

Research on the Influence of University Entrepreneurship Education on College Students' Entrepreneurship Willingness

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Abstract

University entrepreneurship education plays an important role in generating college students' entrepreneurship willingness. 421 college students in Guangzhou university town as research objects, the relationship among university entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship opportunity discernment and college students' entrepreneurship willingness was explored. The research results show that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect for college students' entrepreneurship willingness, and entrepreneurship opportunity discernment plays an intermediary role in the promotion mechanism of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship willingness. The research results are conducive to further exploring the influencing factors of college students' entrepreneurship willingness, reveal effective ways to transform university entrepreneurship education into entrepreneurship willingness, and provide suggestions and measures for Chinese colleges and universities to better develop entrepreneurship education.

Keywords

entrepreneurship education; entrepreneurship willingness; entrepreneurship opportunity discernment.

1. Introduction

On the one hand, the "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" strategy is an important concept leading the development of Chinese society; moreover, it is the main driving force for China's social and economic growth. At present, more than 7 million college graduates provide powerful human resource guarantee for China's innovation and entrepreneurship every year. College students have strong professional and technical advantages; their entrepreneurship plays a huge role in promoting the transition of China's economic structure. However, the data shows: in December 2018, Northeast Normal University released the "Report on the Employment and Entrepreneurship Development of Chinese College Students 2017-2018", and the relevant data showed that college graduates' entrepreneurship rate in 2018 was only 3.12% throughout the country, of which 51.47% graduates believed the best entrepreneurship opportunity is "after 1-3 years of work", and the proportion of graduates interested in entrepreneurship is 45.03% (Blue Book of Employment, 2019). The above data shows that the innovation rate of Chinese college students is very low; and Chinese college students' willingness is relatively weak.

Entrepreneurship is the planned and conscious behavior, and the entrepreneurship willingness plays an important role in the decision to set up new enterprise. Having entrepreneurship willingness is the necessary prerequisite for making entrepreneurship activities. In recent years, research in the theoretical world believes that entrepreneurship education plays a very important role in promoting individual entrepreneurship willingness (Zhang Xiu'e and Zhao Minhui, 2017). Management master Drucker pointed out that

entrepreneurship like other disciplines as early as 1985, which can be learned and educated. Anselm's (1993) research shows that some people may be born with entrepreneurship willingness, but if they through entrepreneurship learning, practice has proven that their level of entrepreneurship activity is higher. Li Xinchun's (2010) research believes that entrepreneurship itself is a learning process, specific knowledge can be acquired, and entrepreneurship self-efficacy and discernment ability of entrepreneurship opportunities can be improved through effective learning. Moreover, the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment has always been an important content in entrepreneurship research; the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment has a positive impact on the promotion of entrepreneurship willingness (Liu Wanli et al., 2011).

Therefore, this paper takes Chinese college students as the research objects, and constructs an intermediary model to verify the effect of entrepreneurship education on college students' entrepreneurship willingness during school, and seeks the relationship among entrepreneurship opportunity discernment, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship willingness.

2. Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

2.1. Entrepreneurship Education and Willingness

Entrepreneurship education is the education related to entrepreneurship carried out by colleges and universities to college students, including curriculum education, activity education, practice education and other forms, in order to enhance the entrepreneurship intention of college students, improve entrepreneurship ability, and ultimately promote the employment of college students (Li Qin, 2018). Entrepreneurship willingness is individual subjective attitude and tendency to engage in entrepreneurship activities in the future, and it is the premise of entrepreneurship activities, the stronger entrepreneurship willingness is, the more likely entrepreneurs are to engage in entrepreneurship activities (Wen Liang, 2010). Many scholars have studied the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship willingness, and draw conclusion: entrepreneurship education can significantly affect students' entrepreneurship willingness (Li Qin, 2018; Fietjo, 2001), studies concluded that entrepreneurship education can promote students' perception for feasibility by increasing their knowledge, and then promote their entrepreneurship willingness; there is a connection between entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurship willingness, this is because entrepreneurship education can cultivate students' entrepreneurship confidence. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses based on the existing research:

Hypothesis 1: Entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on entrepreneurship willingness.

2.2. Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurship Opportunity Discernment

If entrepreneurs want to succeed in business, in addition to their entrepreneurship willingness, they also need to be keen to find opportunities that others ignore or not notice, and then develop opportunities in time and effectively. Therefore, the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment is also a core issue in entrepreneurship research, therefore, the ability cultivation of entrepreneurship opportunity discernment is a key element in the entrepreneurship process, and entrepreneurship education can enhance this ability. According to the entrepreneurship education reference, opportunity discernment can and should be taught and should be the core theme of training future entrepreneurs (Liu Wanli et al., 2011; Schiff et al., 2016). This paper proposes hypothesis based on the above analysis:

Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment.

2.3. Entrepreneurship Opportunity Discernment and Entrepreneurship Willingness

Reitan's studies (1977) believe that potential entrepreneurs are those who recognize the entrepreneurship opportunity and plan to set up new enterprise, But for those who haven't done anything about entrepreneurship. This study shows that discerning entrepreneurship opportunities and having entrepreneurship willingness are two key characteristics of potential entrepreneurs; in order to carry out actual entrepreneurship behavior, both of these two elements are indispensable (Karimi et al., 2016). The discernment and recognition of entrepreneurship opportunities will stimulate entrepreneurs to work hard. The stronger recognition ability will increase the entrepreneurship intention and the entrepreneurship energy of potential entrepreneurs. Studies have shown that opportunity discernment and entrepreneurship intention are closely linked (Liu Wanli et al., 2011). For college students, the importance of entrepreneurship opportunity discernment is even more prominent. Only when college students have strong opportunity discernment ability or find promising entrepreneurship opportunities can their entrepreneurship willingness be maintained at a high level. Karimi et al. (2016) confirmed in his research that college students who have a stronger perception for entrepreneurship opportunities have higher entrepreneurship willingness. This paper proposes the following hypothesis based on this point:

Hypothesis 3: The entrepreneurship opportunity discernment has a positive impact on entrepreneurship willingness.

2.4. Intermediary Role of Entrepreneurship Opportunity Discernment

Entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities can enhance the entrepreneurship knowledge of college students; previous studies have shown that entrepreneurship knowledge has a positive impact on the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment (Sanchez, 2013). Corbett's (2007) research also shows that individual knowledge acquired through professional education has a positive impact on the entrepreneurship of this industry; its fundamental reason is that this knowledge is closely related to the individual entrepreneurship opportunity discernment ability. That is to say, entrepreneurship willingness is affected by education or learning and other variables. According to the above, entrepreneurship opportunity discernment originates in entrepreneurship education; entrepreneurship opportunity discernment is a variable that affects entrepreneurship willingness, by improving entrepreneurship opportunity discernment ability of college students, their entrepreneurship willingness can be enhanced. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: entrepreneurship opportunity discernment plays an intermediary role between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship willingness.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

This paper studies the influence of entrepreneurship education on college students' entrepreneurship willingness, therefore, college students are selected as the research objects, and the research scope is college students and college students after graduate within 5 years. The reason why the college students after graduate within 5 years are included: one is to consider the possible time lag of entrepreneurship education; the other is that the current subsidies and policies of college students' entrepreneurship are aimed at the college students after graduate within 5 years. The formal survey is mainly concentrated in Guangzhou

University City, online recycling is carried out through the questionnaire star, and the qualified college students or graduates are screened by using university colleagues and students and other connection resources, and the online questionnaire is released. A total of 518 questionnaires are collected in this survey, and the recovered questionnaires are screened. Finally, 421 valid questionnaires are formed; the recovery rate of questionnaires is 81%. The descriptive statistical results of the samples are shown in Table.1.

Table 1.: descriptive statistical analysis of respondents

characteristic	characteristic value	sample number	percentage	characteristic	characteristic value	sample number	percentage
gender	male	224	53.2	major	economics and management	156	37.05
	female	197	46.8		literature, history and philosophy	49	11.64
age	under 20	109	25.9		science and engineering	86	20.42
	21-25	272	64.6		agriculture, medicine and law	42	9.98
	25-30	37	8.79		others	88	20.9
	over 30	3	0.7		whether parents are entrepreneurs	yes	117
				no	304	72.21	

3.2. Variable Measurement

By consulting domestic and foreign classic literatures in this paper, the maturity scale with high reliability and validity and many references is selected. The entrepreneurship situation and group characteristics of Chinese college student groups are integrated; the scale is modified through in-depth interviews and pre-tests with potential entrepreneurs, thus forming the scale for this study. Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship opportunity discernment, and entrepreneurship willingness scale are measured with the Likert five-point scoring method, "1" means "completely disagree" and "5" means "completely agree", and surveyors score according to the actual situation. According to previous research, different ages, genders, and families all have a greater impact on a person's entrepreneurship willingness. Therefore, this study selected the respondents' age, gender, and whether their parents are entrepreneurs as control variables.

This paper refers to the research of Ren Shenggang (2017) and Lu Qiuping (2015) to measure entrepreneurship education, including 8 items: "I actively take entrepreneurship education courses and participate in entrepreneurship lectures", "I often actively participate in entrepreneurship skills training or simulation exercises", "I often take the initiative to participate in entrepreneurship competition activities" and so on. By referring to the research of Liu Wanli (2011) and Shi Xiaofu's (2016) research on Measuring entrepreneurship opportunity discernment, there are totally 5 items, including: "I often find entrepreneurship opportunities", "I often have some ideas that can be developed into new products or service", "How many entrepreneurship ideas have you thought of?" and so on. By referring to the research of Xianghui (2014) and Wang Xinhuan (2016), 6 items of entrepreneurship willingness are determined, including: "My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur", "I

will make every effort to start and run a company", "I thought about creating a entrepreneurship team to set up a company" and so on.

4. Research Results

4.1. Reliability and Validity Test

The Cronbach's α coefficients are used as the criterion for determining reliability in this study, and the results are shown in Table 2. α value of each variable is higher than 0.7, and the KMO value is also larger than 0.7. The minimum value of cumulative variance contribution rate is 56.89%, and the minimum factor load is 0.676, which is higher than the acceptable critical value, the measurement scale has good reliability and validity.

Table 2. Factor analysis

variable	minimum factor load	Cronbach's α	KMO	Total variance explained
entrepreneurship education	0.802	0.910	0.890	62.13%
entrepreneurship opportunity discernment	0.676	0.869	0.840	56.89%
entrepreneurship willingness	0.832	0.924	0.899	74.38%

The mean, standard deviation (SD), and related coefficients of each variable are listed in Table 3 below. In discriminant validity testing, this paper uses the size of the AVE value of the variable to test, the results show that the AVE values are all higher than 0.5, and the square root of AVE is greater than the related coefficients between the variable itself and other variables, it shows that each variable has higher discriminant validity. Moreover, AMOS22.0 is used to carry out confirmatory factor analysis on the variables, the results shows that the basic model of this study has a good fitting ($X^2/df=2.687$, CFI=0.940, TLI=0.892, IFI=0.949, GFI=0.895, RMSEA=0.070, NFI=0.898), each fitting index basically reaches the standard, and the discriminant validity is good.

Table 3. descriptive statistical results and related coefficients

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 gender	1.59	0.50						
2 age	1.67	0.64	-0.184*					
3 entrepreneurship parent	1.98	0.44	0.028	0.047				
4 entrepreneurship education	3.90	0.69	-0.254**	0.034	-0.076	0.785		
5 entrepreneurship opportunity discernment	3.23	0.67	-0.167*	0.045	0.151*	0.677*	0.773	
6 entrepreneurship willingness	2.82	0.73	0.274**	0.060	-0.008	0.667**	0.597**	0.850
AVE						0.645	0.597	0.723
CR						0.965	0.880	0.940

Note: ** denote $P < 0.01$, * denote $P < 0.05$; the diagonal value is the square root of AVE.

4.2. Common Method Bias Test

During the survey, one person filled out a questionnaire, which was prone to produce universality and systematic errors. In order to reduce the impact as much as possible, some methods are adopted in the research of this paper: (1) some pre-controls are adopted during the measurement process, such as anonymous filling in the questionnaire, setting reverse questions, and disrupting the order of the items, etc.; (2) the prevention of Harman single factor test is used to conduct statistical control, through exploratory analysis of all the items, they are aggregated into 4 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, and the cumulative variance contribution rate exceeds 66.47%. Therefore, the deviation is small.

4.3. Hypothesis Test

4.3.1. Test of the Relationship among Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Opportunity Discernment and Entrepreneurship Willingness

Based on controlling the respondents' gender, age, and whether their parents are entrepreneurs, this study conduct multiple regressions on the relationships between the core variables studied, as shown in Table 4. Model 3 tests the effect of the control variable on the dependent variable, the results show that gender is a factor that affects entrepreneurship willingness, and age and whether parents are entrepreneurs do not significantly affect individual entrepreneurship willingness. In order to verify the main effect, independent variables are introduced on the basis of model 3, it can be seen from model 4 that the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship willingness reach significant level ($\beta=0.621$, $p<0.01$), and entrepreneurship education can explain 39% of the total variation in entrepreneurship willingness, it shows that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurship willingness, so hypothesis 1 is verified. Model 2 takes entrepreneurship opportunity discernment as the dependent variable and entrepreneurship education as the independent variable for regression, the results show that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive effect on the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment ($\beta=0.642$, $p<0.01$), entrepreneurship education explains 41% of the total variation in entrepreneurship opportunity discernment, so hypothesis 2 is verified. Model 5 tests the relationship between entrepreneurship opportunity discernment and entrepreneurship willingness, the results show that entrepreneurship opportunity discernment has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurship willingness ($\beta=0.602$, $p<0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 4. multiple regression analysis results

	entrepreneurship opportunity discernment			entrepreneurship willingness		
	model 1	model 2	model 3	model 4	model 5	model 6
gender	0.120*	-0.014	0.198**	0.075	0.129**	0.081*
age	0.020	0.038	0.024	0.044	0.014	0.030
entrepreneurship parent	0.140*	0.072	0.000	-0.036	-0.065	-0.062
entrepreneurship education		0.642**		0.621**		0.356**
entrepreneurship opportunity discernment					0.602**	0.374**
entrepreneurship willingness						
R ²	0.029	0.410	0.041	0.390	0.377	0.452
ΔR^2	0.029	0.373	0.041	0.329	0.336	0.082
F	3.678*	66.557**	5.688**	58.618**	60.435**	65.654**

Note: ** denote $P < 0.01$, * denote $P < 0.05$.

4.3.2. Test of Intermediary Effect of Entrepreneurship Opportunity Discernment

The model 4, 5 and 6 in Table 4 are used to verify the intermediary effect of entrepreneurship opportunity discernment. The first step is to test whether the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable, as can be seen from model 4, entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurship willingness ($\beta=0.621$, $p<0.01$); the second step is to test whether independent variable entrepreneurship education has a significant role in entrepreneurship opportunity discernment of intermediary variables, the results of model 2 show that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment ($\beta=0.642$, $p<0.01$); the third step is to carry out the regression of dependent variable on the independent variable and the intermediary variables, the independent variable entrepreneurship education and the intermediary variable entrepreneurship opportunity discernment are put into the regression equation together. The results are shown in model 6, entrepreneurship opportunity discernment has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurship willingness ($\beta=0.374$, $p<0.01$), and entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurship willingness as well ($\beta=0.356$, $p<0.01$), ($0.356 < 0.621$), however, its regression coefficient has declined ($0.356 < 0.621$), this shows that entrepreneurship opportunity discernment has discernment role between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship willingness. Hypothesis 4 is verified.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

5.1. Research Conclusion

This paper focuses on the action mechanism of entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities in entrepreneurship willingness, and explores the relationship among entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship opportunity discernment and entrepreneurship willingness. Through survey and research on 421 college students, the following conclusions are drawn:

- (1) Entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities has a significant positive impact on college students' entrepreneurship willingness. Namely entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities can enhance college students' entrepreneurship willingness and make their attitudes to entrepreneurship positive, encouraging, proud, and firm.
- (2) Entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities has a significant positive impact on the entrepreneurship opportunity discernment. This shows that the more college students participate in entrepreneurship education courses, the more frequently they participate in entrepreneurship simulation exercises and entrepreneurship competitions, the higher their satisfaction with the current entrepreneurship education courses, practice activities and teachers, the more they can improve the discernment ability of entrepreneurship opportunities, and the improvement of this ability is conducive to promote the students' entrepreneurship willingness, and finally, the more likely it is to put it into practice, in the end, they are more likely to put entrepreneurship activities into practice.
- (3) Entrepreneurship opportunity discernment has a significant positive impact on college students' entrepreneurship willingness, and entrepreneurship opportunity discernment plays a intermediary role between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship willingness.

5.2. Research Significance

First, college entrepreneurship education should focus on improving the discernment ability of entrepreneurship opportunities. It is concluded that entrepreneurship education cannot be superficial, and cannot be simply measured by credits, scores, etc., but focuses more on cultivating college students' discernment ability of entrepreneurship opportunities in practice

by using the surrounding beneficial resources, improve the efficiency of resource optimization, and find partners to establish, Find partners to start an entrepreneurship team, find startup funding, and build network relationships. These abilities are the abilities that are actually needed by build a new enterprise, and the source of these abilities can not only rely on books, but more on practical activities, practical activities such as simulated entrepreneurship contests, simulated entrepreneurship roadshows, and business plan writing, make students invest in entrepreneurship practice, find like-minded partners, write business plan together, think about the profit model of the enterprise, design the distribution of rights and responsibilities, try to solve the problem of entrepreneurship, and constantly evaluate their entrepreneurship capabilities in practice, so that have more rational thinking about entrepreneurship and consider the possibility of taking it as a future career.

Second, entrepreneurship education should focus on "quality" to enhance college students' entrepreneurship willingness. In the development of entrepreneurship education, colleges and universities should pay more attention to "quality" rather than "quantity", the entrepreneurship activities that bloom everywhere cannot bring about the promotion of entrepreneurship intentions, only entrepreneurship courses and practical activities that meet students and students are willing to participate can really works. The development of entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities should be set up in accordance with people and major, pay attention to improving the attractiveness of entrepreneurship courses and practical activities, and hire high-quality, high-level entrepreneurship mentors, conduct targeted high-level development according to the different needs and actual conditions of students, carry out high-quality entrepreneurship education with purpose, make students voluntarily and actively participate in it, set up student evaluation system, and continuously improve and perfect entrepreneurship education.

5.3. Research Prospect

First, follow-up studies are not in place. The sample collection in this paper is just a survey for a period of time, and the entrepreneurship status and intentions of the respondents will also change over time. Therefore, in future related research, dynamic tracking can be adopted, a relatively fixed team of university graduate entrepreneurship team samples can be used to track and study, and continuously track entrepreneurship behavior of college students who have received entrepreneurship education after entering into society, investigate their demands for entrepreneurship education and various behaviors in social entrepreneurship, integrate its own situation, continuously clarifies the various possibilities of the impact mechanism of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship willingness and improves relevant conclusions.

Second, future studies can further dig from the perspective of entrepreneurship education. The measurement of entrepreneurship education in this paper is mainly based on the students' reference to entrepreneurship education and their satisfaction with entrepreneurship teachers and courses. However, the contents of entrepreneurship education in universities are very extensive; for example, the impact of school entrepreneurship education resources on college students' entrepreneurship behaviors can be investigated. In short, further decomposing the constituent elements and element indicators of entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities, and then using empirical research methods explore the its action mechanism on college students' entrepreneurship, and it is a topic that can guide the practice of college entrepreneurship education theory.

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