

Research on the Integration Path of Entrepreneurship Education into the Governance of College Students' "Empty Heart Syndrome"

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ABSTRACT College students with "Empty Heart Syndrome" often experience confusion, helplessness, weak learning motivation, and a lack of life meaning. Traditional higher education interventions frequently fail to address these deeper psychological and value-related problems. Taking entrepreneurship education as the entry point, this study explores its advantages in value reconstruction, competence development, and mental health support. Based on the Meaning in Life Questionnaire, a survey of 10,727 valid responses from college students is analyzed to identify meaning-related characteristics. A 32-class-hour innovation and entrepreneurship training program is then implemented with selected freshmen, and most participants show improvement in mental outlook and psychological state. The study proposes a three-dimensional governance path of value guidance, ability empowerment, and mechanism guarantee. Entrepreneurship education is integrated with ideological and political education, professional learning, project practice, and whole-process student development to rebuild meaning, strengthen self-efficacy, and enhance growth motivation. Technology-enabled project learning, including wireless communication, sensor design, and other engineering innovation contexts, can further expand its applied relevance.

INDEX TERMS empty heart syndrome, entrepreneurship education, value reconstruction, engineering innovation, student development

I. INTRODUCTION

CURRENTLY, with the deepening of China's social transformation and the vigorous development of we-media, some college students have fallen into a spiritual predicament characterized by emptiness, anxiety, and a sense of life meaningless. Essentially, this phenomenon reflects the lack of correct values and a sense of life meaning among some college students. With its unique practicality and foresight, entrepreneurship education can provide students with a practical platform to re-examine themselves, construct life meaning, and subtly alleviate their psychological "sense of emptiness". This paper explores the effective integration path of entrepreneurship education into the governance system for college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome", so as to provide theoretical and practical reference for solving the spiritual predicament of college students.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BASIS

A. RESEARCH ON THE "EMPTY HEART SYNDROME"

The concept of the "Empty Heart Syndrome" was first proposed by Xu Kaiwen from Peking University. It mainly

refers to a state of psychological imbalance among some college students caused by defective values, which is specifically manifested as a lack of self-worth, absence of life meaning, and weakened sense of existence. [1] Although this concept has not yet been fully empirically verified, its heuristic value lies in focusing on the "meaning crisis" in the educational context and reminding researchers to attach importance to the construction of students' spiritual world. This paper adopts it as a phenomenological descriptive tool to denote a cluster of psychological states centered on the deficiency of meaning in life. Numerous Chinese scholars have conducted extensive research on the causes and governance strategies of college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome". In the psychological community, it is generally recognized that the "Empty Heart Syndrome" falls into the category of existential anxiety, with intervention measures mainly including logotherapy and value-oriented education. Scholars in the fields of management and education have widely pointed out that innovation and entrepreneurship education serves as one of the effective approaches to alleviate the "Empty Heart Syndrome". By endowing students with real social roles and task-based learning experiences, such

education helps them rebuild their sense of life meaning. [2] A synthesis of existing studies indicates that the lack of meaning in life is the root cause of the "Empty Heart Syndrome", while the imbalance between family education and school education acts as the core inducing factor. Family education lays the foundation for individual growth, and utilitarian and inappropriate parenting styles will lay hidden dangers for adolescents' physical and mental development. Under the impact of diverse social ideological trends, contemporary family education has become increasingly utilitarian and goal-oriented, neglecting students' personalized development, innate endowments and interest demands. Excessive arrangement and over-interference by parents often leave students devoid of independent judgment after entering university, trapping them in life confusion. Traditional school education has long been score-oriented and ignored students' all-round development, and the instrumentalization of education has further intensified the utilitarian tendency. [3] Amid the collision and conflict between traditional values and the modern social value system, current higher education still suffers from inadequate measures and imperfect systems in terms of value guidance, ideological enlightenment and the cultivation of students' sense of meaning.

Social being determines social consciousness. Against the backdrop of social transformation, rapid economic development has driven profound changes in social structures, making young students more vulnerable to value contradictions and cognitive confusion. Coupled with the rapid development of self-media, college students' values are constantly impacted by diverse ideological trends; weak individual subjective cognition and insufficient self-perception further induce problems such as the "Empty Heart Syndrome". [4] As Anthony Giddens stated: In the context of modern society, the sense of meaninglessness in individual life—namely the perception that life lacks value and inner essence—has become a prevalent fundamental psychological issue. [5] In terms of theoretical origin, the meaninglessness embodied in the "Empty Heart Syndrome" is highly correlated with the existential vacuum proposed by Viktor Frankl in existential psychology, both highlighting the central role of the deficiency of life meaning. [6] The difference lies in that Frankl focused on the universal manifestation of the "meaning crisis" in modern society, whereas the "Empty Heart Syndrome" pays more attention to the inner value barrenness of college students induced by external factors under China's educational system, which can be regarded as a localized expression of existential emptiness. Meanwhile, the confusion and loss of direction presented by the "Empty Heart Syndrome" are closely associated with the ego identity theory in adolescent developmental psychology (Erikson, 1968). Individuals with the "Empty Heart Syndrome" are often those who devote themselves highly to external achievements yet suffer from inner emptiness of meaning, rather than simple identity diffusion. They belong to the status of foreclosure identity or

false identity, suggesting that researchers should distinguish between external adaptation and internal sense of meaning.

B. THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

As an educational philosophy, entrepreneurship education has the functions of value reshaping and psychological tempering. Through the education of "outlook on gains and losses" in the course of entrepreneurial competency training, it guides students to establish correct values. Setbacks and failures in the entrepreneurial process can exercise students' pressure resistance and psychological resilience, which has a strong impact on the sense of meaninglessness caused by "Empty Heart Syndrome". Throughout the implementation of entrepreneurship education, it emphasizes breaking professional barriers and improving students' interdisciplinary thinking ability. Through "real social roles", students' sense of meaning is enhanced in the process of solving problems, thereby filling the inner emptiness of students and enriching their lives. When students deconstruct specific tasks systematically, they can accurately pinpoint the inherent challenges, proactively explore targeted solutions, and conduct continuous reflection, review, and summarization throughout the process of tackling obstacles. In this iterative practice, their problem-solving competencies are refined, and a tenacious character of rising to difficulties is fostered. Each instance of growth and breakthrough engenders a profound sense of fulfillment and contentment within them.

In conclusion, this paper draws on the enlightening implications of "Empty Heart Syndrome", and carries out an integrated theoretical dialogue with mature theories of existential psychology and adolescent developmental psychology. In view of the educational value of entrepreneurship education, this study establishes the above integrated framework as the theoretical starting point for exploring how innovation and entrepreneurship education can intervene in the governance of "Empty Heart Syndrome" among college students. In subsequent research, mature and validated scales will be adopted for operationalization, so as to ensure academic rigor and reliability.

III. RESEARCH ON THE INTEGRATION PATH

Based on the Meaning in Life Questionnaire, this study conducted a survey of approximately 16,000 college students from a university in China. A total of 10,727 valid questionnaires were finally collected, including 7,139 from freshmen, 1,680 from sophomores, 980 from juniors, and 928 from seniors. Among the valid samples, 6,833 were female students (63.7%) and 3,894 were male students (36.3%), with all participants aged between 18 and 23 years old. Descriptive statistics and difference analysis were adopted for data analysis, and the results are presented in Figure 1.

Analysis Link ^{a)}	Core Conclusions ^{a)}
Descriptive Statistics ^{a)}	The mean score of the P dimension of the subjects is 4.0 (SD=0.9), which is at a moderate level of meaning in life; the mean score of the S dimension is 4.2 (SD=0.8), which is at a moderate level of exploration. ^{a)}
Difference Analysis ^{a)}	The average score of the P dimension of females is significantly higher than that of males ($P<0.05$); there is no significant difference in the S dimension scores among different groups ($P>0.05$). ^{a)}

FIGURE 1. Conclusion Table of the Life Meaning Questionnaire (P/S Dimensions)

On the basis of the above findings, this study selected 60 freshmen as research participants and implemented an innovation and entrepreneurship training program with a total of 32 class hours. The results indicated that 95.6% of the participants achieved significant improvements in mental outlook and psychological status. Combined with the experimental process and the realistic manifestations of college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome", this paper proposes that innovation and entrepreneurship education can realize infiltration and integration from the following three dimensions. The specific framework is shown in Figure 2.

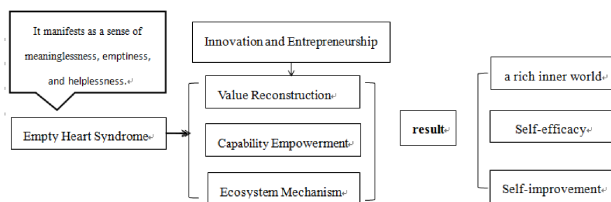


FIGURE 2. Intervention Path for "Empty Heart Syndrome"

A. DEEP INTEGRATION OF CONCEPTS WITH VALUE RECONSTRUCTION AS THE CORE

The goal of entrepreneurship education is to nurture college students' innovative spirit, creative thinking and entrepreneurial competence, entrepreneurial awareness and entrepreneurial ability. It is not merely simple skill training, but also emphasizes value reconstruction, ideal and belief shaping, and the cultivation of social responsibility.

In terms of strengthening the mission, throughout the implementation of entrepreneurship education, students are guided to realize that the pursuit of entrepreneurship allows one to achieve personal aspirations, serve the needs of others, and contribute to societal development simultaneously. For example, in the process of designing a business plan, taking the initiative to identify customers' pain points, meet their needs, and integrate business activities with social welfare and environmental protection can break the utilitarian thinking that "entrepreneurship is only for making money", and enable students to experience the joy of helping others in the process of solving problems. In the process of entrepreneurial practice, students also gradually realize that going to university is not for "entering a prestigious

school", but for creating social value; Learning is not merely pursued for the sake of attaining fame and accomplishment, but rather for the realization of one's self-worth.

In terms of correcting cognitive biases, through case teaching, students are made to realize that real success is a win-win situation of personal interests and social values, which helps to correct the nihilistic view of values that leads to the "empty heart"; through task-based learning, students improve their self-efficacy by successfully completing projects, forming a positive cycle.

B. COLLABORATIVE INTEGRATION OF CONTENT WITH ABILITY EMPOWERMENT AS THE STARTING POINT

Entrepreneurship education empowers college students and cultivates their innovative spirit, entrepreneurial ability and social responsibility, mainly through the reconstruction of a curriculum system integrating specialized education and entrepreneurship education, and whole-process education. This approach aims to dismantle the "two-aspect separation" phenomenon prevalent in current higher education, wherein entrepreneurship education is disconnected from specialized education. By promoting the alignment and synergy of the two, it seeks to resolve students' sense of emptiness, enrich their spiritual core, and stimulate their intrinsic motivation for individual growth.

In terms of curriculum system reconstruction, guided by the concept of integrating specialized education and entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship education is integrated into the entire chain of talent training, forming a training program consisting of general education courses, specialized-innovation integrated courses, project practice and entrepreneurship incubation. Through project-driven teaching, it breaks the teaching mode where specialized courses and entrepreneurship courses are separated, digs deep into the connections between the two, and constructs a curriculum system where the two types of courses are organically integrated. In the process of curriculum construction, it abandons tedious theoretical indoctrination, combines professional theoretical knowledge, professional skill training with entrepreneurship project practice, guides students to conduct research on real social needs and carry out projects, and cultivates students' practical problem-solving capability by leveraging their professional theoretical knowledge. In the process of project practice, under the guidance of tutors, students actively use knowledge to overcome difficulties and optimize schemes, which can not only consolidate and deepen professional knowledge, accumulate professional experience and improve abilities, but also further understand the application value and social significance of professional knowledge, and get rid of the sluggish state of lacking goals and being confused about study. In the process of completing projects, students gradually realize the value of learning and the development prospects of their majors, gradually establish their own career development goals, and find a sense of professional identity and belonging. [7] This integrated training mode not only changes the exam-

oriented and utilitarian drawbacks of traditional education, encourages students to take the initiative to explore and create value, but also consolidates students' professional foundation and improves their practical ability, enabling students to gradually regain the meaning of life and study, and alleviate the symptoms of "Empty Heart Syndrome" from the root cause. Its hierarchical logic is shown in Figure 3.

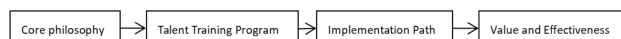


FIGURE 3. Hierarchical logic

In terms of whole-process education, entrepreneurship education shall be integrated throughout the entire process of student cultivation. In the freshman year, the focus is on "enlightenment of entrepreneurship awareness", viewing cutting-edge professional issues in the context of entrepreneurship to prevent the "sense of confusion" in "Empty Heart Syndrome"; in the sophomore year, the focus is on "cultivation of innovative ability", guiding students to form their own teams through team building and task canvas to resolve the "sense of loneliness" in "Empty Heart Syndrome"; in the junior and senior years, the focus is on "improvement of entrepreneurial ability", addressing the "sense of powerlessness" in "Empty Heart Syndrome" through project practice. Integrating entrepreneurship education throughout the entire process of university education cultivates students from cognitive, emotional, social and other multi-dimensional aspects, stimulates their creativity, improves their personality, and prevents the occurrence of "Empty Heart Syndrome" among college students. The overview is shown in Figure 4.

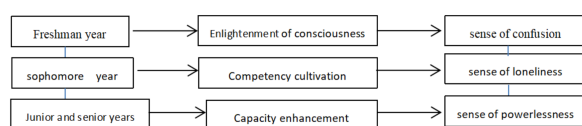


FIGURE 4. The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on the University Stage

C. COORDINATED INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENT WITH MECHANISM AS THE GUARANTEE

With the continuous development of network technology and artificial intelligence, social demand for talents has shifted from a single knowledge and skill orientation to an orientation emphasizing comprehensive competence and innovative literacy. Nevertheless, there remains a certain disconnection between the current talent cultivation model of universities and actual social demands, making institutional reform and adjustment urgently required to adapt to the development of the times. Against this backdrop, constructing a collaborative education environment and improving supporting guarantee mechanisms have become an important cornerstone for integrating innovation and entrepreneurship

education into the governance system of college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome".

In response to increasingly prominent manifestations of "Empty Heart Syndrome" among contemporary college students, such as life confusion, value loss, and insufficient motivation for study and daily life, most existing intervention measures in universities focus merely on curriculum teaching, individual case diagnosis and value guidance. Lacking systematicness and long-term effectiveness, such measures can hardly fundamentally alleviate students' spiritual emptiness and deficiency of life meaning. Therefore, universities should base themselves on the actual learning situation, take mechanism construction as the starting point, and establish a three-dimensional support system with diversified integration. It is essential to fully safeguard students' mental health from multiple aspects including resource guarantee, institutional construction and educational atmosphere. In the process of diversified integrated development of innovation and entrepreneurship education, its inherent educational value should be fully explored and embedded into the whole process of intervention and governance of college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome", so as to fill students' spiritual void and realize in-depth talent cultivation.

To achieve the above objectives, universities should first establish a resource collaboration and platform guarantee mechanism. Specifically, universities should build innovation and entrepreneurship practice platforms centered on students, focus on improving students' practical operational capabilities, and create an immersive and experiential educational field. On the one hand, universities should cooperate with multiple stakeholders including governments and enterprises to expand financing channels, integrate high-quality social resources, and coordinate the construction of physical platforms such as innovation centers, business incubation bases, school-enterprise cooperative training bases, and college student entrepreneurship parks, so as to provide solid material support for students' innovation and entrepreneurship practice. On the other hand, functional departments of universities should regularly hold practical activities such as innovation and entrepreneurship competitions and social surveys, encourage the formation of interdisciplinary teams for collaborative participation, and construct an educational mechanism featuring multi-department linkage, full staff participation, whole-process coverage and all-round collaboration [8]. In real practical scenarios, students transform from passive knowledge receivers to active challengers. In the process of learning by doing and doing while learning, they temper their teamwork ability, confront realistic dilemmas directly, thereby dispelling inner confusion and loneliness, and gaining a sense of personal accomplishment and collective belonging. Such immersive practice can effectively break the learned helplessness commonly seen among groups suffering from "Empty Heart Syndrome", prompting students to recognize themselves in practice and anchor their life goals. Secondly, optimizing the evaluation and management mechanism serves as

the institutional foundation for guaranteeing environmental collaborative integration. With the iterative upgrading of information technology, the forms and contents of innovation and entrepreneurship education have been continuously enriched, covering diverse carriers such as virtual simulation experiments, intelligent teaching platforms, online courses and smart classrooms. This requires universities to reform the previous rigid and single evaluation model that solely prioritizes research achievements and awards, and establish a sound comprehensive assessment system covering the entire process. In formative evaluation, assessment should not only target the overall performance of project teams, but also quantify individual contributions of students at each stage. Meanwhile, diversified evaluation methods such as intra-group and inter-group mutual evaluation should be incorporated to realize multi-dimensional and all-round comprehensive assessment, so as to foster an open, fair, innovative and inclusive campus atmosphere. On the basis of improving the evaluation mechanism, universities should also optimize the management system of innovation and entrepreneurship education simultaneously to ensure the standardized and orderly implementation of all work [9,10].

Thirdly, the environmental collaborative integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education also requires the introduction of value guidance and psychological support mechanisms. The implementation of innovation and entrepreneurship projects is inevitably accompanied by various obstacles and setbacks, such as blocked project progress, failure to achieve expected goals, and internal team conflicts. These circumstances easily impose psychological pressure on students and trigger negative emotions including self-negation, self-doubt and intensified frustration. For this reason, ideological and political education should be organically integrated into innovation and entrepreneurship practice to inject spiritual motivation and value guidance into entrepreneurial talent cultivation. Universities should coordinate resources including ideological and political teachers, professional supervisors and psychological counselors to regularly carry out special lectures, group counseling and personalized psychological intervention. This provides humanistic care and value guidance for students, guides them to view failure rationally, regards setbacks and dilemmas as tempering for growth, and continuously enhances their psychological resilience and frustration resistance [11,12].

In conclusion, the environment collaborative integration guaranteed by mechanisms requires universities to construct a stable and sustainable educational ecosystem from multiple dimensions including resource collaboration, value guidance, evaluation and management. Relying on the dual effects of institutional governance and cultural infiltration, universities can give full play to the empowering role of innovation and entrepreneurship education in governing college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome". Ultimately, it cultivates new-era youth with sound personality and abundant spiritual connotation, and helps students grow and mature in a positive and healthy campus atmosphere [13].

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Entrepreneurship education is not a panacea for "Empty Heart Syndrome". Integrating it into the governance of college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome" is not a simple superposition, but a process of "meaning reproduction". The integration of the two provides a path for students to regain a sense of value and existence. By deeply integrating entrepreneurship education into value guidance, ability cultivation and ideal and belief reshaping, and constructing a new educational ecology that can both heal the sense of emptiness and empower growth, colleges and universities can fundamentally improve the phenomenon of college students' "Empty Heart Syndrome" and cultivate high-quality talents with sound personality.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization – Ruihong Song; methodology – Ruihong Song; formal analysis – Ruihong Song; investigation – Ruihong Song; resources – Ruihong Song; writing-original draft preparation – Ruihong Song; writing-review and editing – Ruihong Song; visualization – Ruihong Song; supervision – Ruihong Song. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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