

Effect and Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Finland's Higher Education System

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How to cite this paper: Wang, H. (2022). Effect and Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Finland's Higher Education System. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10, 226-234.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2022.109015>

Received: July 27, 2022

Accepted: August 20, 2022

Published: August 23, 2022

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Abstract

Finland entrepreneurship education has its own characteristics, in the world has certain characteristics. The basic form of Finland entrepreneurship education in higher education is analyzed in this paper, which is mainly the function of higher education: the possibility of forming a career development, promoting the development of entrepreneurship education teachers, giving impetus to the development of innovation and improving entrepreneurship education system four aspects. Impact is mainly manifested in: inspire the students' ability, problem solving and innovation through entrepreneurship education can enrich the teachers' teaching skills and widen our sight and affect the student individual career development in three aspects. Finally, it is inspired by Finland entrepreneurship education experience for China's summing-up.

Keywords

Finland Higher Education, Finland's Higher Education System, Entrepreneurship Education

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship education has received increasing attention from education departments of various countries in recent years. In 1947, the Harvard Business School in the United States was the first to offer entrepreneurship education courses. Finland, a Nordic country, offers entrepreneurship education courses in colleges and universities, which are representative of many European countries. In 2009, the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland published a Guide to Entrepreneurship Education, which aimed to regulate the development of entrepreneurship education in educational activities at the national level. At the same time, China has also attached great importance to the role of entrepre-

neurship education. Under the guidance of “people’s innovation and entrepreneurship,” colleges and universities have also explored entrepreneurship education. It is undeniable that the development of any kind of educational activity will have an impact on the education system of the country where it is located. The talents cultivated by colleges and universities must face the choice of the labor market. Thus, how to develop entrepreneurship education so that it can offer college students more appropriate courses, specifically entrepreneurship education courses, is worthy of further discussion. Through literature sorting, this paper attempts to demonstrate the impact of Finnish entrepreneurship education on higher education and gain a full understanding of the development characteristics of Finnish entrepreneurship education based on the relevant information collected.

Finland, located in the northern part of Europe with a highly developed economy, has six provinces and 20 districts distributed throughout a territory of 380,000 square kilometers. The reason why the Finnish government attaches great importance to the development of entrepreneurship education in universities is inseparable from the slowdown of Finland’s economic development in recent years. According to the latest statistics in February 2019, negative growth was 1.9%, and the income brought by businesses to the national economy reached 340 million euros (OECD, 2019). Due to the generally poor economic growth in European countries, the number of unemployed in Finland has reached 20% of the labor force. As an emerging force in the labor market, how to use the employment pressure brought about by economic development has become one of the reasons for colleges and universities to offer entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education in Finland started in the 1980s. The prototype of entrepreneurship education was the economic education provided in the 1950s. After the 1980s, it was mainly in the form of entrepreneurship training. Under the influence of European Union (EU) member states and UNESCO, entrepreneurship education in schools has been gradually standardized as entrepreneurship education. At present, the Finnish government’s understanding of entrepreneurship education still includes entrepreneurship training:

Entrepreneurship education, as a concept, also includes entrepreneurial training. It includes individuals’ active and active participation in entrepreneurial activities, entrepreneurial learning environments, entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial training, as well as related policies. Entrepreneurship education spreads all over the society and vigorously promotes business development.

Since 1993, Finland has conducted online entrepreneurship training, and since 1997, it has promoted the development of entrepreneurship education throughout the country. Finland’s emphasis on entrepreneurship education originated from the economic recession in the 1990s. Since then, entrepreneurship education has been considered to help students prepare for the ability to pursue independent entrepreneurship and employability in the future.

There are two main types of Finnish universities: applied technical universities and comprehensive universities. There are 34 polytechnics and 14 universities in the country, all of which belong to the category of higher education and can grant bachelor's degrees and above. The difference between the University of Applied Sciences and the comprehensive university is that the talent training method is more closely related to the labor market, and the professional knowledge taught is more practical. This system makes up for the lack of vocational education in the higher education stage and undertakes the task of training professional teachers.

2. The Role of Entrepreneurship Education

The Finnish government believes that Finland is transforming from an industrial to an entrepreneurial society, and college students are not fully prepared at this stage. Therefore, universities can support entrepreneurship education in terms of theoretical research, related technologies and teacher training. As a social phenomenon, entrepreneurship can bring employment and technological development, indicating that it should be given enough attention in universities. Furthermore, universities must establish cooperation with enterprises and seek the support of experts to create an innovative environment and system where theories are effectively taught in universities. There is a gap in the technical support required by the enterprise, which requires closer cooperation between the two to jointly create a set of solutions. Moreover, to improve its teaching content, the University of Applied Sciences must support entrepreneurship education (Paasio, Nurmi, & Heinonen, 2005). The above six points are also the reasons why the federal government believes it is necessary to carry out entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities. Combined with the development of entrepreneurship education in Finnish education, especially in higher education, the role is reflected in the following aspects.

2.1. A Career Choice

One's career is an individual's journey in life, study, and work. It is also related to an individual's professional experience. It refers to the behaviors and activities associated with one's career as well as the continuity of related attitudes, values, aspirations, and processes experienced in one's lifetime, among others. One of the motivations for individuals to pursue higher education is to have a better career in the future. The understanding of a better career is usually measured by the level of pay, employment opportunities, and continuing education provided (Daghbashyan & Hårsman, 2014). For most entrepreneurs, the above criteria for measuring careers seem to be beyond the scope of their consideration, but most entrepreneurs say that they have more opportunities to exercise free creativity, gain higher self-esteem, and control their own lives through entrepreneurship, which means that entrepreneurship is also a relatively successful career.

According to Statistics Finland's Education Statistics, employment among

students remained unchanged in 2018 compared to 2017. Over one-half of students aged at least 18 years were employed during their studies. Working was most common in connection with university studies, such as in applied sciences. Fifty-six percent of university students had an employment contract while studying, while 59 percent of University of Applied Sciences students had the same (Statistics Finland, 2020). Furthermore, the number of enterprise closures was 15.5 percent higher from April to June 2021 than 12 months earlier. There were also 1.1 percent more enterprise openings from July to September than in the corresponding period of 2020 (Statistics Finland, 2021).

In recent years, the pressure on the European economy has increased, and the overall number of unemployed people in these countries has increased. According to Statistics Finland's Labor Force Survey, 227,000 people were unemployed as of May 2022 (margin of error $\pm 26,000$), which was 68,000 fewer than one year earlier. Of these, 125,000 were men, while 101,000 were women (Statistics Finland, 2022). Notably, for Finland, carrying out entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities facilitates employment transfer through entrepreneurship, which not only promotes economic development but also helps reduce the number of unemployed people in this age group.

2.2. Promoting the Training of Entrepreneurship Education Teachers

The EU believes that entrepreneurship education should be conducted in both the education sector and the non-educational sector, as indicated in two EU-issued documents, the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan and the Rethinking Education Communication. In recent years, there has been a call on member states to provide more practical entrepreneurial experience for young people in school and fully recognize the importance of entrepreneurial learning. Finland's advantages in entrepreneurship education have even led to the publication of *Entrepreneurship Education: A Guide for Educators* published by the EU. In this book, Finnish entrepreneurship education practice is used as an example to guide member countries in implementing their own versions of entrepreneurship education. There are three points in the description of entrepreneurship education teachers in this book: 1) they have enthusiasm for teaching and are flexible and open-minded; 2) they are good at playing roles in teams, can maintain a team well, and find the connection between education and economic development while focusing on real-life experiences; and 3) they can follow a flexible and adaptable study plan and good at applying subject learning and using training materials instead of textbooks in teaching.

At present, Finnish entrepreneurship education teachers come from three backgrounds. One is teachers received the traditional teacher education. Finland has added entrepreneurship education-related courses in teacher training, and this course exists as both a compulsory and an elective course. Education is a compulsory subject and an optional subject at the University of Jyväskylä. The second is the existing faculty at the universities, who focus on the creation, de-

velopment, and internationalization of companies and are good at a certain field in the real economy. Finally, there are teachers who are venture capitalists and have successful venture capital experiences in their previous. After years of development, Finnish universities have a team of teachers for entrepreneurship education, which is usually led by an executive director, accompanied by a service team and several instructors.

The development of entrepreneurship education in Finland has the most important impact on teachers in terms of “the self-reflection and learning formed by teachers in entrepreneurship education. The development of entrepreneurship education courses has also brought new impacts to teacher training and training. In the context of entrepreneurship education, change in educational goals” (Seikkula-Leino, Ruskovaara, Ikävalko, & Mattila, 2015). Over the years, the development of entrepreneurship education in Finnish universities has trained teachers with entrepreneurship education experience and advanced entrepreneurship education technology. At the same time, through the training and training of teachers, the management concepts of modern enterprises are also passed on to teachers in colleges and universities.

2.3. Entrepreneurship to Drive Innovation

Driving entrepreneurship through innovation is a consensus reached by countries in promoting entrepreneurship education, enhancing international competitiveness and national economic development. The Finnish government recognized as early as 1950 that innovation and entrepreneurship are the core elements of innovative economic growth. Innovation requires relevant compensation policies. Therefore, when the Finnish government faces how to promote innovation, it often introduces some policy measures to encourage entrepreneurship. In recent years, the Finnish government has committed to the development of an innovation-driven economy, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for the formulation of innovation policy, and the research and development of the innovation system is coordinated by the Research and Innovation Committee under the leadership of the Prime Minister. Finland fully considers the role of entrepreneurship in innovation in the formulation of innovation policies, through innovation to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises, help enterprises to start businesses, and improve productivity.

According to statistics, Finland had 5817 new enterprises in 2015, accounting for 1.7% of all enterprises in the country. Among them, the number of enterprises whose main business is technology and technology development has reached 1027, accounting for 17.7% of all new enterprises. Finland’s “National Technology Innovation Agency” (Tekes) has committed to investing in and supporting the incubation of these new, innovative and entrepreneurial enterprises. In particular, one-third of the Tekes funds will be invested in universities and research institutions, and the remainder will be used to support corporate and team innovation projects. According to a Tekes report, in recent years, the Na-

tional Technology Innovation Bureau has launched a series of support for innovation and entrepreneurship. The types of support include the following: start-up companies in the international market, small media development companies, mature innovative companies, research teams, and public services. These aspects reflect Finland's systematic consideration of innovation and entrepreneurship and a relatively mature incubation model.

2.4. Improvement of the Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum

The Finnish Ministry of Education defines an entrepreneurship education course as an elective course and asserts that the core goal of entrepreneurship education is to motivate entrepreneurship. Regarding the goals of entrepreneurship education courses in Finnish higher education, different universities are not consistent, especially in terms of the stages and departments of entrepreneurship courses. For example, the Department of Management Studies under the School of Business at Aalto University offers courses consisting of five sections: Entrepreneurship, International Business, Organization and Management, Organizational Communication, and Management Philosophy. A total of 180 credits are required to complete the bachelor's degree: 60 credits of core courses, 12 credits of methods research courses, 42 credits of international business courses, 18 credits of language and communication courses, 30 credits of minor research, and 18 credits of elective courses. The course is finished if a student completes all 180 credits.

Usually, in a conventional teaching plan, entrepreneurship courses generally comprise six credits and are related to such courses as Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, Business Project Development, Entrepreneurship (Intellectual Property), Entrepreneurship in the Global Economy, Quick Start, and so on. Meanwhile, at the Hanken School of Economics, the entrepreneurship course is also completed as an elective course, and the undergraduate subjects include Essence of Entrepreneurship, which takes up eight credits. In addition, Aalto University has the "Aalto Ventures Program," which is responsible for providing professional entrepreneurship education courses. In particular, the project provides 11 entrepreneurship education courses, including Corporate Finance, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Entrepreneurial Marketing, Background of Design and Innovation, Entrepreneurial Conception, and so on.

This study used the literature method to collect and sort out the literature on entrepreneurship education in Finland, summarized the development of entrepreneurship education in Finland in recent years, and summarized the impact of entrepreneurship education in Finland on the higher education system as follows.

3. The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Colleges and Universities

The European Commission's understanding of entrepreneurship education is

that “Entrepreneurship education prepares individuals with an entrepreneurial spirit. It helps people develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they should have to achieve their goals. At the same time, it also helps people better employment” (European Commission, 2015). The explanation given in the relevant report of the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education mainly refers to:

[T]he education administration to carry out entrepreneurship work widely with the viewpoint of improving entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education provides support for a diversified labor market, political parties, and social organizations. Its practical measures are all aimed at instilling a positive entrepreneurial attitude and developing entrepreneurial-related knowledge and skills, creating new business models, enhancing the capabilities of entrepreneurs and employees, and bringing operational entrepreneurial models to their businesses and business operations. Entrepreneurship education is an education based on the concept of lifelong learning and Internet teaching. (Ministry of Education, 2009)

Although the EU believes that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior play an important role in individuals’ pursuit of competitiveness in the future, few countries have conducted entrepreneurship-related educational activities in their educational systems. Finland is considered the first country in Europe to carry out such activities. In 2009, the “Guidelines for Entrepreneurship Education” published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland further standardized the path of entrepreneurship education in educational institutions at all levels. In the process of entrepreneurship education, students are given the confidence to challenge their goals through continuous attempts. They are also given opportunities to be more closely connected with social development, allowing students to choose multiple careers and stimulating students’ ability to solve problems and innovate.

At the same time, entrepreneurship education promotes teachers’ understanding of entrepreneurship and enables them to understand both the internal and external systems of entrepreneurship. Of course, for college teachers, although the “Guidelines for Entrepreneurship Education” (2009) have clarified a core course in the national education strategy for entrepreneurship education, teachers still lack effective methods and models, which are very important for European and American countries. In the pursuit of the concept of “universal pedagogy,” it is undeniable that such a shortcoming is a critical one. However, many unknown factors in entrepreneurship and what students learn through entrepreneurship education are filled with issues that challenge teachers’ professional development. Teachers must obtain the appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be able to teach students under the new curricula, with new teaching methods and learning environments, thus enabling students to successfully acquire entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, in 2010, the EU added the content of entrepreneurial core skills and values to teacher education. Indeed, entrepreneurship education can also be considered an opportunity and a challenge for college

teachers. Through entrepreneurship education, teachers can enrich their teaching skills and broaden their horizons. However, as a new activity in schools, it is also subject to uncertainties that may affect teachers.

Entrepreneurship education is not currently regarded as a subject in Finland. Like other European countries, although the federal government has recognized that entrepreneurship education is important in ensuring the international competitiveness of Finnish education, the curriculum and teaching of entrepreneurship education have yet to be fully developed. At present, there are many areas that require further development and refinement. If entrepreneurship education is to be regarded as a discipline, it also needs to construct a complete index system. The people it cultivates should be honest, visionary, possess leadership skills, be good at communication, seek self-improvement, and be decisive. They should also have excellent decision-making skills and the spirit and innovation of an adventurer. As an existing curriculum, the definition of entrepreneurship education curriculum includes teaching methods and learning content. Entrepreneurship education exists in and out of school and has become a school's culture and characteristics. Although both the federal government and the Ministry of Education and Culture are aware of the existence of this problem, the conduct of entrepreneurship education as an educational activity in Finnish universities still greatly affects the career development of individual students.

4. Conclusion

Finland has attached great importance to entrepreneurship education for a long time, thereby forming distinct characteristics in the process of continuous reform, innovation, and entrepreneurship. In the Nordic region, Finland has carried out entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities and has achieved progress in this area. With its continuous innovation and reform-driven economy, it has become one of the main influencing factors worthy of attention. In China, entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities remains in the stage of continuous exploration due to the lack of a relatively consistent concept and operation mode.

Taking entrepreneurship education in Finnish universities as the research object, this study explores the development of entrepreneurship education in Chinese universities. First, it is necessary to clarify the focus of entrepreneurship education in different types of universities. In providing entrepreneurship education, undergraduate research colleges and universities, application-oriented colleges, higher vocational colleges, comprehensive colleges, and specialized colleges and universities must be driven by innovation and focus on training students' business abilities. Second, these institutions should establish a training mechanism for entrepreneurship education teachers. Although some entrepreneurship education teachers have been selected through the "Start Your Business" program and other methods during the development of entrepreneurship education, the selection mechanisms for such teachers vary. Moreover, in the

development of entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities, no teacher team is yet to be formed. In particular, the outstanding management personnel and entrepreneurial mentors of enterprises have not yet been tapped to participate in the development of entrepreneurial education in colleges and universities.

Third, there is a need to integrate the concept of innovation and entrepreneurship into students' career planning. Although the transformation of local application-oriented universities and the development of applied majors in research universities have raised the cultivation of students' practical ability to a higher level, innovation and entrepreneurship should still have a higher priority. It has not yet been promoted as a career choice nor integrated into the daily teaching activities.

Fourth, there is a need to systematically develop and innovate the curriculum system of entrepreneurship education. The final foothold of entrepreneurship education is still the curriculum. Given that entrepreneurship education itself covers many factors, it is not easy to achieve a consistent entrepreneurship curriculum. The development of a batch of entrepreneurship education courses should be carried out according to the current situation of a school and the characteristics of its students. Furthermore, systematic planning should be carried out consistently, with no shortage of choices and attempts.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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