Research on General Education of Art in Universities of Finance and Economics in Innovative and Entrepreneurial Era

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Abstract. Innovation and entrepreneurship education is the requirement for the national innovation strategy. Universities of finance and economics should meet the needs of social and economic development for innovative and entrepreneurial talents and deepen the educational reform of innovation and entrepreneurship. As an important way of training talents, general education in art plays a fundamental role in innovation and entrepreneurship education. There are many problems in current general education of art in universities of finance and economics, such as imperfect system and mechanism, and inadequate practice, etc. Therefore, innovation and entrepreneurship can be scientifically integrated into art education to provide better support for the cultivation of innovative and entrepreneurial talents through building a three-dimensional and multi-level education system, improving cooperation mechanism, and enriching course forms, etc.

Introduction

As China vigorously promotes the development strategy in the era of Innovation 2.0, it has put forward higher requirements for the quality of talents required for social and economic development. As a teaching practice under the national strategy, innovation and entrepreneurship education is of great significance for improving the comprehensive quality of college students, inspiring the sense of innovation, and fostering their ability of entrepreneurial practice. The general education of art is one of the important training paths for “educating people” and “creating beauty” in higher education, and it is also a major method to develop students’ innovative thinking. Universities of finance and economics, with relatively simple disciplines, generally adopt such training methods of classifying academic and applied talents and combing general education and professional education. General education of art plays a fundamental role in improving the level of practical teaching and cultivating students’ ability in innovation and entrepreneurship [1]. At the same time, it is also an important guarantee for colleges to promote the reform of innovation and entrepreneurship education and to enhance the level of quality-oriented education. Therefore, general education of art should be highly valued in the teaching reform in universities of finance and economics.

Significance of Strengthening Educational Reform of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

At the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping pointed out that “innovation is the primary force driving development; it is the strategic underpinning for building a modernized economy”. “We will improve our national innovation system and boost our strategic scientific and technological strength”. “We should cultivate a large number of world-class scientists, technologists in strategically important fields, scientific and technological leaders, and young scientists and engineers, as well as high-performing innovation teams”. This is a new requirement for the development of education. Meanwhile, he emphasized that, in the report, “strengthening education is fundamental to our pursuit of national rejuvenation; we will move faster to build Chinese universities into world-class universities and develop world-class disciplines as we work to bring out the full potential of higher education”.

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From the above, it shows that higher education bears the major task of providing excellent talents for the country’s modernization and development. To strengthen education and cultivate various types of talents that meet the needs of economic and social development, colleges and universities must take the initiative to adapt to the new normal of economic growth. Centering on the fundamental task of “high moral values establishment and people cultivation”, they should actively promote innovation and entrepreneurship education and deepen various teaching reforms, aiming at the training of innovative talents. The strategy of innovation-driven development will be effectively implemented through the reform in teaching concepts, forms, methods, and means, etc. Through innovation and entrepreneurship education, colleges lead entrepreneurship with innovation and encourage entrepreneurship to create more employment opportunities. It can make a close integration of higher education with science and technology, economy, and society, and continuously increase the contribution of higher education to steady growth, reform, structural adjustment, and people’s livelihood support. This is an inevitable trend in the reform of higher education and the development of colleges and universities when socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. The innovation and entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities is not the expansion of teaching contents, but the integration of the entire personnel training system and the daily teaching curriculum, so as to enhance students’ innovative and entrepreneurial awareness which can better promote their overall development.

Role of General Education of Art in Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education

Inspiring Potentiality and Broadening the Vision of Innovation

Mr. Qian Xuesen has an insightful analysis of the relationship between scientific work and art. “Scientific work stems from image thinking and finally logical thinking. And image thinking originates from art, so scientific work is art first and then science. On the contrary, it is necessary to have a scientific understanding of things in the art work, and then artistic creation. In the past, people always separated science from art. In fact, science needs art and vice versa” [2]. It can thus be seen that science and art have a natural connection, and so do the cultivation of scientific quality and artistic ability. With the continuous creation of science and art, the general education of arts is particularly important in the cultivation of entrepreneurial awareness and innovative thinking in innovation and entrepreneurship education. Innovation is the direct goal of education, as well as one of the significant factors that promote the development of modern civilization. Through the comprehensive general education of art, it helps transform students’ subjective feeling into innovation. By training the perception–appreciation–understanding–creation–internalization of beauty, the core elements of innovation–innovative consciousness and spirit, creative thinking, are transformed in intuition, imagination, and persistence. In the process of transformation, artistic aesthetics subtly integrate with beauty, thus professional barriers can be broken. According to Schiller, “aesthetic appreciation of beauty is the most perfect reconciliation of the sensual and rational parts of human nature” [3]. Due to the influence of art, the artistic literacy plays a catalytic role in the process of innovation, as proved by Astronomer Kepler and folk song “Harmony”, mathematician Leibniz and Eight Diagrams, scientist Einstein and the violin, etc. General education of art is a permeable which is based on perceptual education, and it affects the psychology of college students, and stimulates their creative potentiality, and thus broadens the vision of innovation.

Upholding the People-oriented Concept and Promoting Students’ All-round Development

Talent cultivation is the foundation and core value of a university. Education must not only enable people to learn to do things, but more importantly, to be a good person [4]. The essence of innovation and entrepreneurship education lies in the realization of the free and comprehensive development of people in morality, intellect, physique and aesthetics [5]. Compared to professional education, general education aims to achieve an integrated system of knowledge [6]. The core is to develop the perfect personality of people through the integrated knowledge [7]. General education
of art is a vital way for higher education to cultivate innovative talents. Tao Xingzhi said in his *Declaration of Creation* that “Educators are not creating gods or statues, or making a lover, but creating living people who are true, good, and beautiful [8]. The academic disciplines in universities of finance and economics have distinct characteristics, and often other disciplines that have little to do with finance and economics have not been given sufficient attention. In the process of educational reform in financial colleges, a perfect general education of art can better guide students. According to Schiller, “It does it only because the beautiful can become a means of leading man from matter to form, from feeling to laws, from a limited existence to an absolute existence” [9]. In accordance with the law of free development, general education of art fosters “whole person” to realize college students’ free and all-round development.

**Present Situation and Shortage of General Education in Art in Universities of Finance and Economics under Innovative and Entrepreneurial Background**

At present, universities of finance and economics are mainly characterized by economic management specialties. There is a contradiction between the direct benefits of school personnel training and the long-term benefits of general education in art. The survey has found that the relevant courses are limited in most financial and economic colleges, with incomplete curriculum modules, imbalanced structure, imperfect art theories and related practical courses, and low credit requirements. At the same time, it is obvious that general education in art has not make a better integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education. The details are as follows:

**Imperfect Education System and One-sided Understanding**

With the deepening of innovation and entrepreneurship education reform, general education of art has received a certain degree of attention. Some financial and economic colleges have realized that it is a significant way to improve the level of innovation and entrepreneurship education. However, there are some colleges still have one-sided understanding, lacking a comprehensive knowledge of its importance. (1) The teaching plan is value-oriented and does not pay attention to the role of general education of art in quality education, focusing on traditional lectures, exams, and competitions with serious pragmatism and utilitarianism. (2) The position of art general education is vague, and its short-term effects are examined with professional requirements. It is only regarded as a task, and the courses are set according to the relevant documents.

**Imperfect Cooperation Mechanism and Insufficient Resources**

Due to the wide range of general education courses of art, the courses are mainly set up in school of arts or center of art education. Relevant activities are scattered in the Arts Center, Youth League Committee, Student Affairs Department and so on, and the quality is managed by Office of Teaching Affairs. Cross-sectoral and multiple management lead to the incoordination of the operation. With the professional focus on the discipline of economics and management, there exists a relative lack of teacher resources in general education of art, and the ratio of students to teachers in some universities of finance and economics is less than one in 1,000.

**Inadequate Practice and Less Interest**

With the development and transformation, due to subject orientation in the financial and economical universities, training applied talents is generally regarded as the focus, getting much practical resources and the class hours. From the general education of arts in most colleges, many art public courses, such as aesthetics, art aesthetics, and Introduction to Chinese culture, have been cancelled [10]. The general education of arts is lacking in practice, special classrooms, and equipment. Activities outside the classroom are limited to photography competitions, welcome and graduation party and so on. It is difficult for most students to participate in art aesthetics activities. Besides, due to the monotonous teaching, students are generally less interested in general education of art.
No In-depth Content and Lack of Innovation

There is a lack of planning for the general arts education curriculum in universities of finance and economics, which can be mainly reflected in that: (1) The courses offered are simple. According to National Teaching Guidelines for Arts General Education in Colleges and Universities, at least eight elective courses in public arts must be set up, which are historical course—Introduction to Art, and appreciation courses in painting, music, calligraphy, film, dance, opera and drama. However, the art general education courses focus on the latter, being short of the former and practice. And there is almost no art criticism course. The practice of arts general education varies from school to school, and the development is not coordinated. Even some financial colleges do not offer such courses. (2) The teaching method lacks innovation. Most of the courses are still taught by traditional teaching methods. Teachers take the initiative while students accept it passively. It is difficult to form the critical thinking that students require in the process of innovation and entrepreneurship, and their personalities are hard to be found.

Reform of Arts General Education in Universities of Finance and Economics under Innovative and Entrepreneurial Background

Building Brand Courses and Establishing a Three-dimensional and Multi-level Art General Education System

It is a systematic project to promote innovation and entrepreneurship education that requires resources in all aspects. Under the new circumstances, colleges and universities should improve the system as soon as possible to constantly explore innovative and entrepreneurial education models. Considering the subject-orientation in financial and economic universities, the three-dimensional, multi-level brand courses should be set up in art general education, in the case of limited credits and class hours. Colleges should also appropriately carry out supportive courses and organize a variety of artistic practice activities. The purpose of setting up the brand courses is to allow more students to improve their appreciation level and aesthetic ability and develop their innovative awareness through the art general education. Through the combination of supportive courses, colorful practice activities and the brand courses, students have more choices, thus expanding their aesthetic vision, and cultivating a certain degree of innovative ability. In the horizontal construction of the curriculum system, a multi-level system “one trunk with multi-branch” is formed, which is based on artistic theories—art appreciation—creating techniques and so on, which reinforces the innovation and entrepreneurship education. In the vertical construction, it is necessary to make full use of the resources of schools, regions, and society to develop art general education courses with characteristics of school, regions and ethnic culture, and to further inspire students’ awareness of cultural innovation.

Bringing in and Going out, Sharing Resources, and Building a Perfect Coordination Mechanism of Arts General Education

Facing the shortage of teachers and courses in general arts education, it is necessary to build a coordination mechanism that is suitable for the universities of finance and economics. In terms of management, they should have a clear top-level design, give full play to the main role of the school of art and art education center, and coordinate with the relevant departments. For course resources, online course platform must be made full use, and at the same time the construction of on-campus network teaching platform should be strengthened, thus to promote the digital resource construction of art general education.

Advocating Practice, Expanding Contents, and Enriching Course Forms.

The essence of art is innovation. Any art is a comprehensive and complex mental work in the process of creation. Therefore, the general education of art is not only to guide students to rationally understand the beauty of art, but also to allow students to experience it personally. In the course of practice, it forms their internal understanding of artistic beauty. From guidance to practice, students
resonate in their creations with deep feelings, and the value of arts general education is enhanced. Universities of finance and economics need to make more innovation in practice in the teaching process, such as encouraging students to go out of the classroom, visit museums and art galleries, historic sites, listen to music, and enjoy movies, through which they can enjoy the beauty of life and art and improve their aesthetic qualities.

Making a Comprehensive Course Planning and a Scientific Integration into Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education

Lv Sibai once said that “education is the foundation of science and art. And art education is especially the basis of education for the development of Chinese national spirit, which cannot be forgotten” [11]. Art education is one of the cornerstones of innovation and entrepreneurship education, the core of which is the art general education. The integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education lays a solid foundation for general education in arts. Most of the students in universities of finance and economics are not art majors, so the course setting and teaching need to focus on students’ aesthetic ability. In the content, it should be scientifically planned into the level of perception, experience, performance, creation and evaluation, so that students can grasp this course. Through the improvement of aesthetic ability, students’ self-quality and social cognition are constantly strengthened, and the ability of innovation is constantly improving, so as to speed up their role positioning, clarify their self-worth, and lay a solid foundation for future employment and entrepreneurship.

Summary

As an important way to explore financial college students’ interests, to find their value of life, and to enhance quality education, art general education requires to integrate the idea of innovation and entrepreneurship education with educational practice. With the continuous deepening of reforms in innovation and entrepreneurship education, art general education needs scientific methods to improve college students’ ability of innovation and entrepreneurship. Nowadays, in the face of technological innovation, college students are the new force to boost social development, economic change and national prosperity in the future. Universities of finance and economics need to further play the coordinated role of art general education in cultivating people and lay a solid foundation for innovative and entrepreneurial talents to adapt to the all-round development of socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era.

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