A Survey on the Entrepreneurial Capacity-Building from the Students' Views: Based on Study of the Phenomenography

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Abstract

This article introduces the idea of phenomenography, the useful method of qualitative and quantitative. And using this method, the paper analyzes the understanding, experience and perception of the entrepreneurial capacity from the user's point of view, and then come to the 7 different conceptions. The purpose of this research is to identify the different conceptions of students on different years, different education levels and different practical experience. And based on theses conceptions, we can carry out targeted education.

Key words: Ohenomenography; Entrepreneur capacity; Entrepreneur education; University students

INTRODUCTION

As we all know, entrepreneur education is one of the important ways to educate students' creative ability. University student's pioneering work is a tendency of employment, and this will cause a series of changes in conception, system and talent training mode. And nowadays, the words "business", "entrepreneur education" and "pioneering capacity" have become hot topics.

After reading some papers written by experts or scholars, I found that questionnaire investigation was used usually for study methods. But we can say that this method can limit the respondents' thoughts in the statement and questionnaire format, so it's impossible to get the full results. In this paper, the author will analyze the students' understanding, experience and perception of entrepreneur capacity from the point of view of the students by using the phenomenographic research method. So we can discover different conceptions of the students. It is helpful for us to carry out the targeted business-pioneering education and deal with the existing problems in the teaching process.

1. PHENOMENOGRAPHY--- THE NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR THE STUDY OF ENTREPRENEUR EDUCATION

Phenomenography was pioneered by Ference Matron in Sweden in the early Seventies. It has evolved from the empirical studies on learning in the 1970s into a research specialization which focuses on human experience rather than on human behavior or mental state (Stuart, Bill & Sheila, 2007). The method itself is a research method adapted for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experienced, conceptualize, perceive, and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them. It takes a second-order perspective: the focus is on the perceptions of the subjects of study, not on those of the researcher; and the approach aims to identify variation in experience of a phenomenon. It should be carried out under the natural true conditions, and it focuses on the process of teaching and learning, so it is pertinence for us to Study entrepreneurial education

(Susie, 2007).

Entrepreneur education is based on the professional education, and after all, it is higher than other types of education, because it involves in multi-disciplines and various abilities. And the core of the entrepreneur education is consciousness and ability training, not simply skills. And the cultivation of creative ability comes from the comprehensive knowledge and also caused by all kinds of entrepreneurial activities (LI, 2009). At present in China, we should recognize that we don't have a scientific system of authority education teaching materials, and the teachers also become the bottleneck of entrepreneurial education(WANG, 2009). So the current major problem the university faced is how to make career education obtain larger development in a short time.

And here, by the method of phenomenography, we can study the entrepreneur education from the view of students, and have a better understanding of their current situation. And this is the best way to make different education strategies for different levels of students. It is undoubtedly a shortcut for talents training.

2. THE PROCESS OF THE RESEARCH

According to the basic principle of phenomenography, the research process normally contains several steps, such as determining the content and research strategies, data collection, and data analysis and so on (Stuart et al., 2007) (WU & GAO, 2008).

2.1 Designing the Research Problems

In order to obtain comprehensive information as much as possible, we usually begin the research from the related aspects rather than the organized and clear interview questionnaires, such as:

Q1. Is it appropriate for you to do pioneering work?

Q2. What kind of intangible capital the entrepreneurs should have?

Q3. How do you think about entrepreneurship and employment?

Q4. What method do you want to take for improving your career ability?

Q5. How do you think about the entrepreneur education?

In addition to the core problems mentioned above, the interview also involves some related optional and additional topics, such as: the interviewee's study method, academic ability, family history, and etc.

2.2 Making Survey Strategies and Choosing Interview Persons

To make the results representative, we chose some students from undergraduates, graduate student and employed persons, because they have difference kinds of practical experience, and different understanding about the entrepreneur education. So we can say that they represent different groups on background, interests and learning goals.

In our research, the survey strategies are individual and group interview. And the interview structure is "half structured". At the same, we pay more attention to the interviewee's free space, so as to get the first-hand materials about the respondents' basic standpoint, way of thinking and characteristics of discourse. And all those are the basic materials for our further study. We take the methods for interview by face to face, E-mail and QQ chat, etc.

2.3 The Process of Interview and Data Collecting

The interview began from September 2010 and ended in May 2011, it lasted about nine months. Also during this period, we hold several related meetings, adjusting the plan and gathering materials. In view of the time, place and other external factors, so we interviewed the same person many times. The accumulation time of interview was in 45 minutes to an hour or so at average for per person. The author thinks that along with the growth of knowledge and experience and the influence of social environment, the understanding of the interviewee also continues to deepen. In order to have a pleasant situation, the conversation is more casual, and we avoid putting our own subjective ideas on others during the interview time.

2.4 Process of Data Analysis

The first step is to record the initial interview contents. According to the phenomenon description analysis method, it is generally needed to record or video in order to sum up the interviewee's point of view. But in this study, in view of the conditions, we have no sound or video recording, and also, the author thinks that it is more beneficial for students to express their point of view easily and freely. So we wrote the original words down, and after the interview, we even carefully recall the whole process, to finish the interview record. We didn't ignore any other details, and strived to reflect their original idea. And for QQ chat or E-mail, we only need to preserve and print at any time for summary.

Secondly we need to read the record repeatedly in order to make the initial analysis and summarize the interviewee's point of view. Every few weeks, the project team members will hold a forum to discuss the cases and summary analysis.

The last stage is analysis. When the all interviews were over, we began to summarize the interview records and initial analysis. We gathered all conversations record together for everyone at different times in different backgrounds, and concluded their ideas from it. And at the same time we classified the similar views. Besides the individual repeat content, we sort out more than 90 records. And these cases can be divided into seven categories, respectively represent their views to develop abilities.

3. THE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Category 1: None Entrepreneur Conception

Parts of students have no awareness or understanding of any business ability. Most of them are freshman or the second grade students, or similar to the "nerd" type of the students. They hide themselves in the "ivory tower" as in into the "xanadu," They may think that the employment is dim and remote in future, and mostly they have the "Man's extremity is God's opportunity" idea. And some students only want to pass through the Postgraduate Student Examination, so they usually attend class mechanically and paid little attention to relevant information and knowledge about business ability.

Category 2: Negative Conception

In this category, entrepreneur is conceived as a compulsory choice to the serious situation. Moreover it maybe affected by the traditional culture in China. Traditionally the intellectuals pursue political career. We can see this from the Analects of Confucius.

"If I can't find the ideal work, I have to do pioneering work.". One student said.

Most of them said: "In that year, we struggled to break through the university entrance examination; the main purpose is to get a decent and the stable occupation." But when we talked about the problems of their employment, entrepreneurial mindset, and knowledge reserves, they also said they had not been ready to consider it.

Category 3: Mirage Conception

In this category, entrepreneur is conceived as a mirage. Though they hold to venture approved attitude, also hope to accomplish their career, but in China, a series of problems such as the market problems, the lack of social experience and management ability, and so on, are often dampened the enthusiasm of the business.

"It is said that the failure rate to the university student's pioneering work is 99%, I may not be so lucky, right in the 1%.

Such is the fact. In our country, the rate of college students' entrepreneur is lower, the success rate is also lower, only 2% ~ 3%, it is said that this is an optimistic statistics. But in America, the entrepreneurial successful rate is 20% (ZHANG, 2009). In China this lower rate made most people lost their confidence. The reason is various. It included the government policy factors and the social environment. But the subjective reason is from students, such as lack of experience and enterprise, full of blind, so the personal quality remains to further strengthen.

Category 4: Seeking Balance Conception

In this conception, the purpose of doing pioneering work is to find a psychological balance.

Some students found their classmates in middle school or friends graduated from technical secondary school have been successful in their cause, but he himself is still at "the parasitical" ranks. Even though he gets a job after graduation, the current salary naturally can not compare with the income of somebody else, not even his basic necessities for life is still a question. So they think that they should be batter or more successful than their former classmates. Thereby, they decided to start their own business. Although this is not a bad thing, but we can not deny the fact that in some of those would like to venture, actually they have the state of mind.

Category 5: The Occupational Conception

In this conception, the pioneering work is conceived as a kind of occupation. And starting a new business will become the mainstream of future employment.

Someone said: "Hundreds of students even more people apply for a position, and in our society, most of time, it does not depend on his own ability. So again and again, it can not only make the person lose confidence, but also increase disappointment. Therefore it is the best way to prepare for the self-employed, instead of squeezing the single-plank bridge."

These parts of the students are mostly with an entrepreneurial family background, and the author also found that most of them come from South China, such as Guangdong and Zhejiang province. And they are accumulating the business knowledge and experience for future, and emphasizing on their own skills in school. They seek business opportunities on campus in their spare time; also they look for opportunities to practice outside.

Category 6: Survival Ability Conception

In this category, entrepreneur is conceived as a creative ability to face directly the viability of the modern society. Someone believes that the career ability becomes necessary to contemporary people.

They said like this: "If you have the entrepreneur abilities, you can wander unhurriedly in the society". "If you have this kind of living skills, whether employment or his business, you relaxed freely".

Category 7: Freedom Conception

Entrepreneurship is a kind of free way of life. And most of students who want to become self-employed think that it is better to work for themselves rather than to others. It is better to have their own business rather than to sell their work achievements.

For entrepreneur, people must be actively and voluntary, and have even more working enthusiasm, more investment, more likely to inspire creativity, therefore they can more likely to succeed.

An employed student said: "If you want the freedom of financial, spiritual and power of liberty, you have to start your own business."

"By the constraints of the company, I can not do things according to my own idea. But the entrepreneur can give me a free space to realize self-worth."

4. CONCLUSION AND COUNTERMEASURES

4.1 Conclusion and Discussion

From the interview process and the results, it is can be seen that students in different grades, different degree levels and having different practice experience, have different kinds of conceptions on entrepreneur and the abilities.

Students in lower grade may not think the long-term future; it is almost vacant to them for any business abilities, or the education and awareness. And we can mainly see that from None Entrepreneur Conception and Negative Conception.

The Mirage Conception mainly focuses on those graduate students. They are disoriented in the employment pressure and the competition. In addition, they had ignored the cultivation of creative abilities during the past time, and pay much attention to negative case in ordinary times, so they are too pessimistic for the prospects of entrepreneur.

Survival Ability Conception and Freedom Conception mainly come from the employed graduates. They passed through the experience of employment, they had the hardship of work for others and also they had knowledge, skills, and other comprehensive ability of employment, and therefore they have more understanding of entrepreneur, they pay more attention to fostering their capability.

For the Conception of Seeking Balance, in some way, we can say it is also a kind of passion. Passion is not equal to ability, but as a kind of catalyst, it can stimulate the potential abilities of people.

In fact, most of knowledge in the university is theoretical; the students lack the conditions and opportunities of practice. So the predicament is temporary, the difference between the college students and no-university-educated people lies in the comprehensive quality and ability. In the interview, there are many students said, if they could go back in the past time, they will try to reserve knowledge, improve the soft power of business venture, and cumulate intelligence ability.

4.2 Countermeasures

From these above results and conclusions we got by the method of phenomenography, we can find that university students' comprehensive quality of business should to be strengthened. The school should set up teaching goals on different levels of entrepreneur education in different time basing on the actual situation. Such as for the lower grade students, we should focus on the cultivation of the innovative consciousness. To senior students, we should pay more attention to improving their skills and the accumulation of business knowledge and information. To the graduate students, we should have to strengthen the enterprise practice training.

The universities should take various forms of education pattern, being given priority to the first class, supplemented by other teaching methods. During the teaching process, we will permeate the entrepreneur idea to the teaching, update the teaching contents timely, make them closely associated with the market demand, and then students will feel that the learning will be useful.

Here, there are three measures is worth using for teaching. Firstly, Opening fixed classes. We should take the entrepreneur education as one part of general education, to popularize the business knowledge. Those courses, such as the college students' career planning, marketing, enterprise's strategic management, financial management, business plan making, and the other courses, should be taken as required courses. Secondly, we can set amateur classes for different levels and different needs of students to improve their entrepreneurial skills. Thirdly, we can invite entrepreneurs or industry professionals to give lectures for students. These entrepreneurial cases or idol consciousness can give deep impression to students.

No matter what the teaching way we taken, we should not ignore the practice teaching, because at any time, courses or classes are only a kind of knowledge padding. And the social practice is the best way to consolidate the knowledge and accumulate experiences for students. So we should make full use of every opportunity to organize the students to participate in social practice, let students go outside the classroom to visit and inspect all kinds of business enterprises, in order to accumulate the actual experiences.

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