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THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CORE COMPETENCES FOR DISTRIBUTION SERVICE INDUSTRY**SU-CHANG CHEN****PROFESSOR****NATIONAL PENGHU UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****TAIWAN****HSI-CHI HSIAO****CHAIR PROFESSOR****CHENG SHIU UNIVERSITY****TAIWAN****JEN-CHIA CHANG****PROFESSOR****NATIONAL TAIPEI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY****TAIWAN****CHUN-MEI CHOU****PROFESSOR****NATIONAL YUNLIN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****TAIWAN****CHIN-PIN CHEN****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****NATIONAL CHANGHUA UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION****TAIWAN****CHIEN-HUA SHEN****PROFESSOR****TRANSWORLD UNIVERSITY****TAIWAN****ABSTRACT**

Entrepreneurship has emerged as the most potent economic force. The focus of economic development has shifted more heavily toward entrepreneurship. The distribution service industry is very important in Taiwan, so to explore the entrepreneurship core competency for distribution service industry is became an important issue. This study aims to understand the entrepreneurship core competencies for distribution service industry. This study used the in-depth interview techniques to interview with 6 successful entrepreneurs who established their own stores over 3 years. Then, this study conducted group discussion to confirm the domains, items and criteria of entrepreneurship core competences for distribution service industry. Base on the interview and group discussing results, this study summarized the 11 entrepreneurship core competencies including the cognitive of entrepreneurial processes, entrepreneurial traits/behaviors, business foundation skills, communication skills, digital skills, professional innovation, financial management, human resource management, marketing management, operations management and risk management, within three domains as entrepreneurial skills, ready skills, and business functions skills.

KEYWORDS

Distribution Service Industry, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Core Competences.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has been recognized and accepted by economies the world over as the catalyst to boost innovation and growth for an economy (Biju & Vardhan, 2011). It has emerged as the most potent economic force. The focus of economic development has shifted more heavily toward entrepreneurship (Raposo & Paco, 2011). In other words, national incomes and change of unemployed population significantly and positively influence entrepreneur development (Hsiao et al., 2012a). The European Union (UN) considered that the entrepreneurship was one of the "new basic skills" in the economic life (European Commission, 2006). Nowadays, entrepreneurship has become the key word that attaches great attention by governments and workers (Liu & Hu, 2010).

The entrepreneurs are not inherent, the skills and knowledge of entrepreneurial abilities can be learned (Okudana & Rzasa, 2006). Rasmussen and Sorheim (2006) pointed out that it was possible to educate individuals to become entrepreneurs. According to the 2009 SME White Paper on SMEs in 2008, the business over 10 years was only 45.1% in Taiwan (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2009). It seen entrepreneurship does have a high risk, not every entrepreneur can succeed. Headd (2003) indicated that the failure rates for starting a new business might be as high as 30% over the first 2 years of established. People can make higher survival of starting a business if they accepted well entrepreneurial education before starting a business (Shepherd, Douglas, & Shanley, 2000; Hsiao et al., 2012a, 2012b).

According to 2011 statistics presented by the Taiwan's Small and Medium Enterprise Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs pointed out that there were 1.27 million SME in Taiwan, this is 97.63% of all firms, growth of 2.55% compared to 2010. Among them, there were 80.09% for the service industry, and wholesale and retail trade accounted for 50.94% of service industry. Belonging to the self-employed and employers 180.3 million, of which 60.5 million wholesale and retail trade industry, accounting for 33.5% (Small and Medium Enterprise Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2012). In terms of product

value, wholesale and retail trade in 2000 amounted to US\$ 0.3 trillion in 2011 reached US\$ 0.475 trillion, the 10-year growth of 58.6% (Statistics Department, Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2012), this means that SMEs, especially for service, play an important role for Taiwan's economics.

Taiwan's government announced "The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Services roadmap" in October 2012. It will promote the guiding blueprint for wholesale and retail, logistics services, that is expected to spend US\$ 10 billion during the period to 2020. The service sector GDP annual growth rate will reach to 5.14% and the services sector will become to promote sustained economic growth engine in Taiwan (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2012). The distribution service industry is very important service type in Taiwan (Chen, 2006), so to explore the entrepreneurship core competency for distribution service industry is became an important issue.

OBJECTIVE

The object of this study was to understand the entrepreneurship core competencies for distribution service industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

DEFINITION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The term of entrepreneurship was from the 12th century French compound verb *entreprendre* (*entre + prendre*). In modern English, it means "to undertake" (Hoang & Huang, 2008; Hsiao et al., 2012a). The European Commission had defined in 2006 as: "Refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action" (European Commission, 2006). The European Commission made another definition in 2009 as "Entrepreneurship is an attitude that reflects an individual's motivation and capacity to identify an opportunity and to pursue it in order to produce new value or economic success (European Commission, 2009). In the Oxford English Dictionary defined entrepreneurship as "A person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006; Hsiao et al., 2012a).

Entrepreneurship is the act of creating a new business (Liu & Hsieh, 2006). It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the competences to plan and manage projects in order to achieve target. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) said that entrepreneurship was entrepreneurs use entrepreneurship, discovery, assessment, or create opportunities. Lo, Wang and Hsu (2007) gave a definition of entrepreneurship as a process of creating profit. In this process, entrepreneurs can identify, and discover business opportunities. Uhløi (2005) considered that the entrepreneurs were to take advantage and identify of starting a new business opportunities and willing to take risks. Entrepreneurship was not only in the creation of new business but also the source of personal and social development and innovation (Brush et al., 2004). General speaking, Hsiao et al. (2012b) aggregated entrepreneurship as a combination of production factors including labor, capital, technology, management and knowledge. It also included creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the competences to plan create, assess or discover business opportunities and manage projects in order to achieve object.

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES

Competency can refer to the individual's effective implementation, it can play the role of a good job, qualified for the duties and tasks, and it can be observed. Competences usually contain knowledge, affective and skills (Tien, 2001).

The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education designs a National Content Standards for entrepreneurial competences standards. There are fifteen major standards, which are divided into three major skills: entrepreneurial skills, ready skills and business functions skills (The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, 2004; Hsiao et al., 2012b). The entrepreneurial skills are the unique traits, behaviors and processes that differentiate an entrepreneur from an employee or manager. It includes entrepreneurial processes, entrepreneurial traits/behaviors. The ready skills are the business, or entrepreneurial, knowledge and skills that are prerequisites or co-requisites for the study of entrepreneurship. It includes business foundations, communications and interpersonal skills, digital skills, economics, financial literacy, professional development. Business functions skills are the business activities performed in starting and running a business. It includes financial management, human resource management, information management, marketing management, operations management, risk management, strategic management (The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, 2004). Townsend, Busenitz and Arthurs (2010) indicated that ability expectancies were a robust predictor of starting a business decision. Zhang (2008) believed that the entrepreneurs should have adventurous, entrepreneurial ability, independent operational capability, as well as technical, social and management capabilities.

The entrepreneurial competences should be able to distinguish into three competences that were the entrepreneurial professional competence, entrepreneurial basic capacity and entrepreneurial management capacity (Chang et al., 2012). Hindle (2007) proposed in the entrepreneurship program, the business plan course was required for covering the professional skills and the external environment of the wheel-like diagram. He considered that entrepreneurship education could not be off campus within the ivory tower of academia. Entrepreneurship education must link with external resources. In the most peripheral alliance partners, Internet, alumni and tutors to help students learn. In the second ring, the students must have entrepreneurial professional courses including marketing, sales, organizational behavior, strategy, business development, opportunity assessment, financial and accounting, creativity and other professional skills training. Schools may be developed their own characteristics courses. In the inner ring, it can integrate all knowledge and skills by business plan. Hood & Young (1993) survey 100 CEO, pointed out that marketing was the most important areas of entrepreneurship, leadership was entrepreneurial core skills, and creativity was the most important cognitive skills in the entrepreneurial. In Chandler and Jansen (1992) survey, they found that entrepreneurs should have five abilities that were organizational behavior, the ability to grasp the opportunities, the ability of the operational assets, professional and technical capabilities and knowing people ability. American Association of Business and Management in 2001 referred to the entrepreneurial abilities including the ability of entrepreneurs and entrepreneur's opportunity, marketing capabilities, economics capabilities, financial capabilities, accounting capabilities, management capabilities, global market capabilities, legal capabilities and enterprise planning capabilities (Chou, 2005).

Sung (2008) pointed out that started a new business could be divided into six stages: new venture idea, screening, formal plans, financing, set up and start-up. The various stages of the required knowledge and skills are shown in table 1. It can be seen from table 1 that in the early days of the new venture idea stage, entrepreneurs should have creative thinking, innovation management ability and creativity commercialization assessment capabilities. In the screening stage, entrepreneurial vision assessment, evaluation of the investment is very important. In the planning stage, the entrepreneur must have a business plan writing and assessment capacity. In the financial stage, entrepreneurs need to have the ability to get funds and the ability to make financial planning and investment framework arrangement. In the set-up stage, entrepreneurs must clearly understand the knowledge of the Companies Act and the protection of intellectual property rights. In the start-up stage, knowledge and skills of production, service, finance, sales, control and management, strategic planning, leadership are needs.

TABLE 1: VARIOUS STAGES OF THE REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL FOR STARTING A NEW BUSINESS

Stages	required knowledge and skill
New Venture Idea	creative thinking, innovation management ability, creativity commercialization assessment
Screening	assessment of entrepreneurial vision, investment assessment
Formal Plans	prepare a business plan, venture proposal assessment
Financing	financial planning, how to arrange the investment framework
Set Up	the protection of intellectual property rights, the legal form of the various companies
Start-Up	produce, service, finance, sales, control and management, strategic planning, leadership knowledge and skills

Source: Sung(2008), p.88.

The main content of the Grade B store service skills certificate specification of Council of Labor Affairs in Taiwan include commercial theory of outlets, stores and merchandise plans, management and operation of technology and customer service. The disciplines of skills certificate specification include retail store management, store merchandise management, store sales management, store human resources management, store operations planning and management,

store shopping district operations, store customer service management, retail crisis handling eight (Central office of the Council of Labor Affairs, 2006). It can be regarded as the entrepreneurial professional competence s for the distribution service industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The implementation of this study included two stages. First, six successful entrepreneurs were interviewed. Their stores all established over three years. The background of them is shown in table 2. The interview questionnaire is revised from The National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education (Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, 2004). After collecting the interview data, the researchers used entrepreneurial skills, ready skills and business functions skills as the analytic domains. And in entrepreneurial skills includes entrepreneurial processes, entrepreneurial traits/behaviors two items; in ready skills includes business foundations, communications skills, digital skills, and professional innovation ability four items; in business functions skills includes financial management, human resource management, marketing management, operations management, and risk management five items. Subsequently, definitions for these domains and items were used as objective criteria for selection. When the sentence fitted the criteria, it was drawn to the corresponding item. After the assortment, the core competence for distribution service industry was established for further discussion.

Secondly, the researchers conducted group discussion to confirm the domains, items and criteria of entrepreneurship core competences for distribution service industry.

TABLE 2: THE BACKGROUND OF SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS

No	Sexual	Education	Experience	Category
A	M	junior college	9 yr.	convenience store
B	M	Senior vocational high school	10 yr.	convenience store
C	M	Senior vocational high school	23 yr.	specialty store
D	F	University	3 yr.	beverages store
E	F	University	3 yr.	breakfast store
F	F	Senior vocational high school	3 yr.	beverages store

RESULTS

Table 3 is the summaries of the core competencies for distribution service industry entrepreneurs. The domains of entrepreneurship core competences for distribution service industry include entrepreneurial skills, ready skills and business functions skills.

There are 11 items in these domains. The entrepreneurial skills mean the unique traits, behaviors and processes that differentiate an entrepreneur from an employee or manager. It includes entrepreneurial processes, entrepreneurial traits/behaviors two items.

The ready skills mean the basic business knowledge and skills that are prerequisites or co-requisites for becoming a successful entrepreneur; it includes business foundations, communications skills, digital skills, and professional innovation ability four items.

The business functions skills mean the business activities performed in starting and running a business. It includes financial management, human resource management, marketing management, operations management, and risks management five items.

There are 34 criteria in these items. In entrepreneurial processes, there are 4 criteria that are to assess market trends and opportunities, to assess opportunities for venture creation, to select sources to finance venture creation/start-up, and to have business law knowledge.

In entrepreneurial traits/behaviors, there are 4 criteria that are to have leadership ability, to have risk taking ability, to have creativity and Innovation ability, and to have positive initiative.

In business foundations, there are 2 criteria that are to have concepts of business management and to have concepts of marketing.

In communications skills, there are 3 criteria that are to use communications technologies/system, to have personnel communication ability and to have ethics in communication.

In digital skills, there are 2 criteria that are to use basics computer and to use computer applications

In professional innovation ability, there are 3 criteria that are to have product innovation ability, to have technology innovation ability and to have technology innovation ability.

In financial management, there are 3 criteria that are to have money management ability, to have product inventory management ability and to have costs/benefits analysis ability

In human resource management, there are 3 criteria that are to have human resource planning ability, to have human resource training and developing ability and to have manpower management ability.

In marketing management, there are 3 criteria that are to have product selling ability, to have product promotion ability and to have product pricing ability.

In operations management, there are 4 criteria that are to manage target market, to serve customers, to have daily operations ability and to have strategic planning ability.

In risk management, there are 3 criteria that are to make property and personnel safety, to manage disaster and to treat emergency events.

TABLE 3: SUMMARIES OF THE CORE COMPETENCIES FOR DISTRIBUTION SERVICE INDUSTRY ENTREPRENEURS

Domains	Items	Criteria	
Entrepreneurial Skills: The unique traits, behaviors and processes that differentiate an entrepreneur from an employee or manager.	Entrepreneurial processes	To assess market trends and opportunities	
		To assess opportunities for venture creation	
		To select sources to finance venture creation/start-up	
		To have business law knowledge	
	Entrepreneurial traits/behaviors	To have leadership ability	
		To have risk taking ability	
		To have creativity and Innovation ability	
Ready Skills: The basic business knowledge and skills that are prerequisites or co-requisites for becoming a successful entrepreneur	Business foundations	To have concepts of business management	
		To have concepts of marketing	
	Communications skills	To use communications technologies/system	
		To have personnel communication ability	
		To have ethics in communication	
	Digital skills	To use basics computer	
		To use computer applications	
	Professional innovation ability	To have product innovation ability	
		To have technology innovation ability	
		To have service innovation ability	
	Business Functions Skills: The business activities performed in starting and running a business	Financial management	To have money management ability
			To have product inventory management ability
To have costs/benefits analysis ability			
Human resource management		To have human resource planning ability	
		To have human resource training and developing ability	
		To have manpower management ability	
Marketing management		To have product selling ability	
		To have product promotion ability	
		To have product pricing ability	
Operations management		To manage target market	
		To serve customers	
		To have daily operations ability	
Risk management		To have strategic planning ability	
		To make property and personnel safety	
		To manage disaster	
		To treat emergency events	

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

Base on the interview and group discussing, this study summarized the 11 entrepreneurship core competencies for the distribution service industry, including the cognitive of entrepreneurial processes, entrepreneurial traits/behaviors, business foundation skills, communication skills, digital skills, professional innovation, financial management, human resource management, marketing management, operations management and risk management, within 3 domains as entrepreneurial skills, ready skills, and business functions skills. In the planning of entrepreneurship education courses, the marketing and distribution management department of universities can reference these competences. If these entrepreneurship core competencies directory set into curriculum and to reinforce existing courses. It will be better able to meet the needs of future students towards entrepreneurial path.

This study explores on distribution service industry. It is recommended that future researchers can follow this research process to copy to other industries. It can make a comparison between industries, such like service industry and manufacture industry. It can find out what same or differences between them.

This study is focus on micro-enterprise entrepreneurs. It does not cover large distribution industry enterprises. The entrepreneurship core competencies only reference in the creation of micro-entrepreneurs. It is recommended that future researchers can expand the study and make a comparison the same and differences between micro-enterprise and large enterprises.

In this study, only uses the interview and group discussion method. It is recommended that future researchers can base on the results, to take the questionnaire and to investigate more samples. For example, in authors' previous (Hsiao et al., 2012b), we used the techniques of Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to solicit opinions from 17 excellent franchisees that selected from Taiwan Family-Mart Chain Stores. The results show that the entrepreneurial skill is the most important factor for starting a store in the criteria level. This means that if the entrepreneurs have more entrepreneurial skills, it will be possible success. So, how to strengthen the entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurial candidates are the important issues in the distribution service industry entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurial candidates can be teaching by writing and planning a business plan.

The outline of interviews is base on the literature review. But in actual use, it may be affected by the impact of the background and experience of the respondents. May be caused the time of the interview and the interview questions inconsistent. It can be said that this is the limitation of this study.

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