Entrepreneurship Education and E-Learning in the Greater Bay Area of China

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Abstract. China's new economy calls for innovation-driven development and entrepreneurship-focused strategies. As China's new corporate formation rate is rising, plenty of educators and policymakers are looking forward to building a better context to support entrepreneurship. It is worth noting that the development and fusion of the Greater Bay Area highly depend on joint and cross-regional entrepreneurship. While the system, law, language, and cultural differences hinder this progress. E-learning is a great way that could break the barriers and boost the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in the Greater Bay Area.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education · E-learning · The greater bay area

1 Introduction

In just 30 years, China has developed into the world's second-largest economy, and entrepreneurship was considered to be a key driver of China's rapid growth. China plans to develop its Greater Bay Area to be an international innovation and technology center. Innovation and entrepreneurship resources are shared in the area to provide more opportunities for the Mainland of China, Hong Kong, and Macau's entrepreneurs. Currently, the Greater Bay Area blueprints some policies for future direction, including many innovation and financial hubs. Meanwhile, it provides more incentives for youth and opens many related courses and incubation base opportunities [1].

However, many youths begin their entrepreneurship with little or even no business-related knowledge. Moreover, the system, law, and culture disparities in the Greater Bay Area make them have a wait-and-see approach for joint entrepreneurship and cross-regional development [2]. Compare to traditional teaching and learning methods, e-learning has some irreplaceable advantages, especially in transregional and cross-culture contexts [3, 4].

2   Entrepreneurship in China

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey has shown that there was a consistently high rate of entrepreneurship in China over the past few years [5], and most Chinese adults perceived that there were good opportunities to start their own business [6]. Ever since Premier Li Keqiang proposed mass entrepreneurship and innovation in the 2014 Summer Davos forum in Tianjin, "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" had been regarded as the new power of China's economic growth. Premier Li said, "Mass entrepreneurship and innovation has been an effective driver for both economic growth and the consistent transition between traditional and new growth engines. It has also significantly contributed to the creation of new jobs and the increase in incomes" [7].

3   The Greater Bay Area Context

Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangdong had become a global regional metropolis. Meanwhile, a new and closer integration has started since July 1, 2017. President Xi Jinping signed the framework of building the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. The Greater Bay Area is a huge and densely populated geographic space in the south of China and it includes Guangdong Province's nine cities, Hong Kong and Macau. This blueprint not only would boost the development in the Greater Bay Area and it plays a key role in the Belt and Road Initiative of China [8]. Deep integration has numerous advantages, which could increase the ability to attract Foreign Direct Investment and become increasingly diverse and commercialized [9]. Hong Kong and Shenzhen had merged into one block in many fields. In addition, it is a similar interconnection as Macau and Zhuhai. While the Hong Kong Basic Law limits the fusion between Hong Kong and Shenzhen on some level until 2047 [10].

The majorities of Hong Kong and Macau were migrants from the mainland of China. Cantonese-speaking Chinese culture is the dominant cultural concept in these areas and may bring social harmony to the Greater Bay [11]. While we should face the reality that Hong Kong and Macau separated from mainland China more than one hundred years. They had governed under British and Portuguese rules respectively and developed their unique socioeconomic system and local culture. The two special administrative regions of China have some extraordinary characters, such as an efficient financial system, free market, and western organizational culture. Meanwhile, living under both colonial and post-colonial periods, the residents have their unique memories, loyalties, and values, which may differ from people in the mainland of China [12]. These differences may lead to some barriers and obstacles for entrepreneurship knowledge spreading and start an undertaking together [10].

The population in the Greater Bay Area needs to be more united. A survey including 1033 interviewees showed that less than 8% of Hongkongeses work in the mainland and only 54% visited Guangdong Province. 42% of Hongkongeses were afraid of losing their special benefits from the Hong Kong government if they move to the mainland of China [10]. Meanwhile, youths are the future of this area, the administrator of the Greater Bay Area should motivate and convince youth residents to leave their comfort zone and become more open to the future united. Both Carrie Lam and Ho Iat Seng,

who are Hong Kong and Macau chief executives, said the future of their youth residents is in the mainland of China [13].

4   Entrepreneurship Education

It is obvious that entrepreneurship brings immense benefit for the Greater Bay Area so that there is considerable attention for how to raise future successful entrepreneurs [2]. An entrepreneur, as be defined by Henry et al., is "someone who has the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities; gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them, and initiate appropriate action to secure success" [14]. Entrepreneurship education provided students with information and inspiration in establishing their own company, which indirectly increases their willingness to become entrepreneurs [14]. In a survey, that investigated more than 1500 young entrepreneurs in G20 countries, most of the participants agreed that entrepreneurial skills should be trained and taught [15].

The study of characteristics of entrepreneurs began to emerge in the middle of the 20th century, unifying the domains of economics, psychology, sociology, and business management to attempt to shed light on this issue [16]. However, China's entrepreneurship education started late and did not fully meet the needs of Chinese students [17]. In China, entrepreneurship education usually is delivered by an innovative system, which is beyond the regular curriculum [18]. The "Enterprising and entrepreneurial education" policy was announced in 2015 since then entrepreneurial education and training had developed and spread tremendously in university context [19].

Many kinds of researches of entrepreneurs have been carried out by scholars with economic or management backgrounds, and they have a less deep understanding of the educational philosophy, especially e-learning [20]. Some researchers identify that entrepreneurial education should include learning mathematics, economics, and behavioral sciences. The format of teaching could include scenarios, role-playing, and real business experiences, real project teaching by business people [21, 22]. Cope and Watts emphasis the importance of learning by doing, the real experience could build students' problem-solving skills, in further improve their self-efficacy by continuing reflect on their progress [23]. However, the scholars have underlined the delivery methods' impact on effectiveness.

5   E-Learning

The e-learning method starts to change the nature of study for all students, which is be defined as the use of the Internet and digital technologies to educate people. It usually used the network to generate communities and systems that facilitate the knowledge spreading and offer remote students a friendlier environment to learn [24].

6   How E-Learning Techniques Contribute to the Joint Entrepreneurship Education in the Greater Bay Area

There are some barriers to joint teaching among mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau students. That may include the distance, and culture, law, and system differences.

Meanwhile, entrepreneurs usually are thoughtful practitioners who not only learn things but also have a goal to achieve and could work to rapid changes and developments after learning, so entrepreneurs are their own agencies for their learning process [14]. One report showed that entrepreneurs are more likely to learn from a task-oriented approach compare to the conventional teaching method [14]. Entrepreneurship education is to help those entrepreneurs or future entrepreneurs to adapt to their own context that caused the entrepreneurship education content to be highly diversified and flourishing [25]. Those features for entrepreneur education in the Greater Bay Area are unable to be fulfilled by the traditional teaching methods. The advantages of e-learning stand out in this situation.

6.1   Remote Learning

The e-learning techniques provide geographically dispersed students to study from experienced entrepreneurs. The developed technology-based systems or platforms could enable remote access for both students and teachers. The youth entrepreneurs were not asked to do a full-time study, so they could practice what they learned in their own business at the same time [20]. Apart from the official e-learning platform, the Connectivist theory brought the idea that people are in a networked environment in this digital age. Andrews said that people could use e-community, such as social networking sites, virtual meetings, and emails or chats, to support their learning whenever and wherever possible [26].

6.2   Continue and Shared Learning

Learning is a circle, and it is an unending process that people continuously interact with the environment [20]. As to entrepreneurship education, e-learning could use cloud computing to storage and share the recording of lectures with different communities [27]. That is a valuable method for knowledge management in a big region. In this way, qualified students could access the platform in an unlimited time. They could reflect on their needs and restudy the previous lectures.

6.3   Adaptive Learning

A report showed that e-learning was very dependent on students' abilities to be self-directed and internally motivated which is the same as entrepreneurship [28]. The people with the power and mode of communication usually decide the content of teaching. The student could gain a lot from the real business cases, while the diversified nature of entrepreneurship makes the teaching resource is hard to be concentrated just in a typical course. For e-learning, students could set their own standard for exclusions and inclusions the content they need to learn [29]. So that teaching could be adaptive and customized to all students.

6.4   Cross-Language Learning

People living in the Greater Bay area use at least four different languages, which are Mandarin, Cantonese, English, and Portuguese [11]. The variety of languages cause many

troubles in commutation and knowledge delivery. E-learning platforms could combine with artificial intelligence systems, for example, the synchronous translation system, to resolve this difficulty [30].

7 Conclusion

Today, researchers have a huge interest to investigate entrepreneurship, and youth could access more curriculums that delivering entrepreneurship-related knowledge. A better understanding of the combination of entrepreneurship education and e-learning is highly valuable. Youth is essential for the Greater Bay Area's future. The delivery method for entrepreneurship education should enable people from different backgrounds and locations to enhance their capabilities for innovation and entrepreneurship. Overall, E-learning techniques could boost joint entrepreneurship education in the Greater Bay area.

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