

A Study on Enhancing College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Abilities from the Perspective of Entrepreneurial Practice



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Abstract: Against the backdrop of “Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation,” innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities have become core comprehensive competencies for college students in the new era, as well as key indicators for talent development in higher education. While innovation and entrepreneurship education is rapidly gaining traction in colleges and universities, students generally face common challenges such as weak knowledge foundations, insufficient practical skills, a lack of innovative thinking, and inadequate entrepreneurial literacy. Based on a practical entrepreneurial perspective, this paper systematically analyzes the current state of innovation and entrepreneurship capability development among contemporary college students. It identifies two core objectives for capability development—knowledge base and professional competence—and constructs a comprehensive, systematic implementation pathway for capability enhancement across dimensions such as practical training platforms, university-industry collaboration, curriculum systems, faculty development, and assessment mechanisms. The aim is to refine the innovation and entrepreneurship education system in higher education institutions, helping college students achieve comprehensive advancement in innovative thinking, entrepreneurial capabilities, and overall competence, thereby meeting the demands for innovation and entrepreneurship talent in the new era.

Keywords: entrepreneurial practice, college students, innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities, capability enhancement, higher education

Introduction

As the innovation-driven development strategy continues to deepen in the new era and the social industrial structure continues to evolve, the demand for high-caliber, innovative, and hands-on talent continues to rise. College students are the main force in innovation and entrepreneurship; the level of their comprehensive entrepreneurial capabilities directly impacts the quality of employment and the vitality of social innovation and development. In light of this, this study, from the core perspective of entrepreneurial practice, identifies the existing issues in college students' innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities. By establishing scientific educational objectives and constructing systematic enhancement strategies, it provides theoretical references and

practical foundations for deepening the reform of innovation and entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions and cultivating high-quality talent in innovation and entrepreneurship.

1. Current Status of College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capabilities

Currently, reforms in innovation and entrepreneurship education at domestic universities are in full swing. The scope of “mass entrepreneurship and innovation” education continues to expand, and college students' overall awareness of innovation is gradually awakening. However, from the perspective of practical implementation, students still exhibit many shortcomings in their comprehensive innovation and

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entrepreneurship capabilities, and their development remains generally unbalanced and incomplete (Xie, 2024). In terms of knowledge base, most students' entrepreneurial knowledge systems are fragmented; they have only mastered superficial theoretical concepts and have not developed a systematic understanding of market operations, financial management, and risk prevention and control. The integration between project planning, other specialized entrepreneurial knowledge, professional expertise, and entrepreneurial practice is insufficient, making it difficult to support the implementation of a complete entrepreneurial project. In terms of thinking abilities, students generally exhibit rigid innovative thinking and severe homogenization of thought; resulting in insufficient capacity for independent thinking, critical inquiry, and innovative breakthroughs, making it difficult to conduct creative R&D and project innovation in alignment with market demands. In terms of practical skills, students commonly suffer from a disconnect between theory and practice, a lack of hands-on experience, and weak practical abilities in areas such as project implementation, team management, market engagement, and problem-solving.

2. Objectives for Enhancing College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capabilities from the Perspective of Entrepreneurial Practice

2.1 Consolidating professional entrepreneurial knowledge

Cultivating college students' innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities within the context of entrepreneurial practice first requires the construction of a systematic, structured, and specialized knowledge framework to address existing issues such as fragmented knowledge, superficial understanding, and the disconnect between learning and application. In this new era, market-driven entrepreneurial competition is intensifying; entrepreneurial activities no longer rely solely on individual inspiration and experience but depend on the support of sound theoretical knowledge, professional expertise, and market insight (Zhu, 2024). A solid knowledge base

provides students with foundational support in areas such as innovation project R&D, entrepreneurial project operations, and market risk management. In terms of constructing a knowledge framework, higher education institutions must guide students to fully master the fundamental knowledge of general entrepreneurship. This includes content such as entrepreneurial policies and regulations, market research and analysis, and core elements such as project planning and design, business operations and management, financial management and accounting, intellectual property protection, and marketing and promotion, thereby establishing a comprehensive framework of entrepreneurial knowledge. At the same time, it is necessary to promote the deep integration of specialized knowledge with innovation and entrepreneurship knowledge. By leveraging the disciplinary strengths of students' majors to identify points of innovation and breakthroughs for entrepreneurship, higher education institutions can provide specialized empowerment for entrepreneurship and ensure that entrepreneurship feeds back into academic disciplines, thereby preventing students from experiencing a disconnect between their major and entrepreneurial endeavors or innovation without a solid foundation (Liu & Wang, 2024).

2.2 Shaping comprehensive entrepreneurial professional competence

Comprehensive entrepreneurial professional competence serves as the core of sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship among college students. Compared to knowledge and skills, it determines the level and sustainability of students' entrepreneurial development and is the central educational objective for cultivating innovation and entrepreneurship talent within the context of entrepreneurial practice. Entrepreneurial practice is a long-term, complex, and highly challenging form of social practice. It requires not only a solid foundation of knowledge and skills but also sound psychological resilience, professional integrity, and collaborative abilities, underpinned by an innovative spirit and a sense of responsibility. Cultivating comprehensive

professional competence is the key to addressing issues such as students' reluctance to tackle difficulties, the premature failure of entrepreneurial ventures, and insufficient resilience under pressure. In terms of psychological qualities, emphasis should be placed on cultivating students' tenacious resilience under pressure, their ability to bounce back from setbacks, and a rational and optimistic entrepreneurial mindset. This will guide students to correctly understand entrepreneurial risks and failure, discard negative attitudes such as seeking quick gains, fear of difficulties, and passivity or laziness, and develop entrepreneurial psychological qualities characterized by a spirit of exploration, a willingness to take risks, and the courage to pioneer and innovate (Li & Sun, 2019).

3. Methods for Enhancing College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capabilities from the Perspective of Entrepreneurial Practice

3.1 Establishing a tiered and progressive entrepreneurship training platform

As the core vehicle for supporting entrepreneurial practice and transforming theoretical knowledge into practical skills, the construction of a tiered and progressive entrepreneurial training platform is a fundamental and critical pathway for fostering the development of college students' innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities. Currently, the development of training platforms at most universities is characterized by homogeneity, uniformity, and superficiality. Training content tends to be superficial, lacks a graded design, and fails to adapt to the diverse needs of students at different stages of their innovation and entrepreneurship development. This results in low efficiency in practical training and slow improvement in students' capabilities (Wang & Liu, 2021). Based on the educational logic of entrepreneurial practice, universities need to establish a three-tiered, progressive platform comprising foundational, advanced, and practical training to achieve the goal of step-by-step, tiered education. At the foundational training level, a universal simulation training

platform should be established for all lower-year students. Using virtual simulation entrepreneurship systems and simulated business operation platforms as a basis, this platform provides entrepreneurship simulation training for students with no prior experience, enabling them to become familiar with the basic processes of business registration, accounting, market operations, and project applications, thereby alleviating their unfamiliarity with and fear of entrepreneurship while consolidating their foundational practical skills. At the advanced training level, specialized training platforms should be built for students with some prior experience, focusing on targeted development of specific skills such as project planning, market research, business model design, and intellectual property registration. Emphasis should be placed on precisely addressing students' skill gaps and strengthening specialized innovation and entrepreneurship competencies. At the advanced practical level, building upon campus startup incubators and maker spaces, we establish a practical training platform. We select high-quality innovative projects and startup teams for incubation, providing participants with realistic project operation venues, equipment resources, and practical scenarios. Participants fully engage in the entire process—from project implementation and team operations to market engagement and risk management. This tiered and progressive training model aligns with students' cognitive and developmental patterns, balancing inclusivity with specificity. It enables students with no prior experience to build a solid foundation, allows intermediate students to enhance their skills, and facilitates the growth of high-performing students through real-world practice. This approach completely resolves the challenges of traditional training programs—which often become mere formalities or remain superficial—and hones students' practical entrepreneurial abilities in every respect.

3.2 Establishing a robust mechanism for university-industry collaborative education

University-industry collaborative education serves as the core pathway to breaking down barriers between campus education and market-based

entrepreneurship, and to achieving the market-oriented and practical development of innovation and entrepreneurship education. It effectively addresses shortcomings such as the limited scope of university educational resources, lagging market integration, and a lack of real-world scenarios—thereby enhancing college students' core competitiveness in innovation and entrepreneurship. Traditional university innovation and entrepreneurship education is confined to the campus, with curriculum content disconnected from market and industry realities and a lack of practical resources. Students are unable to experience real-world entrepreneurial scenarios, industry trends, or corporate operational logic, resulting in graduates who lack adaptability and practical skills. Universities must actively collaborate with high-quality local enterprises, technology innovation companies, industrial parks, and startup incubators to establish a deeply integrated, long-term, stable, and mutually empowering mechanism for university-enterprise collaborative education (Zhao & Lai, 2020). On the one hand, universities and enterprises should jointly establish practical training bases and project incubation centers. Enterprises should provide services such as real-world entrepreneurial projects, market resources, industry case studies, and hands-on positions, enabling students to enter enterprises and participate in practical work—including actual project R&D, market operations, product innovation, and business planning—to gain a firsthand understanding of industry market demands, corporate operating models, and the core logic of entrepreneurship, thereby accumulating practical experience for market-oriented entrepreneurship. On the other hand, a mechanism for two-way teaching and mentoring between universities and enterprises should be established, inviting enterprise founders, industry leaders, and senior operations mentors to campus to deliver practical lectures, provide project guidance, and answer entrepreneurship-related questions, thereby introducing market-oriented entrepreneurial thinking and cutting-edge industry concepts to

compensate for the limitations of theoretical university instruction; simultaneously, university faculty members are organized to undertake secondments at enterprises to enhance their practical teaching capabilities (Wu et al., 2022). Furthermore, universities and enterprises jointly organize innovation and entrepreneurship competitions to conduct project R&D and tackle scientific and technological challenges, using real-market projects as a vehicle to facilitate the commercialization of students' innovative achievements and the implementation of entrepreneurial ventures. Through deep university-enterprise collaboration, campus education is precisely aligned with market demand, enabling students to hone their innovative abilities, accumulate entrepreneurial experience, and enhance their practical competencies in real-world industry settings.

3.3 Optimizing the diversified structure of entrepreneurship courses

As the core vehicle for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in higher education, the curriculum system's richness, systematic nature, and practicality directly determine the quality of innovation and entrepreneurship skills development among college students. Currently, the innovation and entrepreneurship curriculum systems at most universities are relatively one-dimensional, primarily consisting of general education theory courses. These systems suffer from outdated content and severe homogenization, lacking specificity, practicality, and specialization. The proportion of theoretical courses is excessive, while practical courses are insufficiently developed; integration with students' majors is low. Consequently, these systems fail to meet the diverse and personalized needs of students' growth in innovation and entrepreneurship, making it difficult to effectively stimulate innovative thinking and enhance entrepreneurial capabilities. From the perspective of a practice-oriented approach to entrepreneurship, universities must move beyond the single-course model to build a diversified, tiered, specialized, and practice-oriented innovation and entrepreneurship curriculum system. They can

optimize the design of general education foundation courses, continuously update course content, discard outdated theories, and incorporate cutting-edge topics such as the latest entrepreneurship policies, market case studies, industry trends, risk management, and intellectual property rights to disseminate foundational innovation and entrepreneurship knowledge and foster innovative thinking among all students (Zeng, 2023). Specialized advanced courses should be established, with practical courses centered on core skills such as entrepreneurial planning, marketing, new media operations, scientific and technological R&D, financial management, and team management, emphasizing the targeted cultivation of core entrepreneurial competencies. At the same time, the university promotes the development of courses that integrate academic majors with entrepreneurship. Building on the distinctive characteristics of each discipline, these courses incorporate innovation and entrepreneurship thinking, innovative methods, and entrepreneurial pathways into major-specific curricula. This approach fosters the development of specialized courses in professional innovation design, scientific and technological innovation practice, and entrepreneurial transformation, thereby empowering innovation through academic expertise and using innovation to drive entrepreneurship. Furthermore, we have introduced a distinctive elective course—"Practical Expansion"—covering diverse areas such as entrepreneurial psychological resilience, professional workplace etiquette, business negotiation, and resource integration to meet students' individualized growth needs. By comprehensively optimizing this diversified curriculum system, we have established a multidimensional course framework featuring a foundation in general education, specialized skill enhancement, the integration of academic disciplines and entrepreneurship, and the expansion of professional competencies, thereby providing systematic curricular support to enhance students' innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities.

3.4 Establishing a faculty team of "Dual-Qualified" entrepreneurship advisors

As the core force driving the implementation of innovation and entrepreneurship education and the enhancement of student capabilities, the professional competence, practical skills, and advisory experience of the faculty directly determine the effectiveness of innovation and entrepreneurship education. Currently, faculty dedicated to innovation and entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions face common challenges such as a one-dimensional structure, weak practical skills, and insufficient industry experience. While most instructors are full-time faculty members with solid theoretical teaching abilities, they lack practical market entrepreneurship experience, corporate operational experience, and firsthand industry insights. Consequently, their guidance often remains at a theoretical level, failing to provide students with practical and professional entrepreneurial guidance. As a result, the practical challenges students face in project implementation, market operations, and innovation and R&D are rarely effectively resolved, which severely limits the quality of "Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation" education. To address this, universities must build a dual-qualified entrepreneurial guidance faculty comprising both full-time on-campus instructors and part-time off-campus experts to improve the faculty structure and address these shortcomings. Regarding the development of on-campus faculty, universities should regularly organize specialized training, teaching and research exchanges, corporate placements, and project-based study programs for "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" instructors. This will facilitate the transition of on-campus faculty from theory-oriented to practice-oriented "dual-qualified" instructors, enhance their capabilities in entrepreneurship guidance, project incubation, and innovation-oriented teaching and research, and strengthen the core on-campus educational team. In terms of recruiting off-campus faculty, universities should actively engage outstanding entrepreneurs, industry experts, seasoned investors, startup mentors, corporate executives, and science and technology innovation professionals to

join the faculty as part-time external mentors. Leveraging their extensive practical market experience, these mentors provide students with project guidance, market analysis, answers to entrepreneurial questions, and hands-on guidance on commercializing research outcomes. At the same time, a collaborative mentoring mechanism has been established: on-campus faculty members handle theoretical instruction and foundational guidance, while external mentors take on practical guidance and project incubation tasks, achieving mutual complementarity and collaborative education. By establishing a specialized, multidisciplinary “dual-teacher” faculty team, the program has thoroughly resolved the challenge of entrepreneurial guidance becoming overly theoretical or abstract, providing professional, comprehensive, and practical faculty support for college students’ innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives.

3.5 Improving the incentive and evaluation system for innovation and entrepreneurship

A scientific and sound incentive and evaluation system serves as a crucial institutional guarantee for standardizing the educational processes of innovation and entrepreneurship, motivating student participation, and ensuring educational outcomes. It is also a key measure for promoting the regularization and long-term effectiveness of cultivating college students’ innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities. The current evaluation system for innovation and entrepreneurship in higher education institutions is generally characterized by a one-dimensional approach, an overemphasis on results at the expense of the process, and insufficiently robust incentive mechanisms. Evaluations often rely solely on course grades and competition results as the sole criteria, overlooking students’ practical processes, cognitive development, and skill progression. With insufficient incentives and simplistic evaluation methods, it is impossible to effectively stimulate students’ enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity in actively participating in innovation and entrepreneurship practices. Universities need to establish a process-oriented, diversified, and

comprehensive evaluation system based on the entire entrepreneurial practice process, thereby moving beyond the single-dimensional, results-only evaluation model. Regarding the assessment subjects, a multidimensional evaluation system has been established that includes student self-assessment, peer evaluation within groups, faculty evaluation, and corporate evaluation; in terms of assessment content, it covers course learning, participation in practical training, innovative thinking, project implementation, team collaboration, deliverables, and attitude toward practice. This approach emphasizes the growth of students’ abilities and the enhancement of their competencies through practical experience. At the same time, a diversified incentive system for innovation and entrepreneurship must be established, encompassing credit recognition, preferential treatment in excellence evaluations, financial support, project incubation, honorary awards, and priority in further education and employment. Comprehensive recognition and rewards should be provided for students who actively engage in innovation and entrepreneurship practices, produce innovative outcomes, launch entrepreneurial projects, and win awards in science and technology innovation competitions. The outcomes of innovation and entrepreneurship practices must be integrated into comprehensive quality evaluations, academic assessments, and systems for selecting outstanding students and award recipients, ensuring that such practices are well-grounded, motivated, and recognized. By refining evaluation and incentive mechanisms—using evaluations to standardize processes and incentives to boost motivation—we can guide students to actively engage in innovation and entrepreneurship practices, continuously hone their innovative thinking, and enhance their entrepreneurial capabilities, thereby establishing a long-term educational model where institutional frameworks promote education and mechanisms drive sustainable development.

Conclusion

Based on the core perspective of entrepreneurial

practice, this article provides a relatively systematic review of the current state of innovation and entrepreneurship capability development among contemporary college students. It finds that the shortcomings in their innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities primarily manifest in fragmented knowledge, rigid thinking, lack of practical experience, and insufficient competencies. Higher education institutions must move beyond a single theoretical teaching model and adopt an approach that is practice-oriented, competency-oriented, and market-oriented. This study further enriches the research framework on innovation and entrepreneurship education practices in China's higher education institutions. It holds significant theoretical and practical value for deepening reforms in innovation and entrepreneurship education, aligning with market talent demands, and cultivating high-caliber, innovative talent. Moving forward, higher education institutions must continuously optimize their innovation and entrepreneurship education models in response to the driving forces of market and industrial transformation, promoting the normalization, practical application, and professionalization of such education to help college students succeed through innovation and achieve success through entrepreneurship.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that he has no conflicts of interest to this work.

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