

Chapter 12

The Performance Evaluation of Entrepreneurship Education in Chinese Universities

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ABSTRACT

The quality of entrepreneurship education at the collegiate level is correlated with its sustainability. Existing studies have focused on the construction and method selection of evaluation systems for entrepreneurship education but have lacked concrete analyses of individual effectiveness. Through a micro-perspective, this study conducted a data envelopment analysis to assess the efficiency of entrepreneurship education in eight higher learning institutions. The input criteria comprised the number of courses and available funding, whereas the output criteria consisted of the number of awards won in two major intercollegiate contests and the initial employment rate. In addition, this study further investigated the most efficient schools to find students' opinions on course content and entrepreneurial needs. The findings in this study may serve as a reference for optimizing collegiate-level entrepreneurship education resources, clarifying developmental goals, and improving resource efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Collegiate-level entrepreneurship education (also known as enterprise education) provides students with guidance and skills, delivered through courses and funding, to encourage current or future entrepreneurial success. It is intended to mitigate unemployment. Entrepreneurship education originated in the Western world in 1940s, and the mature development of entrepreneurship education in these countries alleviated

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the employment pressure led by the 2008 financial crisis to a certain extent. In China, higher education enrollment has continuously expanded in the past 10 years, and the number of college graduates has exceeded 7 million since 2014, adding considerable job-seeking pressure. In light of this, the Ministry of Education (MOE) proposed a country-wide implementation of entrepreneurship education in 2009 (when the number of college graduates in China exceeded 5 million) to encourage college students to start their own businesses. In a populous country such as China, entrepreneurship education is one solution to encourage social innovation and mitigate long-term unemployment.

Entrepreneurship education was introduced in China in 1998 and has drawn country-wide attention in recent years. Consequently, the high participation rates from college students and the government's commitment have led to the rapid growth of entrepreneurship education. However, according to the data from McScott, compared with the case where less than one percent of college students started their business in 2009, there have been some changes in recent years. By 2014, the proportion of "self-employed" college students has increased to 2.9%, indicating that entrepreneurship education is a certain degree. The effectiveness. In the United States, this proportion is far higher than China's 23%-25% (Shi, 2009; Zhu, 2013; Mai, 2016). Many have questioned the discrepancy between the commitment to entrepreneurship education and the outcomes and noticed the phenomenon of "haste makes waste" in collegiate entrepreneurship education (Yu, 2010). Both Chinese students and experts have expressed pessimistic reviews on this topic related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (Gao, Yan, & Liu, 2013). But some foreign scholars put forward the opposite view that the positive effects of entrepreneurship education are marked when previous entrepreneurial exposure has been weak or inexistent (Fayolle, 2015). Meanwhile, Piperopoulos (2015) argued that the nature of the entrepreneurship course—whether theoretically or practically oriented—creates a distinct motivational frame for entrepreneurship in promotion or prevention terms. So is the entrepreneurship education effective? There is a lack of empirical research on the efficiency of entrepreneurship education in universities, and a lack of comparative analysis. From this perspective, more attention should be paid to the effectiveness of education input and output. Therefore, an effective evaluation of college entrepreneurship education is not only the responses but also the practice and exploration of evaluate ability. The most basic evaluation of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education is the efficiency of input and output. These are the starting point and the focus of this study.

This study attempted to determine the following: a) the efficiency of entrepreneurship education at the collegiate level, b) Chinese college students' opinions of entrepreneurship education, c) the future development of entrepreneurship education, and d) how entrepreneurship education meets college students' entrepreneurial needs. Existing studies on entrepreneurship education have mostly focused on aspects such as curricula, education model, and evaluation systems rather than effectiveness. Particularly, these studies have lacked empirical evidence of the efficiency between the investment in entrepreneurship education and the output, which are the fundamental. Therefore, it is imperative to compare the investment and output of entrepreneurship education among higher learning institutions and analyze college students' specific entrepreneurial needs.

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