

# The Influence of Entrepreneurship Education Evaluation on Female College Students' Entrepreneurial Intention from the Perspective of Social Cognition

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**Abstract:** The level of entrepreneurship within a nation is pivotal as it can boost economic efficiency, foster market innovation, expand employment opportunities, and sustain employment levels. Entrepreneurial intention acts as a significant predictor of entrepreneurial behavior. This study examines the entrepreneurial intentions of 667 female college students and their assessments of entrepreneurship education at universities, with the aim of understanding the current state of female college students' entrepreneurial intentions and the influence of entrepreneurship education evaluations on these intentions. Through a questionnaire survey method, it was determined that the overall entrepreneurial intention level among female college students is moderate. A correlation exists between entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurship education evaluations, with self-efficacy serving as a mediator between entrepreneurship education evaluations and entrepreneurial intentions. Perceived social support moderates the impact of entrepreneurship education evaluations on entrepreneurial intentions. Drawing from social cognitive theory, universities should enhance the cultivation of self-efficacy among female college students and seek additional social support to improve the quality of entrepreneurship education and facilitate the realization of their entrepreneurial intentions.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Intention; Entrepreneurial Education; Self-Efficacy; Social Support; Female College Students; Social Cognition

## 1. Introduction

In the era of "mass entrepreneurship and

innovation," college students, as the most innovative and entrepreneurial group, not only have their entrepreneurial intentions crucial for personal career development but also serve as a key pathway to achieving the national innovation-driven development strategy and high-quality employment goals. However, current college student entrepreneurship practices face the reality of "high intention, low conversion": despite multiple surveys indicating that college students' entrepreneurial intentions are at a moderate level [1,2], the actual entrepreneurial ratio is less than 3% of all graduates [3], with an entrepreneurial survival rate of only 3 years [4]. This contradiction highlights the urgent need to delve into the mechanisms behind the formation of entrepreneurial intentions and address the constraining factors.

## 2. Literature Review

Studies conducted abroad have indicated that entrepreneurial intention is the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial behavior [5], and entrepreneurship education has a significant positive effect on college students' entrepreneurial intentions [6,7]. The entrepreneurial intention of female college students is a product of their subjective construction [8]. Domestic scholars, through localized research, have determined that variables such as gender, school type, interest in entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial experience, entrepreneurship education, social capital, and improvements in entrepreneurial ability significantly explain college students' entrepreneurial intentions [3,9,10]. In explaining the path of entrepreneurial intention formation, Zhang verified through a multiple mediation model that entrepreneurship education indirectly enhances entrepreneurial intention via self-

efficacy [2], and the indirect effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial self-efficacy is greater [11]; At the same time, the social environment can provide college students with a strong support system and foster a strong entrepreneurial atmosphere [12], high social support for entrepreneurship may enhance the positive impact of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention, thereby promoting preparatory entrepreneurial behavior [13]; subjective norms and self-efficacy influence women's entrepreneurial intentions [14]. In summary, the formation of entrepreneurial intention is influenced by the interaction of multiple factors, including individual traits, educational experiences, and social environments. Entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, and social support all impact the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. However, existing research still has three limitations: First, based on social cognitive theory, the exploration of the interaction among "individuals, behavior, and environment" in the formation path of college students' entrepreneurial intentions is still insufficient; Second, current studies generally agree that male students have significantly higher entrepreneurial intentions than female students; however, there is a relative lack of research on how to effectively cultivate entrepreneurial intentions among female college students, considering their unique social cognitive psychological characteristics; Third, empirical data updates lag behind, making it difficult to reflect the dynamic evolution of college students' entrepreneurial intentions under the dual impact of increased employment pressure in the post-pandemic era and the rise of the digital economy.

Social cognitive theory underscores the triadic interaction of "individual, behavior, and environment" [15]. This study concentrates on female college students and, drawing from social cognitive theory, establishes a three-dimensional analytical framework of "individual traits-educational empowerment-social support." Utilizing a questionnaire survey method, it uncovers the current characteristics and generative mechanisms of female college students' entrepreneurial intentions. The research not only enhances the localized interpretation of entrepreneurial intention theory but also offers empirical evidence for refining the innovation and entrepreneurship education system in

universities, enhancing policy support tools, and fostering the growth of high-quality employment hubs. It holds significant practical value in alleviating structural employment tensions and promoting economic transformation and upgrading.

### **3. Method**

This study utilized a questionnaire survey approach, distributing questionnaires to female college students across various grades and majors at thirteen universities, resulting in 667 valid responses. Within this group, there were 203 undergraduate students: 57 from the first year, 53 from the second year, 52 from the third year, and 57 from the fourth year; and 464 vocational students: 155 from the first year, 150 from the second year, and 143 from the third year. The sample distribution across grades was relatively balanced. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 11.0.

#### **3.1 Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale**

Lu et al. developed a self-efficacy measurement tool tailored for college student entrepreneurship [10], which closely aligns with the confidence of college students in their ability to succeed in entrepreneurship, making it more adaptable to the college student population. Building upon the aforementioned scale, this study developed an entrepreneurship self-efficacy scale, specifically including four items such as "I am confident in my entrepreneurial abilities," using a Likert 5-point rating. The reliability coefficient of this scale used in this study is 0.923, indicating good internal consistency.

#### **3.2 Evaluation Scale of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education in Colleges and Universities**

Based on the 5-item version of the entrepreneurship education questionnaire compiled by Guo et al. [16], the scale is designed from three dimensions: talent cultivation, interdisciplinary integration (including ideological and political education in courses), and faculty development. It consists of 9 items and uses a Likert 5-point rating scale. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.924, with reliability coefficients for the three dimensions being 0.823, 0.894, and 0.908, indicating good internal consistency within the scale.

### 3.3 Understanding the Social Support Scale

The Social Support Scale was developed by Zimet et al. [17]. The scale comprises 12 items, encompassing three dimensions: family support, friend support, and significant other support. The total score reflects the overall level of social support an individual perceives. A higher total score indicates a greater perception of social support. The  $\alpha$  coefficient for the scale is 0.946, with reliability coefficients for the three dimensions being 0.897, 0.907, and 0.871, respectively, indicating good internal consistency within the scale.

### 3.4 Entrepreneurial Intention Scale

Peng & Lu (2013) primarily measured college students' entrepreneurial intentions from aspects such as interest in entrepreneurship, expectations, preparation, and preferred occupations when constrained [10], using a Likert 5-point scale.

The scale consists of five questions, which can scientifically and effectively measure college students' entrepreneurial intentions. In this study, the reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.913, indicating good internal consistency.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Difference Test

As shown in Table 1, the independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference in entrepreneurial intention between undergraduate and junior college students. Upon comparing the means, it was determined that undergraduate students exhibited a notably higher entrepreneurial intention (mean value: 3.34) than junior college students (mean value: 3.10). However, no significant difference in entrepreneurial intention was observed among students across different grades.

**Table 1. Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Entrepreneurial Intention	Equal variances assumed	.140	.708	3.189	665	.001

### 4.2 Correlation Test

As shown in Table 2, the Pearson correlation coefficient indicates that entrepreneurial intention is highly positively correlated with self-efficacy (correlation coefficient of 0.825),

moderately positively correlated with entrepreneurial education evaluation (correlation coefficient of 0.377), and moderately positively correlated with understanding social support (correlation coefficient of 0.300).

**Table 2. Correlations**

		Self-efficacy	Entrepreneurial education evaluation	Understanding social support
Entrepreneurial Intention	Pearson Correlation	.825**	.377**	.300**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 4.3 Linear Regression

In this study, entrepreneurial intention was considered the dependent variable, with entrepreneurial education evaluation and understanding of social support being added into the stratified regression model sequentially. As indicated in Table 3, the significance of the second-level model was 0.028, which is less than 0.05, suggesting that social support moderated the influence of entrepreneurial education evaluation on entrepreneurial intention.

As indicated in Table 4, the study employs entrepreneurial education evaluation as an independent variable, self-efficacy as a mediating variable, and entrepreneurial intention as the dependent variable. Utilizing the

Bootstrap method within the Process tool, along with stepwise testing, model 4 is utilized for mediation analysis. The analysis indicates that entrepreneurial education evaluation has a significant overall impact on entrepreneurial intention. Further examination demonstrates that, after accounting for the mediating variable, the confidence interval for the direct effect of entrepreneurial education evaluation on entrepreneurial intention encompasses 0, suggesting that the direct effect is not significant. Conversely, the confidence interval for the indirect effect via the mediating path does not include 0, implying that the indirect effect of entrepreneurial education evaluation on entrepreneurial intention through self-efficacy is significant. Importantly, the indirect effect

constitutes 97.24% of the total effect (total effect ratio: 100%), whereas the direct effect constitutes only 2.76%. This suggests that the influence of entrepreneurial education evaluation

on entrepreneurial intention is almost entirely mediated by self-efficacy, thus supporting the full mediation model.

**Table 3. Correlations**

Model	UC	SC	R	Sig.	
					B
1	(Constant)	1.731	.099		.000
	Entrepreneurial education evaluation	.402	.045	.304	0.154 .000
	Understanding social support	.164	.042	.132	.000
2	(Constant)	1.721	.099		.000
	Entrepreneurial education evaluation	.406	.044	.307	.000
	Understanding social support	.175	.042	.141	0.158 .000
	Entrepreneurial education evaluation * Understanding social support	-.079	.036	-.062	.028

**Table 4. Indirect Effect Analysis**

	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Proportion
C	0.399	0.052	0.297	0.500	100.00
C'	0.011	0.035	-0.057	0.079	2.76
Indirect effect	0.388	0.045	0.298	0.475	97.24

**5. Discussion**

This study reveals the group differences and formation mechanism of female college students' entrepreneurial intention, and puts forward the following discussion based on the theoretical framework and empirical results:

Firstly, the differential impact of educational levels on entrepreneurial intentions is examined. Research findings indicate that undergraduate students exhibit significantly higher entrepreneurial intentions than their vocational college counterparts. This disparity may be attributed to the varying educational resources, knowledge reserves, and career planning orientations of these two groups. Undergraduates generally undergo more systematic theoretical education and innovation training, which could augment their capacity to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities due to the extensive and profound nature of their knowledge structure [18]. Conversely, vocational college students, bound by a training model that emphasizes practical skills, may concentrate more on skill enhancement rather than venturing into high-risk entrepreneurial endeavors. However, no significant grade-level differences were identified in this study, implying that the development of entrepreneurial intentions is more contingent upon the type of education rather than the stage of learning progression. This underscores the necessity for universities to devise entrepreneurial

intervention strategies tailored to different educational levels, offering vocational college students additional entrepreneurial incubation resources to offset any theoretical deficiencies. Secondly, the mediating role of self-efficacy is significant. There exists a strong positive correlation between entrepreneurial intention and self-efficacy, and the impact of entrepreneurial education evaluation on entrepreneurial intention is almost entirely mediated through self-efficacy, supporting the full mediation model. This outcome aligns with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which posits that an individual's belief in their own entrepreneurial capabilities is the core driving force behind action decisions. If entrepreneurial education remains at the level of knowledge transmission (such as policy promotion) without focusing on the cultivation of practical skills (such as simulated entrepreneurship and mentor feedback), it will be challenging to enhance students' self-efficacy. Consequently, universities need to optimize the evaluation system for entrepreneurial education, adopting "ability enhancement" rather than "course completion" as evaluation criteria, and reinforcing students' self-efficacy through periodic achievement feedback. Furthermore, the moderating effect of social support suggests that resource provision from families, schools, and society can amplify the positive impact of educational evaluations. For instance, supportive environments like entrepreneurship competitions

and venture capital connections can strengthen students' willingness to translate educational gains into entrepreneurial actions.

Third, the moderating effect of social support and the integration intervention pathway. Understanding the moderating effect of social support between entrepreneurship education evaluation and entrepreneurial intentions indicates that external resource provision is a key lever for activating educational outcomes. This finding aligns with the "environment-individual" interaction mechanism in social cognition theory (Bandura, 1986): even if students have high self-efficacy, their entrepreneurial intentions may still be stifled due to a lack of social support (such as funding, policies, and connections). In practice, universities need to establish an "education-support" linkage system, such as connecting entrepreneurship courses with social incubators or introducing entrepreneurs as practical mentors. Additionally, policymakers should focus on the social support gap for disadvantaged groups (such as economically disadvantaged students) and lower the barriers to entrepreneurship through special funds or entrepreneurship subsidies.

## 6. Conclusion

This study utilizes a three-dimensional analytical framework of "individual traits-educational empowerment-social support" to uncover the logic behind the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. Theoretically, it confirms the core mediating role of self-efficacy and refines the "input-output" theoretical chain of entrepreneurship education; practically, it offers targeted intervention strategies for universities and society to collaboratively enhance college students' entrepreneurial rates. However, this study is constrained by cross-sectional data, and future research could validate the long-term effects of educational interventions through longitudinal studies and include variables related to entrepreneurial behavior to examine the mechanism of intention-to-action transformation. Moreover, future research can further investigate the distinct roles of various types of social support (emotional or instrumental) to optimize resource allocation efficiency.

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