

Research on the Impact of Entrepreneurial Learning on the Business Model Innovation of Startups

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Abstract: Entrepreneurial learning involves all kinds of learning activities carried out by enterprises in the process of development. It helps entrepreneurs, as the backbone of enterprises, master key entrepreneurial knowledge and solve practical problems encountered in entrepreneurship. It runs through the whole process of entrepreneurial activities. According to research, through entrepreneurial learning, start-ups can improve entrepreneurial opportunities, entrepreneurial dynamics, and other development potentials; additionally, it helps enterprises better grasp and make full use of opportunities, so as to promote business model innovation and enterprise development. In view of this, this paper focuses on the impact of entrepreneurial learning on the business model innovation of startups, expounds the connotation of entrepreneurial learning, analyzes the impact of entrepreneurial learning on the business model innovation of startups, and proposes strategies on how to promote the business model innovation of startups through entrepreneurial learning based on practice, so as to achieve a breakthrough in the bottleneck of development and provide reference for the innovation and development of more startups.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial learning; Startups; Business model innovation; Strategy

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1. Introduction

In the increasingly fierce competitive business environment, technological change and consumer behavior are evolving at a rapid pace. As a result, the key for enterprise survival and development are no longer restricted to technological innovation, product innovation, and service innovation, but rather the innovation of business model. In the “National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy Outline” issued in 2016, the state encourages enterprises to actively carry out business model innovation in the process of development, so as to respond to the complex and rapidly changing business environment. It can be seen that in the changing market environment, overcoming disadvantages, achieving a breakthrough in the bottleneck of development, and promoting the innovation of business model are concerns that require attention ^[1]. Therefore, in the development process, it is necessary for startups to be based on the current development foundation, clarify the development trend and market trend of the industry, pay close attention to the basic law of market development, as well as actively implement entrepreneurial learning, so as to provide guarantee for business model innovation, enhance the development potential of enterprises, stand out in the fierce market competition, and seek better development.

2. Overview of entrepreneurial learning

Entrepreneurial learning can be understood as a cognitive learning activity for enterprise founders, core backbone personnel, and grass-roots personnel to generate innovative ideas and share resources from the internal and external development system of the enterprise in the process of development. From the perspective of organization, entrepreneurial learning can be divided into developmental entrepreneurial learning and exploratory entrepreneurial learning^[2]. Among them, developmental entrepreneurial learning refers to the effort made by new enterprises in strengthening the development of external network resources and knowledge system, connecting enterprise resources with external networks, and continuously gaining rich entrepreneurial knowledge through external feedback, so as to help enterprises better identify entrepreneurial opportunities and make full use of them. Exploratory entrepreneurial learning mainly refers to the effort made by new enterprises in actively creating novel knowledge by exploring diversified ways in the process of development^[3]. In the process of entrepreneurial learning, enterprises can be guided to accumulate rich entrepreneurial knowledge and experience through learning, so as to effectively avoid major risks in model innovation and ensure better enterprise development.

3. Impact of entrepreneurial learning on the business model innovation of startups

3.1. Update the cognitive structure of business model innovation

For startups, the essence of business model innovation in the development process is to achieve a breakthrough in the current business development logic of the industry, build a new value logic based on the development trend of the industry and the reality of the enterprise, as well as create a new business system at the same time^[4]. In order to achieve a breakthrough in the original development logic, the most direct and effective way is to associate with new knowledge and information, which can help enterprises accumulate the experiences of successful innovation and learn from failures through trial and error and external search. At the same time, actively seeking external information and ideas will enable enterprises to learn new knowledge, so as to strengthen their entrepreneurial cognition^[5]. Hence, entrepreneurial learning can help entrepreneurs accumulate entrepreneurial experiences, gain entrepreneurial knowledge, grasp the market situation and the overall development trend of the industry, understand the innovation model of mature enterprises, and effectively avoid the risks in business model innovation through the process of reference and imitation. In other words, entrepreneurial learning can help enterprises overcome their shortcomings in development, identify external innovation opportunities, improve their entrepreneurial knowledge reserve, change their inherent traditional thinking mode, and update their cognitive structure^[6]. Entrepreneurial learning can positively influence startups in terms of their business model innovation activities and reduce the resistance toward business model innovation at the theoretical level^[7].

3.2. Improve decision-making and resource integration skills

In the process of business model innovation, entrepreneurs of start-ups will not only realize comprehensive learning at cognitive and practical levels, accumulate rich experience, and improve their knowledge structure through entrepreneurial learning, but also effectively improve their decision-making and resource integration skills and reconstruct their core dynamic ability, so that new resources that are unique and difficult to replicate can be put forward, thus engendering the establishment of a mechanism for the identification, utilization, integration, and reconstruction of development opportunities. The process of entrepreneurial learning plays a role in promoting entrepreneurial dynamic capability^[8]. Through purposeful and planned learning activities, enterprises can accumulate knowledge, enhance their core competitiveness, and fully integrate their assets and prior knowledge. At the same time, enterprises will be able to use external relations, improve business knowledge system and skills, build a strong learning

environment, as well as continuously improve their dynamic capability through developmental and exploratory entrepreneurial learning. For example, in the process of implementing developmental entrepreneurial learning activities, enterprises can accumulate more opportunities in the external system and gain heterogeneous entrepreneurial knowledge and resources [9]. In the process of exploration and learning, the integration and reorganization of existing system resources as well as the summarization of experiences through trial and error can be realized, which will provide a basis for the improvement of entrepreneurial dynamic capability and business model innovation.

3.3. Improve the opportunity ability of entrepreneurial patchwork

In order to realize business model innovation, startups need to invest resources. However, startups tend to lack resources, and it is difficult to obtain support from the external system. In the context of resource shortage, attempting in entrepreneurial patchwork is an effective innovation path. Entrepreneurial patchwork refers to the creative use of existing resources by entrepreneurs in order to effectively solve problems or deal with new opportunities in the process of development [10]. In order to achieve successful entrepreneurial patchwork, enterprises must be familiar with the strengths of existing resources. Through entrepreneurial learning, it is possible to strengthen the understanding of resources and constantly stimulate creative thinking, so as to promote business model innovation. In the process of entrepreneurial learning, enterprises can improve their understanding of entrepreneurial patchwork and their own existing resources, so as to promote entrepreneurial patchwork and business model innovation [11]. Researchers have put forward three levels in entrepreneurial patchwork: input patchwork, customer patchwork, and system patchwork. Each level contains three indicators (as shown in **Table 1**). Through data analysis of the “average value,” it can be seen that the average value of the item in each dimension is between 2.640 and 5.779; additionally, the distribution of nine indicators in the three dimensions is relatively balanced, which jointly affects the capability of entrepreneurial innovation and patchwork [12]. In the process of entrepreneurial learning, opportunity ability is the condition that triggers entrepreneurial patchwork behavior. The stronger the opportunity ability, the more opportunities that enterprises can find or create. They can also make full use of idle resources, underestimated resources, and redundant resources, identify diversified innovation ideas, and provide new ideas for enterprise model innovation.

Table 1. Composition of entrepreneurial patchwork

Dimension	Number of cases	Average value
Input patchwork 1	638	5.466
Input patchwork 2	638	5.505
Input patchwork 3	638	5.412
Customer patchwork 1	638	5.205
Customer patchwork 2	638	5.124
Customer patchwork 3	638	5.013
System patchwork 1	638	5.263
System patchwork 2	638	5.356
System patchwork 3	638	5.439

4. Entrepreneurial learning strategies for startups to promote business model innovation

4.1. Change the concept of development and focus on the development of entrepreneurial learning activities

Through the analysis, it can be seen that entrepreneurial learning plays a positive role in the process of

business model innovation, especially for startups. The purpose of business model innovation is to continuously promote the innovation of enterprises in terms of technology, products, and operation mode through the application of existing and new resources, so as to help enterprises fully grasp business opportunities for development and create greater value. This process will promote enterprises to better explore the market, seize resources, continuously adjust the internal value and creation mechanism, enable enterprises to improve their core competitiveness, and provide better services to the market ^[13]. In order to achieve this goal, entrepreneurs need to have an ideal knowledge structure and practical experience as well as the skill to identify the opportunities in existing resources and external systems, so as to innovate in a timely manner. Therefore, entrepreneurial learning is of great significance for the innovation of business model, especially in the rapidly changing market environment. Startups need to establish an ideal internal entrepreneurial learning mechanism, so as to fully integrate internal and external resources as well as promote the innovation of business model and the rapid development of enterprises in the new environment. They should also constantly change their concept of development according to the times, focus on entrepreneurial learning activities, and invest into business model innovation and long-term development ^[14].

4.2. Establish a linkage mechanism to realize the coordinated development of learning and innovation

The structure of business model can be divided into internal structure and external structure. In order to realize model innovation in the development of enterprises, it is necessary to build a new mechanism of linkage between entrepreneurial learning and model innovation from the internal and external levels of enterprises. First of all, a collaborative external environment should be built, and the direction of innovation of the internal model should be determined through analyzing the market. At the same time, enterprises should actively participate in various kinds of exhibitions, industry associations, and external technical exchanges ^[15]. On the one hand, it is necessary to gain rich experiences, improve the cognitive structure of entrepreneurship, and optimize it in combination with practice, so as to create new technologies suitable for the development of enterprises. In addition, enterprises should also regularly hold innovation exchange conferences, formulate management systems for learning and innovation, and strengthen the linkage between departments and employees, so as to promote business model innovation. In addition, it is also crucial to strengthen the investigation of industry journals, enhance the analysis of industry development trends ^[16], and gather industry information through diversified channels, so as to lay the foundation for business model innovation. For example, in the case of insufficient development resources, a startup can collect resources that have been mastered but not fully utilized through entrepreneurship learning, turn waste into treasure, break the traditional development trend, and develop new uses for dilapidated wasteland and idle resources, as exemplified by the renovation of dilapidated factories by maximizing the excellent lighting and wide space and transforming them into creative spaces for artists, thus realizing space innovation ^[17].

4.3. Promote cluster learning and build a “brainstorming” environment for all staff

Due to the lack of entrepreneurial knowledge, experience, resources, and capital, startups tend to end in failure. The mastery of entrepreneurial knowledge will determine the success or failure of entrepreneurship ^[18]. Through entrepreneurial learning, enterprises can gain entrepreneurial knowledge and experience from those of successful enterprises, and startups will be able to identify more diversified entrepreneurial opportunities, thus stimulating business model innovation. Within an enterprise itself, there are differences in the knowledge structure of employees. Through entrepreneurial learning, various innovation effects can be obtained ^[19]. In order to achieve innovation, enterprises should pay attention to the importance of “all staff innovation.” Therefore, enterprises should have a good learning environment to support their

employees in the process of entrepreneurship and innovation ^[20]. At the same time, startups should focus on promoting cluster learning among employees, so that all employees may have an understanding of the enterprises' development objectives, development strategies, and technological advantages; they should also strengthen employees' understanding of the development trend of the industry, trigger brainstorming in the process of cluster learning, encourage innovation and creativity among employees, and finally realize business model innovation.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, entrepreneurial learning is a strategy in the development of startups, which is closely related to business model innovation. Entrepreneurial learning can directly or indirectly affect the innovation performance of enterprises. Therefore, in the process of entrepreneurship, startups should pay attention to entrepreneurial learning activities, actively build strategies for coordinated development with business model innovation, promote the accumulation of knowledge and resources in terms of opportunity ability and entrepreneurial dynamic capability, optimize the allocation of resources, enhance creative thinking, and continuously promote business model innovation.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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