

# Theoretical Analysis of the Integration of Entrepreneurship and Professional Education in Higher Vocational Education

Xuan Su

Guangdong Teachers College of Foreign Language and Art, Guangzhou 510000, China.

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**Abstract:** This paper provides a theoretical analysis of integrating entrepreneurship education and professional education in higher vocational institutions. It examines the essence of entrepreneurship as a teachable set of knowledge and skills rather than purely innate traits. The core qualities of entrepreneurship are outlined, stemming from psychological attributes, skills, and opportunity-seizing abilities. The social ideological shifts enabling the rise of entrepreneurship education are explored, centered on pragmatism and colleges' expanding social service role. The relationship between vocational and entrepreneurship education is discussed, arguing they have a profound intrinsic connection based on shared knowledge foundations and service values that allow mutual promotion. Integrating the two through curricular design can cultivate professional entrepreneurs with knowledge of entrepreneurship capacities. The teachability of entrepreneurship and the mutually reinforcing nature of vocational and entrepreneurship education provide the basis for their integration to enhance talent development.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Education; Professional Education; Higher Vocational Education

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## Introduction

The imparting of knowledge is the primary task of higher vocational education. With the increasingly improved organization of higher vocational education and society's growing dependence on colleges, scientific research, social services, cultural leadership, and entrepreneurship have gradually become important functional connotations of colleges alongside social changes. Entrepreneurship education in colleges is an important path for building an innovative country and promoting economic development, and it is an essential factor in constructing entrepreneurial colleges. Entrepreneurship education in colleges is not only a practical issue but also a significant theoretical innovation in college systems and talent development models. Promoting the integrated development of entrepreneurship education and professional education in colleges requires going back to basics and clarifying the essence and mutual relationship between entrepreneurship education and professional education. This is an important foundation for building and reforming entrepreneurship education models and promoting integration between specialization and entrepreneurship.

## 1. The Essence of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship can be simply understood as the establishment of a business, emphasizing the hardships and difficulties of the initial stage, highlighting the exploration and innovation in the process, and also focusing on achieving new accomplishments and contributions based on previous foundations. <sup>[1]</sup> Objectively, the fundamental meaning of entrepreneurship encompasses both adventure as a spirit and activity as a manifestation. Jeffrey <sup>[2]</sup> believes that entrepreneurship is a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that results in the creation, enhancement, realization, and renewal of value, not only for owners but also for all participants and stakeholders. Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted project that requires careful planning, execution, and promotion to achieve success, with the individual qualities of entrepreneurs playing a crucial role. The prevailing belief is that entrepreneurship is characterized by distinct abilities and qualities that are not solely acquired through formal education but influenced by a variety of factors, making them difficult to replicate. It advocates studying cognitive characteristics, particularly cognitive factors such as perception and imagination, as they play a role in determining the success of entrepreneurial activities. <sup>[3]</sup> The academic community has traditionally viewed entrepreneurship as a unique activity driven by a select few individuals with innate gifts. Research in this area has focused on studying the psychological qualities and traits of entrepreneurs, such as their motivations, desires, achievements, and risk-taking tendencies. Lin <sup>[4]</sup> introduced the term "sensitivity" to describe the cognitive characteristics of entrepreneurs, stating that entrepreneurs have a unique ability to identify opportunities in the market that ordinary people do not possess.

## 2. Core Qualities of Entrepreneurs

The success of entrepreneurship depends on the qualities and abilities of the entrepreneurs themselves. The success rate of entrepreneurial enterprises is less than 30%, while the success rate of student entrepreneurship is only 2%-3%, far lower than that of general entrepreneurial enterprises.<sup>[5]</sup> This is mainly due to the lack of core qualities among individual entrepreneurs, rendering them unfit for the demands of entrepreneurship. The scholar believes that current young college students generally lack entrepreneurial abilities, while the severe employment situation inherently urges them to improve their entrepreneurial capabilities. Entrepreneurial abilities include social interaction abilities, self-awareness abilities, practical operational abilities, psychological adjustment abilities, and market operation abilities.<sup>[6]</sup> The construction of the core qualities system in entrepreneurship can be tackled from three dimensions. Firstly, the psychological qualities of individual entrepreneurs, such as entrepreneurial awareness, spirit, emotional attitude, and values, are essential. Secondly, the knowledge and skills system in entrepreneurial management is crucial. Lastly, the ability to identify and seize entrepreneurial opportunities while effectively integrating resources is vital.

## 3. The Relationship between Vocational Education and Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education's value has grown with the knowledge economy, leading it to become a national strategy. However, its practical focus conflicts with colleges' traditional vocational training. Reconciling the two and enabling symbiotic development is an urgent challenge for colleges and governments. Though having diverse functions, entrepreneurship education should not be separated from vocational education and talent cultivation - its core college role. The two approaches are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, as both ultimately develop human capacities. Successfully rooting entrepreneurship in vocational education will enable thriving development.

### 3.1 Both are Knowledge-Based Education

Vocational education emphasizes specialized knowledge and training, while entrepreneurship education focuses on practical experiences and skill development. However, this perspective overlooks the comprehensive nature of knowledge, which includes both explicit (such as curriculum and theory) and tacit knowledge. Both types of knowledge are vital in various aspects of life and work. Vocational education imparts codified and institutionalized knowledge to develop expertise and professional identity in a specific field. Similarly, entrepreneurship education prioritizes the transmission of theoretical knowledge and tacit knowledge, such as entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. By integrating entrepreneurial knowledge into vocational education through well-designed courses and teaching methods, professional entrepreneurs can be cultivated. This integration is crucial for knowledge entrepreneurship and aligns with the objectives of developing a knowledge society and reforming talent cultivation.

### 3.2 Both Education Based on Shared Values

Vocational and entrepreneurship education rely on knowledge to fulfill their functions and serve different stakeholders. They share common values that contribute to their integration. Firstly, they aim to promote individual growth and development by enhancing competitiveness and self-fulfillment in future careers. Entrepreneurship education cultivates entrepreneurial qualities and skills, while vocational education provides systematic knowledge. Professional knowledge acquired in vocational education enhances cultural, social, and material capital. Secondly, both orientations prioritize serving society. By cultivating professional talents, they provide high-quality labor for industries and contribute to national economic production. Entrepreneurship education directly promotes social development through innovation. Serving society is a core value that facilitates the integration of entrepreneurship and vocational education. This shared external value facilitates the integration of entrepreneurial and professional talents.

### 3.3 Mutual Promotion and Coexistence

Entrepreneurship education and vocational education, both aimed at individuals and serving society, can be integrated organically, sup-

porting mutual development. While entrepreneurship education requires a solid foundation in specialized knowledge, it should transcend limitations by not solely focusing on operational and skill-based aspects or confining itself to entrepreneurship parks. Limiting entrepreneurship education in this way restricts its accessibility and makes it exclusive. Vocational education, on the other hand, provides a crucial foundation for entrepreneurship by combining professional knowledge with market and social elements, enabling the ability to serve society through innovation. Integrating entrepreneurship education into vocational education enriches the goals of the latter, equipping students with profound knowledge and practical skills. This integration expands the scope of social services offered by vocational education, enhances students' competency, and transforms talent cultivation.

## Summary

The integration and development of entrepreneurship education and professional education in colleges require a clear understanding of three key aspects: the teachability of entrepreneurship, the essence of entrepreneurship education, and its relationship with professional education. While some question whether entrepreneurship can be taught, this chapter argues for their organic integration. Entrepreneurship is a systematic skill that can be developed through practice and education, not just an innate trait. Entrepreneurship activities necessitate abilities in management, psychology, profession-specific knowledge, and identifying opportunities - all forms of knowledge. Tacit knowledge is a primary focus of entrepreneurship education, which plays a crucial role in modern colleges. Moreover, there exists a profound intrinsic connection between entrepreneurship education and professional education, both of which emphasize different types of knowledge - tacit knowledge in entrepreneurship education and explicit knowledge in professional education. Additionally, they share a common goal of serving society and possess overlapping values. The essence of entrepreneurship, along with the mutually supportive characteristics of professional and entrepreneurship education, provide the theoretical foundation for their integration.

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## About the author:

Xuan Su (1982-10) Male, Han, Lecturer, Phd of Business, Econometrics & Vocational Education