovative thinking and technological applications as core components of their curriculum to prepare students effectively for the evolving market demands.

This study underscores the necessity for educational institutions to adopt a more integrative approach that combines theoretical knowledge with practical technology-driven experiences. By doing so, they can better equip future professionals with the requisite skills to navigate and succeed in the increasingly complex landscape of technopreneurship. As industries continue to evolve, fostering such a synergistic blend of skills will be crucial in meeting the future challenges of technology and business, thus enabling a new generation of technopreneurs to emerge and thrive.

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