

The Impact of External Environmental Factors on Chinese College Students' Entrepreneurial Intention

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Abstract

This study proposes the impact of external factors on college students' entrepreneurial intentions based on the three-element interaction theory. It uses the results of a questionnaire survey of 136 college students at Shaanxi University of Science and Technology to perform data analysis using SPSS 22.0 to verify the proposed hypothesis and aims to explore entrepreneurial policies, the influence mechanism between entrepreneurship education and family support and entrepreneurial intention. The study found that the three dimensions of entrepreneurship policy, entrepreneurship education, and family support in the external entrepreneurial environment all passed the significance test, indicating that the external entrepreneurial environment is positively related to entrepreneurial intention. Finally, it is recommended that the national and local governments actively provide policy guidance for college students to start their own businesses. Colleges and universities should reasonably set up innovation and entrepreneurship courses and innovation and entrepreneurship practice activities. Families should provide emotional and resource support to college students. To enhance college students' enthusiasm and self-confidence in participating in entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurial Policy, Entrepreneurial Education, Entrepreneurial Education, Family Support

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is not only a creative process but also a process for entrepreneurs to realize their value. Therefore, entrepreneurship is one of the important means for college students to realize their value. At the same time, innovation and entrepreneurship can promote the transformation and upgrading of my country's employment market and provide a continuous source of development momentum for economic development (Yu & Yu, 2024). College students' entrepreneurship can not only alleviate the fierce market competition but also help

maximize the advantages and specialties of college students. Cultivating and improving the entrepreneurial ability of college students is not only necessary to improve the education system of colleges and universities, strengthen the quality of college students, and cultivate innovative talents, but also to adapt to the needs of national economic transformation and upgrading (Xue & Peng, 2021).

To effectively solve the problem of insufficient market demand and a large supply of graduates, the country has begun to advocate innovation and entrepreneurship vigorously, colleges and universities have actively carried out innovation and entrepreneurship education, and all sectors of society are also actively providing college graduates with an entrepreneurial platform that allows them to show themselves and apply what they have learned, encouraging college students to start their businesses, use the professional knowledge they have learned in college to practice, and move towards the road of successful entrepreneurship (Lin, Ma & Li, 2024). In China, in 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Implementation Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Institutions". In 2021, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Guiding Opinions on Further Supporting College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship", providing a better environment and a broader platform for college students' innovation and entrepreneurship (Huang, 2022).

However, according to the 2022 China University Student Employment Report (Employment Blue Book) released by the MyCOS Research Institute, it is an indisputable fact that Chinese college students have a low overall willingness to start a business and a low success rate in starting a business (He & Gong, 2022). The strength of college students' entrepreneurial intention directly affects their entrepreneurial behavior (Guo, Mei & Hu, 2024). In reality, the road to self-employment for college students is not smooth (Chen & Yu, 2019). On the surface, college students' entrepreneurship is a personal behavior choice, but in addition to subjective tendencies, this behavior is also affected by many external factors. Because to complete a task, is not just relying on individual subjective tendencies. Still, to a large extent, it requires support from external factors such as the support of national policies, the development of entrepreneurial education in colleges and universities, the family's entrepreneurial environment, and the attitude of parents. Therefore, this paper studies the external environmental factors that affect college students' entrepreneurial intentions and puts forward relevant suggestions, aiming to provide empirical support for expanding the research on college students' entrepreneurship and making theoretical contributions to promoting the development of the country's innovative and entrepreneurial economy.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention is a social psychology concept. Bird was the first to study entrepreneurial intention. On the one hand, he defined entrepreneurial intention as a psychological state that guides entrepreneurs to pursue entrepreneurial goals and invest energy and resources in entrepreneurial goals and plans (Bird & Barbara, 1988); on the other hand, he defined entrepreneurial intention as a prerequisite for individuals to implement entrepreneurial behavior, and as an intermediate variable between individual factors and social environment pointing to entrepreneurial behavior (Bird & Brush C, 2002).

In relevant domestic research, scholars such as Chen, He & Qiu (2017), expressed entrepreneurial intention as entrepreneurial preparation and entrepreneurial possibility. Yuan, Kong & Cai (2019) regarded entrepreneurial intention as a subjective psychological manifestation of potential entrepreneurs to carry out entrepreneurial activities. Guo (2024), believed that entrepreneurial intention is a psychological state that guides individuals to pursue entrepreneurial goals and invest energy and resources. It is the best predictor of their entrepreneurial behavior. This article defines entrepreneurial intention as the psychological state of college students in entrepreneurial activities, which plays a driving role in college students' entrepreneurial practice and is a prerequisite factor affecting college students' entrepreneurial behavior.

Entrepreneurial Policy

He & Gong (2022), believe that entrepreneurship policy refers to the various incentive and support policies and measures taken by the government to promote relevant personnel to find jobs start their businesses and achieve employment. A complete entrepreneurship policy system should include entrepreneurship activities. It should include the stimulation of individual entrepreneurial intentions before the start of the entrepreneurship activities, as well as the support and protection of the entrepreneurs' actions after the start of the entrepreneurship activities. The policies issued by the state to promote innovation and entrepreneurship affect college students' entrepreneurial path; at the same time, the degree of perfection of the social security system also affects college students' independent entrepreneurial activities (Chen & Yu, 2019). In China, the government has set up loan assistance policies for college graduates to start their businesses. Graduates can apply for a guaranteed loan of up to 200,000 yuan, a one-time start-up subsidy, etc (Zhou, 2022).

Entrepreneurial Education

The Chinese Ministry of Education requires that "all universities must set up innovation and entrepreneurship education courses" in 2016, and entrepreneurship education has received unprecedented attention (Yang, 2022). As a practical education model, entrepreneurship education emphasizes cultivating students' innovative consciousness and entrepreneurial skills through practical activities, thereby increasing their possibility of future entrepreneurship. In the process of entrepreneurial cognitive learning, students can not only improve their entrepreneurial awareness but also deepen their understanding of entrepreneurial activities by participating in entrepreneurship education courses and training (Gai & Liu, 2024). Chen (2021), believed that entrepreneurial education in colleges and universities is to cultivate student's ability to identify opportunities, integrate resources, put creativity into practice, and create value. Zhou (2022), supported that entrepreneurship education is a kind of training education that plans and aims to cultivate students and enhance their entrepreneurial spirit and ability to identify opportunities, seize opportunities, integrate resources, create value, and put ideas into practice.

Family Support

In entrepreneurial activities with different levels of family support, college students receive different resources and psychological support, which will affect their emotional state and expectations of achieving similar achievements as comparison objects, and thus affect their entrepreneurial intentions (Guo, Mei & Hu, 2024). When college students get more psychological support from their families, they will have emotional reactions of being

recognized, encouraged, and positive, which will in turn affect the cognitive processing process and produce positive cognitive results, promote a higher degree of self-improvement, and further enhance the intention to start a business. On the contrary, in the context of low family support, entrepreneurial resource constraints, and negative emotions will weaken college students' self-evaluation of their abilities and weaken their entrepreneurial intentions (Zhou, 2022) .

Entrepreneurial Policies and Entrepreneurial Intention

Good entrepreneurship policies can alleviate the entrepreneurial pressure of college students, provide guidance for their entrepreneurship, enhance their entrepreneurial intentions, and promote the transformation of scientific and technological achievements (Xue & Peng, 2021). Many domestic scholars have found that entrepreneurship policies have a positive correlation with college students' entrepreneurial intentions (Zhou, Chen & Chen et. al, 2021; He & Gong, 2022;). As for the positive impact of entrepreneurship policies on entrepreneurial intention, the possible reason is that the stronger the policy support, the less entrepreneurial risk and uncertainty college students face. In addition, the lower the entrepreneurial transaction costs, the higher the entrepreneurial enthusiasm of college students, and the stronger their entrepreneurial intention will be (He & Gong, 2022). Hence, based on the literature and the above discussion, the researcher has developed the following hypothesis;

H₁: Entrepreneurship policies have a significant positive impact on college students' entrepreneurial intentions

Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

Solesvik (2013), based on the theory of planned behavior, confirmed that entrepreneurial education can promote individuals to have higher entrepreneurial motivation and that entrepreneurial education can indirectly affect entrepreneurial intention through the mediation of entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Yang (2022), empirically studied the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention from the perspective of curriculum design and proposed that social practice and entrepreneurial plan competition courses have the most significant impact on entrepreneurial intention. Yan (2023), divided entrepreneurship education in Chinese universities into three dimensions: entrepreneurship competitions, entrepreneurship courses, and entrepreneurship clubs. Empirical research shows that the implementation of entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on college students' entrepreneurial intentions, among which the degree of influence of entrepreneurship competitions is highest. Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on college students' entrepreneurial intention

Family Support and Entrepreneurial Intention

Family support refers to the social support provided by family members in the early stages of life, including emotional support and resource support (Guo, Mei & Hu, 2024). Turker and Elcuk (2009), stated that the support of family and friends may affect a person's choice of career, and this support generally refers to spiritual or financial support. If such support is

obtained, it will increase the possibility of a person choosing to start a business. Families can support young people's entrepreneurial behavior by providing labor and financial resources, which can reduce entrepreneurial risks and increase their entrepreneurial intentions (Huang, 2021). Thus, on the basis of the above discussion and literature, the researcher has developed the following hypothesis;

H₃: Family support has a significant positive impact on college students' entrepreneurial intention

Theoretical Background

Bandura's triadic interaction theory (1989), believes that the environment, individual factors, and individual behavior are interconnected, interact, and influence each other. The triadic interaction theory is widely used to explain how individual learning behavior and knowledge acquisition are completed under the joint action of individual, behavioral, and environmental factors (Yin, 2022). Some scholars interpret entrepreneurial intention as the result of the joint action of external environmental factors and individual factors (Hu & Zhao, 2023). Among the external environmental factors, entrepreneurship policies, college entrepreneurship education, family support, etc. can explain the mechanism that affects college students' entrepreneurial intention from the perspective of external factors. Therefore, this paper takes college students as the research object and explores the impact path of the external entrepreneurial environment on college students' entrepreneurial intention based on the triadic theory. The research framework is shown in Figure 1.

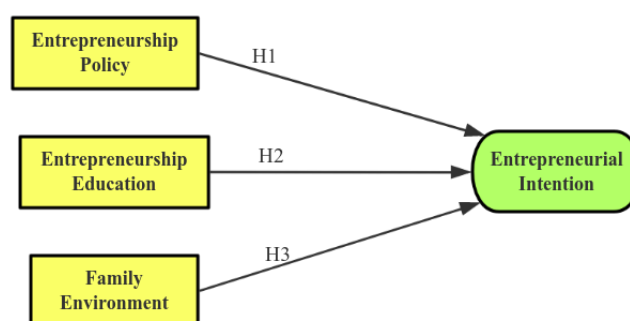


Figure 1 Framework for research

Research Methodology

Population, Sample Size, and Data Collection Method

The research subjects were college students of Shaanxi University of Science and Technology. The survey was mainly conducted through online questionnaires. A total of 159 questionnaires were distributed. After eliminating invalid questionnaires (i.e. questionnaires with the same answer checked for all options), 136 questionnaires were valid, and the questionnaire validity rate was 85.5%. Among them, the male and female ratios were 36% and 64% respectively.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha of each factor is greater than 0.8. Therefore, the scales used have good reliability.

Table 1

Factor reliability coefficient

VARIABLE	ITEM NUMBER	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
ENTREPRENEURIAL POLICY	4	0.898
ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION	4	0.874
FAMILY SUPPORT	4	0.872
ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION	4	0.917

SPSS 22.0 software was used for factor analysis, and the results are shown in Table 2. As can be seen from Table 2, the KMO value is greater than 0.7, indicating that the scale is suitable for factor analysis. The four main factors extracted are named entrepreneurship policy, entrepreneurship education, family support, and entrepreneurship intention, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett testing

VARIABLE	KMO	BARTLETT'S TEST FOR SPHERICITY		
		χ^2	df	P
ENTREPRENEURIAL POLICY	0.792	24.981	3	0
ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION	0.783	151.631	4	0
FAMILY SUPPORT	0.819	67.993	4	0
ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION	0.863	165.048	21	0

Table 3

Rotation component matrix

Variable	Factor indicators	Principal components			
		1	2	3	4
Entrepreneurship Policy	I know about the university student entrepreneurship information service platform		0.691		
	I know about the entrepreneurship guidance services provided by the local government's public employment and talent service agencies		0.850		
	I know about the micro-loans and financial support policies for university student entrepreneurship		0.880		
	I know about the preferential policies such as taxation for university student entrepreneurship		0.886		
Entrepreneurship Education	The school's innovation and entrepreneurship education has a reasonable curriculum system.				0.826

Family Support	The school's innovation and entrepreneurship education has an excellent teaching staff.	0.704
	The school's innovation and entrepreneurship education provides many practical opportunities (entrepreneurship competitions, entrepreneurship practice).	0.849
	The school's innovation and entrepreneurship education has sufficient material and financial guarantees.	0.773
	Regarding entrepreneurship, my family can give me practical and specific help.	0.738
	Regarding entrepreneurship, I can get emotional support and help from my family when I need it.	0.750
	Regarding entrepreneurship, I can talk to my family about my problems.	0.823
	Regarding entrepreneurship, my family is willing to help me make various decisions	0.751
	At this stage, I have the idea of starting a business.	0.887
	After graduating from college, I am likely to start a business.	0.892
	After graduating from college, I am likely to start a business	0.895
Entrepreneurial Intention	I started to consciously learn how to start a business.	0.895

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to perform statistical tests on the three hypothetical factors proposed. The test results show that the adjusted R^2 is greater than 0.4, and the explanatory power is reasonable. As shown in Table 4, the P values of entrepreneurship policy, entrepreneurship education, and family support are all less than 0.1, so the H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses are all established.

Table 4

Regression analysis

VARIABLE	NON-STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENT	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>B</i>	Standard error			
ENTREPRENEURIAL POLICY	0.103	0.058	0.128	1.776	0.078
ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION	0.155	0.076	0.160	2.029	0.044
FAMILY SUPPORT	0.085	0.078	0.088	1.086	0.056

Discussion and Conclusion*Research Conclusion*

Through regression analysis, we can see that the three dimensions of entrepreneurial policy, entrepreneurial education, and family support in the external entrepreneurial environment have passed the significance test. This shows that the external entrepreneurial environment is closely related to entrepreneurial intention. Positive and effective entrepreneurial policies, entrepreneurial education with rich practices, and support from families can reduce the burden of college students' entrepreneurship, and college students who are confident in themselves in innovation and risk-taking tend to be more inclined to start a business.

Suggestions

Actively create an environment that is more conducive to college students' entrepreneurship. Strengthen the overall planning of innovation and entrepreneurship policies, strengthen communication and linkage, understand the real situation of innovation and entrepreneurship education in various colleges and universities, and actively ensure emotional and resource support in the family. Through investigation and visits, understand the real demands of contemporary college students and entrepreneurs, modify and optimize entrepreneurship-related policies, and formulate more complete and operational implementation rules. The national and local governments, as the image of college students' entrepreneurship guarantors, actively guide college students to start their businesses and enhance their enthusiasm and confidence in participating in entrepreneurship.

Colleges and universities should reasonably set up innovation and entrepreneurship courses, and actively cultivate college students' innovative spirit, entrepreneurial awareness, and creative ability. Actively hold entrepreneurial experience exchange meetings to promote the promotion of advanced experience and typical practices, and strengthen the risk resistance awareness and ability of college student entrepreneurial teams. Strengthen the psychological quality of college students, cultivate the spirit of college students who are not afraid of failure and challenges, help college students improve their ability to resist pressure, and learn to positively attribute and control emotions.

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