

# The Impact of Undergraduates' Entrepreneurial Motivation on Entrepreneurial Behavior: A Case Study of Jiangxi Province, China

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the relative efficiency, including 1) To study the effect of the background of people on entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior. 2) To determine the direct influence between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior. 3) To determine the intermediary role of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-efficacy between undergraduates' entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior. The samples were the current undergraduates studying at Universities in Jiangxi Province, China by contacting the Employment Departments of relevant schools, coordinating the counselors and teachers of relevant departments and arranging students to participate in the questionnaire survey. In this study, SPSS 22.0 and Amos 24.0 software were utilized for sample descriptive statistical analysis. The research results were found as follows:

Firstly, the background information of the sample and their family members had significant differences in entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial behavior.

Secondly, the various dimensions of entrepreneurial motivation had a significant impact on entrepreneurial behavior.

Thirdly, both of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention played an intermediary role in the influence of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior, and its chain also played a dual intermediary role in the influence of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Motivation; Entrepreneurial Behavior; Entrepreneurial Intention; Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

## **Introduction**

It is found that the current scholars have conducted a lot of research in the field of entrepreneurial behavior, which provides theoretical support for the impact of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior studied in this study, but there also exist some deficiencies. Therefore, this study considers that the following aspects still need a further and deep research: Firstly, based on different theoretical perspectives and continuous integration of various disciplines, the scholars sometimes draw different or even opposite conclusions on the same issue, making the discussion of entrepreneurial behavior in the field become more and more complicated. Secondly, in most of the current research on entrepreneurial behavior and other related variables, there are large differences of opinions on the choice of intermediary variables and moderating variables among scholars. When conducting related research, they have their own logical structures. But whether there are related variables? Or whether there is a consistent logical structure in the process of influencing entrepreneurial behavior? Thirdly, most scholars have only confirmed the close relationship between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior, but few scholars have discussed the mechanism of their influence in depth, systematically, and comprehensively.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To study the effect of the background of people between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior.
2. To determine the direct influence between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior.
3. To determine the mediating role of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-efficacy between undergraduates' entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior.

## **Literature Review**

### **1. Theory of Planning Behavior**

The theory of planned behavior is the basic theory in the field of entrepreneurship research. It is proved that entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial attitude are the most reliable predictors of entrepreneurial behavior by this theory, and the pre-variables of entrepreneurial intention is also studied in it, namely entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior control. Therefore, in the process of exploring the impact of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial

behavior, this study will introduce entrepreneurial intention as a leading variable of entrepreneurial behavior, and further explore the leading variable of entrepreneurial intention according to the theory of planned behavior.

## **2. Social Cognition Theory**

The theory emphasizes the interaction among the three variables of individual, environment and behavior. Applied to the field of entrepreneurial are individuals with entrepreneurial cognition, which can promote the creation of entrepreneurial behavior under the action of the entrepreneurial environment. In this study, motivation is only a kind of cognition, so the impact of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior is precisely the process of entrepreneurial cognition on entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, in this process, the entrepreneurial environment is introduced as a regulating variable to comprehensively and deeply explore the influence mechanism of entrepreneurial motivation on behavior on the basis of the interaction of the three variables.

## **3. Entrepreneurial Motivation and Entrepreneurial Behavior**

Entrepreneurship is a series of purposeful social activities (Granovetter, 1985). A number of scholars have proposed that entrepreneurial motivation has an important impact on entrepreneurial behavior (Hytti, 2010; Sanchez&Sahuquillo, 2012). Driven by entrepreneurial motivation, Individuals are more inclined to carry out entrepreneurial behavior. But few scholars discuss the intermediate influence mechanism between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior. And the starting point of the new career creation process is entrepreneurial will (Shook, 2003). Entrepreneurship is the possibility that an individual plans to create a new business and complete it in the future. Entrepreneurship is considered a psychological process. At the heart of the entrepreneurial process (Krueger, 2000), Kickul and Krueger (2004) believed that individuals with entrepreneurial aspirations had the possibility to start a new business. Without rejecting this possibility, they had entrepreneurial intention and ability to complete entrepreneurial behavior and the necessary conditions for completing entrepreneurial activities (Gregoire, Shepherd, & Amp; Shurlambert, 2010; Shane, Venkataraman, 2000).

In the 1990s, the construction of entrepreneurial self-efficacy was introduced into the field of entrepreneurship, which supplemented and developed the entrepreneurial theory. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a stronger predictive effect on entrepreneurial behavior and the possibility of entrepreneurial success. It is considered to be one of the key factors to identify potential entrepreneurs. It has been more and more widely used in the field of entrepreneurship research. Potential entrepreneurs' confidence and belief in their ability to play an entrepreneurial role,

participate in entrepreneurial activities and carry out entrepreneurial behavior is gradually becoming a sense of self-efficacy. For potential entrepreneurs, they not only need to have corresponding entrepreneurial knowledge, entrepreneurial experience and relevant entrepreneurial ability, but also need to show a high degree of confidence in their entrepreneurial ability, so as to strengthen their entrepreneurial tendency. Promote the transformation of potential entrepreneurs into actual entrepreneurs and contribute to the success of entrepreneurship.

Chen (1998) research showed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy would affect individuals' judgment of entrepreneurial opportunities and evaluation of expected benefits. Individuals with high entrepreneurial self-efficacy will judge the current situation more optimistic and positive, and can properly deal with all kinds of emergencies encountered in the process of entrepreneurship, so they are more likely to become entrepreneurs. Barbosa et al. (2007) and Urban (2006) also believed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior. However, the empirical research on this conclusion is still very limited. Among the existing studies, Tang Jing and Jiang Yanfu (2007) showed that the higher the score of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, the higher the positive evaluation of themselves, and the stronger the confidence to complete entrepreneurial activities, which promoted the development of behavior in the early stage of entrepreneurship. Similarly, a series of studies show that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a positive intermediary between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention. (Barniret al.,2011; Fuller et al.,2018; Thongpapanl &Dimov, 2015)。

Although there are many researches on entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial motivation, the influence mechanism between them needs to be further studied, especially the entrepreneurial behavior of college students in China. In particular, the mediating effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention is not enough.

## **Conceptual Framework**

This research is a research study. The researcher defines the research conceptual framework based on the theory of planning behavior theory and social cognition theory together with Entrepreneurial Motivation and Entrepreneurial Behaviour The details are as follows.

The purpose of this study was to study the impact of undergraduates' entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, undergraduates' entrepreneurial motivation (EM) was chosen as the independent variable, undergraduates' entrepreneurial behavior (EB) was chosen

as the dependent variable, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and entrepreneurial intention (EI) was chosen as the mediating variable.

According to the views of Zhang Kaijun and Lei Jiasu (2012), this paper holds that entrepreneurial motivation is composed of three dimensions: entrepreneurial mental motivation (EMM), entrepreneurial responsibility motivation (ERM) and entrepreneurial guarantee motivation (EGM) .

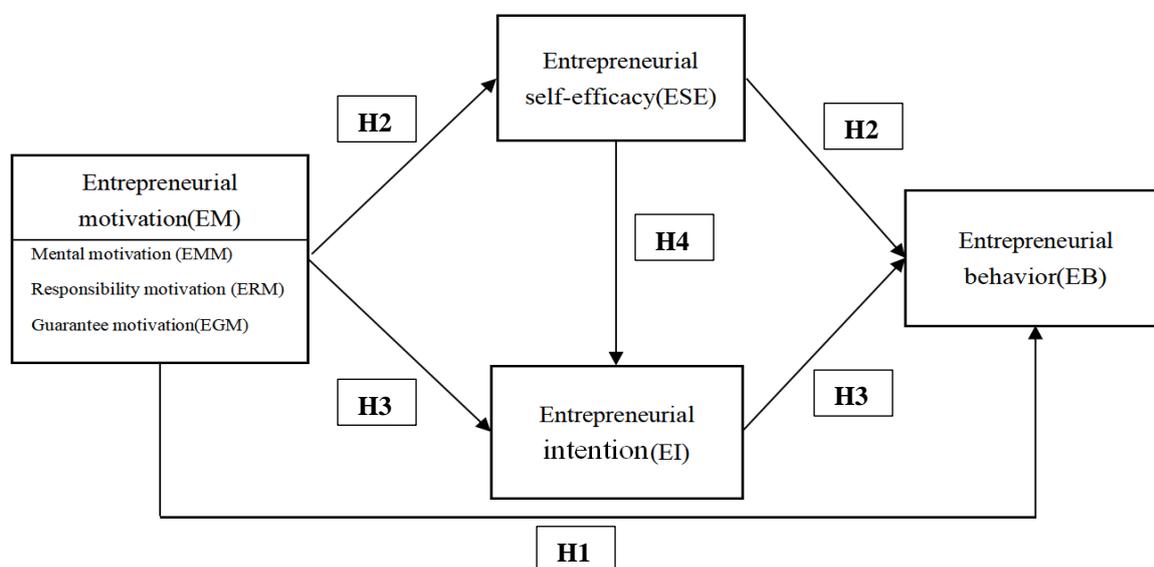


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the analysis of the literature mentioned above, the following hypothesis were assumed :

**H1:** Entrepreneurial motivation has a positive effect on entrepreneurial behavior

**H2:** Entrepreneurial self-efficacy plays an intermediary role between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior

**H3:** Entrepreneurial intention plays an intermediary role between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior

**H4:** The chain of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention plays an intermediary role in the process of entrepreneurial motivation's influence on entrepreneurial behavior.

## Research Methodology

The object of this research were college students from application-oriented universities in Jiangxi Province, China. This study distributed questionnaires by random sampling through the

questionnaire star platform from April 12, 2020 to June 11, 2020. In the questionnaire survey, 711 questionnaires were eventually recovered which 651 were valid questionnaires, and the effective questionnaire rate was 91.56%. Sample descriptive was shown in Table 1.

Almost of them were Male Gender (n=335, 51.50%), study on Science and Technology (n=231, 35.50%), on Junior Educational Level (n=239, 36.70%), and Family members had not entrepreneurial experience (n=468, 71.90%)

**Table1** Sample Characteristics

Variable	Attribute(A)	Number	Proportion
Gender	Male	335	51.5%
	Female	316	48.5%
Major	Science and Technology	231	35.5%
	Economics and Management	221	33.9%
	Medicine, Agriculture and Forestry	123	18.9%
	Literature, History, Philosophy, Law, etc.	76	11.7%
Grade	Freshman	174	26.7%
	Sophomore	136	20.9%
	Junior	239	36.7%
	Senior	102	15.7%
Family location	Rural	144	22.1%
	Urban	507	77.9%
Family members had entrepreneurial experience	Yes	183	28.1%
	No	468	71.9%

**Table 2** Measurement of Variable

Variable	Question number	Proposed by
EM	8	Zhang Kaiju and Lei Jia-yao (2012); Hou Fei et al. (2015)
ESE	19	Lucas&Cooper(2005); Tang Ming (2009)
EI	4	Phan (2000); Li Haili (2011)
EB	5	Yu Fumao and Zeng Ming (2010); Yao Xiaolian (2014)

In this research, descriptive statistics, reliability and validity test procedures, path analysis, mediating effect test, and other data analysis methods were briefly introduced. The model and hypothesis tests in this study mainly adopted path analysis of structural equation model (SEM). And bootstrap method was utilized to test the mediating effect.

## Research Result

The analysis in this research was carried out in SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 24.0 software, and the relevant results were as follows.

Objective 1. To study the effect of the background of undergraduates between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior. Pearson correlation analysis method was used to test the correlation between various variables. The analysis results were shown in Table 1. The results showed that except for family members' entrepreneurial experience and other background factors, gender, grade, major and other background factors had no significant correlation with each variable. This point has also been verified by t-test in this study.

In addition, There was correlation between various dimensions of entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior. It was preliminarily judged that there was a positive relationship between the variables in this study.

**Table 3** Pearson correlation coefficient between variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	1										
2	-0.013	1									
3	-0.019	-0.065	1								
4	0.021	.313**	.172**	1							
5	-0.042	0.042	.080*	0.004	1						
6	0.025	0.049	-0.062	-0.058	-.126**	1					
7	-0.011	0.062	-.106**	0.016	-.150**	.445**	1				
8	-0.030	0.065	-0.052	0.030	-.168**	.465**	.443**	1			
9	-0.039	0.041	-0.010	-0.027	-.160**	.464**	.481**	.453**	1		
10	0.027	-0.006	0.013	-0.058	-.171**	.486**	.473**	.479**	.531**	1	
11	0.003	0.001	-0.049	-0.063	-.301**	.458**	.454**	.462**	.468**	.527**	1

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1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      11

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Note: \* means  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* means  $p < 0.01$ .

1.Gender; 2.Major; 3.Grade;4. Family location;5.Family members had entrepreneurial experience; 6.Mental motivation; 7.Responsibility motivation; 8.Guarantee motivation; 9.Entrepreneurial self-efficacy; 10.Entrepreneurial intention; 11.Entrepreneurial Behavior

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Objective 2 To determine the direct influence between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior. The results showed that all dimensions of entrepreneurial motivation had a significant impact on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial behavior. The entrepreneurial self-efficacy had a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial behavior. The entrepreneurial intention had a positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior.

In order to analyze the effectiveness of theoretical models, recourse was made to the AMOS24.0 structural equation models (SEM) with a statistical methodology, which could establish a confirmatory approach to the analysis of theoretical structures.

**Table 4** Results of the direct effect test

Path		Non- standardized coefficient	Standardization coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	
EMM	→	EB	0.139	0.145	0.054	2.552	0.011
ERM	→	EB	0.148	0.158	0.050	2.954	0.003
EGM	→	EB	0.104	0.121	0.040	2.585	0.010
EMM	→	ESE	0.263	0.349	0.043	6.125	***
ERM	→	ESE	0.192	0.260	0.040	4.746	***
EGM	→	ESE	0.149	0.220	0.033	4.493	***
EMM	→	EI	0.155	0.186	0.045	3.405	***
ERM	→	EI	0.152	0.187	0.042	3.647	***
EGM	→	EI	0.123	0.164	0.034	3.637	***
ESE	→	EI	0.351	0.318	0.064	5.464	***
ESE	→	EB	0.179	0.141	0.078	2.290	0.022
EI	→	EB	0.306	0.266	0.063	4.862	***

Table 4 showed the results of the direct path test analysis of the structural equation model in this study. Table 1 showed the following results:

The standardized coefficient of guarantee motivation on entrepreneurial behavior was 0.121 (C.R.=2.585,  $P < 0.05$ ), indicating that guarantee motivation had a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial behavior; the standardized coefficient of mental motivation on entrepreneurial behavior was 0.145 (C.R.=2.552,  $P < 0.05$ ), indicating that mental motivation had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior; the standardized coefficient of responsibility motivation on entrepreneurial behavior was 0.158 (C.R.=2.954,  $P < 0.01$ ), indicating that responsibility motivation had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior. That meant hypothesis H1 was true.

The final standardized structure path diagram of this study was as follows:

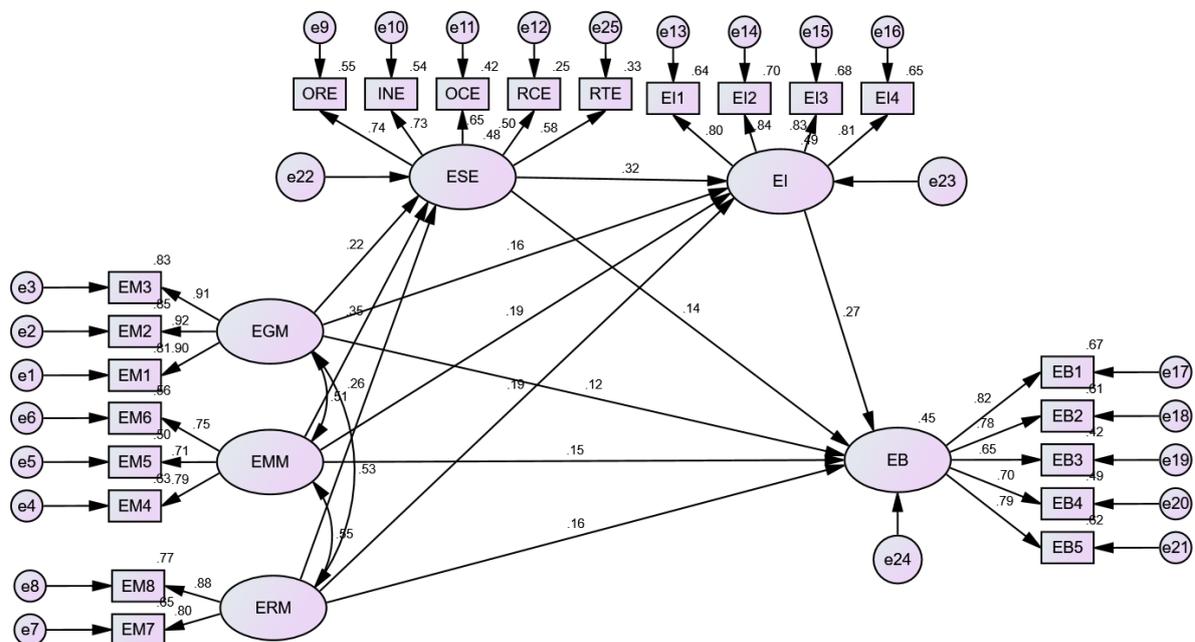


Figure 2 Structural equation model with complete sample

Objective 3 To determine the mediating role of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-efficacy between undergraduates' entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior. The result showed that both entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention played an intermediary role in the influence of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior, and the chain composed of them also played a dual intermediary role in the influence of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior.

**Table 5** Mediation effect of EI and ESE

Path	Effect value	Lower	Upper	P
EMM→EI→EB	0.050	0.012	0.110	0.008
ERM→EI→EB	0.050	0.017	0.097	0.001
EGM→EI→EB	0.044	0.015	0.086	0.001
EMM→ESE→EB	0.049	0.009	0.106	0.017
ERM→ESE→EB	0.037	0.007	0.083	0.016
EGM→ESE→EB	0.031	0.005	0.074	0.016
EGM→ESE→EI→EB	0.019	0.008	0.038	0.000
EMM→ESE→EI→EB	0.030	0.014	0.057	0.000
ERM→ESE→EI→EB	0.022	0.010	0.046	0.000

In this paper, the Bootstrap method of AMOS 24.0 software had calculated 95% confidence intervals with 5000 duplicate samples.

The indirect effect of mental motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial self-efficacy was 0.049, and the confidence interval ranged from 0.009 to 0.106, indicating that the intermediary effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy between mental motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. The indirect effect of responsibility motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial self-efficacy was 0.037, and the confidence interval ranged from 0.007 to 0.083, indicating that the intermediary effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy between responsibility motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. The indirect effect of guarantee motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial self-efficacy was 0.031, and the confidence interval ranged from 0.005 to 0.074, indicating that the intermediary effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy between guarantee motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. In conclusion, the mediation effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in relation between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. That meant hypothesis H2 was true.

The indirect effect of mental motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial intention was 0.050, and the confidence interval ranged from 0.012 to 0.110, indicating that the intermediary effect of entrepreneurial intention between mental motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. The indirect effect of responsibility motivation on entrepreneurial behavior

through entrepreneurial intention was 0.050, and the confidence interval ranged from 0.017 to 0.097, indicating that the intermediary effect of entrepreneurial intention between responsibility motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. The indirect effect of guarantee motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial intention was 0.044, and the confidence interval ranged from 0.015 to 0.086, indicating that the intermediary effect of entrepreneurial intention between guarantee motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. In conclusion, the mediation effect of entrepreneurial intention in relation between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. That meant hypothesis H3 was true.

The results showed that the dual multiple mediator effect of psychological motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention was 0.030, and the confidence interval ranged from 0.014 to 0.057, which meant that entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention had significant chain mediating effects on psychological motivation and entrepreneurial behavior.. The the double multiple mediator effect of responsibility motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention was 0.022, and the confidence interval was 0.010 ~ 0.046. which implied that the chain intermediary effect between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention in responsibility motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. The double multiple mediator effect of guarantee motivation on entrepreneurial behavior through entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention was 0.019, the confidence interval ranged from 0.008 to 0.038, which suggested that the chain intermediary effect between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention in guaranteeing motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. In conclusion, the double multiple mediator effect of entrepreneurial intention in relation between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior was significant. That meant hypothesis H4 was true.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

1. This study verified the influence mechanism and effects of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior from three aspects: guarantee motivation, mental motivation and responsibility motivation. The results showed that entrepreneurial motivation had a positive and significant impact on entrepreneurial behavior. Similar to Mitchell et al.(2007) that there was a close relationship between entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial motivation, which remained consistent. The influence coefficient of responsibility motivation on entrepreneurial behavior ( $\beta=$

0.156) and mental motivation on entrepreneurial behavior ( $\beta = 0.145$ ) were nearly not different, but they were greater than the influence coefficient of guarantee motivation on entrepreneurial behavior ( $\beta = 0.121$ ), indicating that the entrepreneurial motivation was higher than the pursuit of wealth. In this paper, there were significant positive relationship not only between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial self-efficacy of college students, but also between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial intention of college students.

There was a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial behavior of college students, and the path coefficient was 0.141 ( $P < 0.001$ ), indicating that entrepreneurial self-efficacy had a positive effect on the persistence of entrepreneurial behavior of college students. Bandura (1997) argued that self-efficacy would directly affect a particular intention and behavior of individuals. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy could better predict entrepreneurial spirit for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy could have a positive impact and promote the generation of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy could help entrepreneurs improve entrepreneurial confidence and strong entrepreneurial intention.

2. Entrepreneurial motivation could not only directly affect entrepreneurial behavior, but also affect entrepreneurial behavior through an intermediary effect. Specifically, there were two main mediating effects:

1) Entrepreneurial motivation could indirectly positively and significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior through the intermediary effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This study examined the influence mechanism of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on entrepreneurial behavior from three subdivided dimensions of guarantee motivation, mental motivation and responsibility motivation. Entrepreneurial motivation not only positively affected entrepreneurial self-efficacy, but also positively and significantly affected entrepreneurial behavior. As an intermediary transmission, entrepreneurial self-efficacy played an intermediary role in the impact of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior, which was consistent with the driving mechanism theory of intermediary effect.

2) Entrepreneurial intention played a positive and significant intermediary effect in the influence mechanism of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior. Entrepreneurial motivation could indirectly and significantly affect entrepreneurial behavior through the single intermediary effect of entrepreneurial intention. The research showed that entrepreneurial motivation had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention, which was subdivided into three

dimensions: Assurance motivation, psychological motivation and responsibility Motivation. There was a significant positive effect between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, Entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior were theoretically driven. Entrepreneurial intention played an incomplete intermediary role between entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial behavior.

3. This paper verified that the intermediary effect of serial intermediary composed of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention in the influence mechanism of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurial behavior.

4. In addition, college students with entrepreneurial experience in their family members had higher entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial behavior and perception of environment than those without entrepreneurial experience. Family members with entrepreneurial experience would make college students have entrepreneurial consciousness earlier, and the family factor would carry out potential experience education for them, accumulate entrepreneurial relationship network, and have an impact on their own entrepreneurial intention, behavior and macro policy perception.

## **Suggestions**

As there is no sample data collected from college students in other provinces, the selection of samples has certain regional limitations. Therefore, it suggests that the scope of the survey object is further expanded so that the study of the problem is more universal in the future research.

This paper only selects entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a mediating variable. However, in the whole process, the moderating variable is far more than the entrepreneurial environment, and may also be adjusted by the personal characteristics and resource endowment of entrepreneurs. In addition, the relationship between the dimensions of each factor can also be deeply discussed.

## **New Knowledge from this research**

As previously analyzed, the recommendations were put forward as follows:

1. The establishment of a good entrepreneurial team will have a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial motivation, which can promote students' entrepreneurial motivation.

2. Provide financial support and insurance services, reduce the risk of college students to start their own business, enhance the guarantee motivation.

3. We should strengthen the sense of social responsibility education of college students, by encouraging college students to participate in public welfare activities and social practice activities, develop good ideological and moral quality and cultivate social responsibility.

4. Universities should pay attention to the cultivation of college students' comprehensive quality, improve their comprehensive ability and self-confidence through social practice and quality-expansion, and cultivate their self-efficacy.

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