

ผลกระทบของการเรียนรู้การเป็นผู้ประกอบการ ต่อเจตนาารมณ์ทางการเป็นผู้ประกอบการ: บทบาทของ ความเชื่อมั่นในความสามารถในการเป็นผู้ประกอบการ เป็นตัวกลาง

The impact of entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial intention: The mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy

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ศ่าว เซีย*

Zhao Xia*

ศิริเดช คำสุพรหม**

Siridech Kumsuprom**

*วิทยาลัยนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยธุรกิจบัณฑิต ประเทศไทย; วิทยาลัยศิลปะและวิทยาศาสตร์ कुनหมิง ประเทศจีน

*International College, Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand; College of Arts and Sciences, Kunming, China

*Email: 345283915@qq.com

**วิทยาลัยนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยธุรกิจบัณฑิต ประเทศไทย

**International College, Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand

**Email: siridech.kum@dpu.ac.th

บทคัดย่อ

ภายใต้กรอบทฤษฎีการเรียนรู้ทางสังคม (Social Cognitive Theory) งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาผลกระทบของการเรียนรู้การเป็นผู้ประกอบการต่อเจตนาเริ่มต้นในการประกอบการและบทบาทตัวกลางของการมีความสามารถในการประกอบการด้วยตนเอง การศึกษานี้ใช้การสำรวจแบบสอบถามจากนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนในมณฑลยูนนาน ประเทศจีน และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยการทดสอบความแปรปรวนที่เกิดจากวิธีการเดียวกัน (CMV) การวิเคราะห์ความสัมพันธ์ และการสร้างโมเดลสมการเชิงโครงสร้าง (SEM) ผลการวิเคราะห์พบว่า 1. การเรียนรู้ด้านการประกอบการมีผลบวกต่อเจตนาเริ่มต้นในการประกอบการของนักศึกษา 2. การมีความสามารถในการประกอบการด้วยตนเองมีบทบาทเป็นตัวกลางระหว่างการเรียนรู้ด้านการประกอบการและเจตนาเริ่มต้นในการประกอบการ การศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่า การเสริมสร้างความสามารถในการประกอบการด้วยตนเองช่วยส่งเสริมเจตนาเริ่มต้นในการประกอบการ โดยการเรียนรู้จากโรงเรียนและสังคมมีผลมากกว่าการเรียนรู้จากครอบครัว ดังนั้นผู้กำหนดนโยบายและผู้สอนควรสร้างโอกาสในการเรียนรู้ด้านการประกอบการเพื่อเพิ่มความสามารถและส่งเสริมเจตนาเริ่มต้นในการประกอบการของนักศึกษา

คำสำคัญ: ทฤษฎีการเรียนรู้ทางสังคม การเรียนรู้การเป็นผู้ประกอบการ ความเชื่อมั่นในความสามารถของตนเอง ในการเป็นผู้ประกอบการ ความตั้งใจในการเป็นผู้ประกอบการ

Abstract

Grounded within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory, this paper endeavors to investigate the potential impact of entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial intention and what may be the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This study collected preliminary data through a questionnaire survey of university students at nine private universities in Yunnan, China, and employed Common Method Variance (CMV) analysis, correlation analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships and analyze the mediating effects. The key findings from the data analysis can be summarized as follows: 1. Entrepreneurial learning appears to significantly enhance students' entrepreneurial intention; 2. The analysis indicates that entrepreneurial self-efficacy seems to fully mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial intention. This study highlights that enhancing students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy promotes entrepreneurial intention. School-based and social entrepreneurial learning have a greater impact than family-based learning, emphasizing the role of school and social environments. Policymakers and educators should create more entrepreneurial learning opportunities to boost students' self-efficacy and foster entrepreneurial intentions.

Keywords: Social Cognitive Theory, Entrepreneurial Learning, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Entrepreneurial Intention

Introduction

Within this broader analytical framework, entrepreneurial intention (EI) has long been regarded as what appears to represent a crucial antecedent of entrepreneurial behavior, and as such, it continues to draw substantial scholarly attention (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2024). Given the multifaceted nature of this evidence, what the scholarship appears to suggest is that although research has expanded, a unified theoretical foundation seems to remain somewhat lacking (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Among existing conceptualizations, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) appears to be widely applied, tending to point toward the influence of individual attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms on EI (Ajzen, 2011). In the Chinese context, what seems to emerge from recent findings is the suggestion that students' attitudes and perceptions of control may be major factors in shaping intention (Sharma et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the formation of entrepreneurial intention is not merely a rational cognitive process, but is profoundly driven by individuals' intrinsic sense of control and perceived capability (Lyu et al., 2024). What also appears significant in this context is the growing recognition of entrepreneurial learning (EL) as what might be characterized as an important contributor to EI. Such programs often include experiential practice, peer collaboration, and learning from failure—each apparently playing a role in enhancing intention (Chen, 2024; Li et al., 2025). From this particular interpretive perspective, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), rooted in Social Cognitive Theory, seems to serve as a key conceptual bridge between EL and EI. EL provides evidence that may support a positive influence on ESE, which in turn seemingly shapes EI through mechanisms related to self-belief and motivation (Duong & Vu, 2024).

Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory, this study, from this particular interpretive perspective, attempts to adopt what might be characterized as a predominantly student-centric view of entrepreneurial learning in order to construct what appears to be a largely systematic explanatory framework. Given the complexity of the theoretical relationships examined, the investigation suggests that entrepreneurial self-efficacy may serve as a potential mediating factor in the formation of entrepreneurial intention. The findings, within this broader analytical framework, appear to not only enhance the understanding of this potential pathway but also provide evidence that may offer targeted insights into specific aspects of entrepreneurship education design. What appears to follow from this analysis, therefore, is what seems to constitute a potential contribution toward enhancing the overall effectiveness of entrepreneurial learning and, in light of these considerations, also seems to point toward what may be considered potentially new strategies for fostering such intentions, a finding that appears to warrant further interpretive consideration.

Research Objectives

This study examines how entrepreneurial learning influences entrepreneurial intention among students in private universities in Yunnan, China, with entrepreneurial self-efficacy—grounded in Social Cognitive Theory—serving as a key mediating factor:

H1: The entrepreneurial learning experiences of students at private universities in Yunnan, China, significantly enhance their entrepreneurial intention.

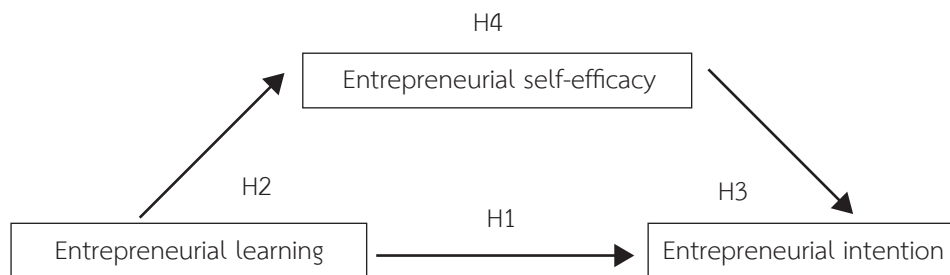
H2: The entrepreneurial learning experiences of students at private universities in Yunnan, China, significantly enhance their entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

H3: The entrepreneurial self-efficacy of students at private universities in Yunnan, China, significantly boosts their entrepreneurial intention.

H4: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy serves as a mediator in the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial intention among students at private universities in Yunnan, China.

Figure 1

Research Conceptual Framework



Relevant Concepts

Entrepreneurial Learning

In this study, and in light of these methodological considerations, entrepreneurial learning is conceptualized following (Huang et al., 2023) as what seems to constitute a dynamic process where individuals apparently develop new understandings while identifying and acting on entrepreneurial opportunities. It also seemingly encompasses the organization and management of entrepreneurial ventures.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Drawing on the perspective of (Liñán & Chen, 2009), entrepreneurial intention tends to be summarized as follows: an individual's social capital seems to lend support to the idea that it influences entrepreneurial intention through its apparent impact on perceived desirability and perceived feasibility.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Within this broader analytical framework, this study adopts the definition of entrepreneurial self-efficacy initially proposed by (Wilson et al., 2007), which appears to characterize it as an individual's belief in their capability to successfully accomplish a range of entrepreneurial tasks. It seemingly represents what could be described as one's perceived competence in launching and managing a business venture. In this specific context, therefore, the term is used to assess what appears to be university students' confidence as it relates to their entrepreneurial intentions.

Research methods

Research Subjects

The present research targets students from nine private universities in Yunnan Province, China, using convenience sampling to collect initial data. The survey was administered via Wenjuanxing, with faculty assistance in distribution through QQ and WeChat during students' non-class hours.

Procedure

This study utilized SPSS and AMOS statistical software to conduct an empirical data analysis, which was implemented in two sequential stages. In the preliminary (pilot) stage, item analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and reliability testing were employed to evaluate the psychometric properties of the measurement instrument, including item validity and internal consistency. A total of 195 pilot questionnaires were distributed. Following a rigorous screening and data-cleaning process, questionnaires with incomplete responses, abnormal answer patterns, or logical inconsistencies were excluded, resulting in 168 valid responses and a valid response rate of 71.4%.

In order to evaluate item discrimination, the top 27% of total scores were designated as the high-score group, while the bottom 27% were classified as the low-score group, and independent samples t-tests were conducted. The results indicated that all items met the criterion of a C.R. value greater than 3 (Carmines & McIver, 1981), with statistical significance at $p < .001$, and item-total correlation coefficients exceeding the .400 threshold (Wu, 2003). Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall scale was higher than that obtained after deleting any single item, confirming the stability of the scale. These findings demonstrate that all items possessed satisfactory discrimination and reliability, with no need for deletion.

The exploratory factor analysis is a pattern suggesting the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure surpassed the recommended threshold of .800, while Bartlett's test of sphericity was also found to be statistically significant ($p < .001$). Within this analytical framework, the cumulative explained variance seemed to reach 77.592%, ostensibly surpassing the 50% benchmark. What the evidence also appears to reveal is that factor loadings for virtually

all items met or exceeded the .400 standard (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988), which tends to point toward what appears to be substantially robust construct validity.

In the second stage, the formal survey was administered and analyzed. A total of approximately 972 formal questionnaires were distributed via Wenjuanxing. After removing 202 invalid responses, 770 valid questionnaires were retained, yielding an effective response rate of 79.22%. Subsequent data analysis included assessments for common method bias, Pearson correlation analysis, structural equation modeling, and hypothesis testing to examine the proposed research framework.

Measurement Tools

Entrepreneurial Learning Scale.

The Entrepreneurial Learning Scale employed in this investigation appears to be predominantly based on what seems to be the scale developed by (Huang et al., 2023). What the scale tends to suggest, therefore, is a structure that ostensibly consists of three dimensions: That might be characterized as School Entrepreneurial Learning (4 items), what appears to represent Social Entrepreneurial Learning (4 items), and what seems to constitute Family Entrepreneurial Learning (4 items), collectively comprising what appears to be a total of 12 items. Within this broader analytical framework, and considering the nuanced nature of these findings, the scale apparently adopts what appears to be a 5-point Likert measurement approach. The Cronbach's Alpha values for the three dimensions seem to range from .885 to .941, which appears to tend to suggest a good degree of reliability.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Scale.

The Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Scale employed in this particular study was adapted from the instrument originally developed by (Wilson et al., 2007). This scale, what might be characterized as a single-dimension instrument, is composed of 6 items. The measurement approach uses a 5-point Likert scale. The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was .92, What this seems to suggest is a good level of instrument reliability.

Entrepreneurial Intention Scale.

The Entrepreneurial Intention Scale utilized in this research was developed by (Liñán & Chen, 2009). It appears to be a single-dimensional scale that contains 6 items. The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale. A higher score seems to generally indicate a stronger level of entrepreneurial intention.

Results and Discussion

Testing for Common Method Bias

Given the nature of the data collection, to test for potential common method variance (CMV), both Harman's single-factor test and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted. The findings indicate that the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results

suggest no single factor accounted for more than 50% of the total variance, implying that the likelihood of CMV being a significant issue is low (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The CFA compared a single-factor model with a multi-factor model. The analysis tends to support, as shown in Table1, is that the multi-factor model seemed to provide a substantially better fit. This appears to lend support to what may represent a conclusion that CMV does not seem to affect the results in any major way.

Table 1

Comparison Analysis of AMOS Single-Factor and Multi-Factor Models

Models	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δdf	p
Single-Factor	5058. 854	252	20. 075	4458. 762	10	<.001
Multi-Factor	600. 092	242	2. 480			

Note. This table presents a comparative analysis between the single-factor and multi-factor models, with data sourced from the organization of this study.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Within this broader analytical framework, the correlation coefficients between the variables ranged from approximately .497 to .700. These were all statistically significant and did not appear to exceed .800. What this tends to indicate is that there are ostensibly no particularly high correlations and, consequently, no seemingly serious multicollinearity issues (Dormann et al., 2013). Therefore, is that structural equation modeling can presumably be used for further testing of the interrelationships and impacts among the variables.

Table 2

Summary Table of Pearson Correlation Analysis for Each Variable

Variable (Dimension)	Items	Correlation Coefficient				
		1	2	3	4	5
1. School EL(EL1)	4	1				
2. Social EL(EL2)	4	.700**	1			
3. Family EL(EL3)	4	.541**	.569**	1		
4. ESE	6	.569**	.581**	.497**	1	
5. EI	6	.545**	.548**	.518**	.592**	1

Note. 1. This table presents the correlation analysis among the variables, with data compiled by the present study.

2. **p<0.01

Structural Equation Model Construction

Overall Model Fit Test

To assess model fit, a structural equation model (SEM) with three variables was ostensibly constructed using AMOS. Within this broader analytical framework, maximum likelihood estimation appears to have been applied to data from valid questionnaire responses. The results appeared to tend to suggest a good fit. Specifically, the absolute fit indices seemed to generally indicate strong performance: RMR=.026, SRMR=.023, RMSEA=.035, GFI=.971, and AGFI=.960. Furthermore, the incremental fit indices (NFI=.979, RFI=.975, IFI=.990, TLI=.988, CFI=.990) all appeared to exceed the .900 threshold. The parsimony indices (PNFI=.811, PGFI=.704) also seemed to meet the recommended criteria. What appears to follow from this analysis is that the model appeared to provide evidence that may support a good fit, seemingly lending support for further analysis of structural relationships and hypothesis testing (Watkins, 2018).

Table 3

Summary of Structural Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Fit Criterion	Test Result	Fit Assessment
RMR	<.080	.026	Fit
SRMR	<.080	.023	Fit
RMSEA	<.080	.035	Fit
GFI	>.800	.971	Fit
AGFI	>.800	.960	Fit
NFI	>.900	.979	Fit
RFI	>.900	.975	Fit
IFI	>.900	.990	Fit
TLI	>.900	.988	Fit
CFI	>.900	.990	Fit
PNFI	>.500	.811	Fit
PGFI	>.500	.704	Fit

Note. This table presents the goodness-of-fit test results of the structural model, with data compiled by the present study.

Path Hypothesis Testing

Findings suggest an opportunity to employ SEM to investigate the relationships between entrepreneurial learning, self-efficacy, and intentions among university students in private higher education institutions in Yunnan, China. What appears to warrant further interpretive consideration is the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, with the hypotheses proposed in this study being tested accordingly. The data seems to suggest is that the path coefficients between the variables were apparently. The path coefficient of entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial intention is .506 ($p<.001$) meaning higher entrepreneurial learning leads to stronger entrepreneurial intention. The path coefficient of entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial self-efficacy is .721 ($p<.001$) showing that higher entrepreneurial learning increases entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The path coefficient of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention is .275 ($p<.001$) which means that higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy results in higher entrepreneurial intention. This pattern seems to suggest that the proposed research hypotheses appear to be largely confirmed.

Table 4

Summary of SEM Path Coefficients

Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
H1 (EL→EI)	.506***	.074	9.047	.000
H2 (EL→ESE)	.721***	.066	16. 128	.000

Note. 1. This table presents the path coefficient test results of the structural equation model, with data compiled by the present study.

2. *** $p<.001$

Mediation Effect Analysis

Preacher and Hayes (2008) this study seems to have employed the Bootstrap method (with what appears to be 5,000 resamples and a 95% CI) to test the mediating roles of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and resilience between entrepreneurial learning and intention. As appears to be suggested in Table 5 and Figure 2, In regards to the total indirect effects, the estimated indirect effect of entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurial self-efficacy is .198, indicating that entrepreneurial learning not only directly influences entrepreneurial intention but also has an indirect effect through entrepreneurial self-efficacy. In regards to the total effects, the estimated total effect of entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial intention is .704, further supporting the significant impact of entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial intention. The evidence suggests that entrepreneurial learning influences intention both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy.

Table 5

Mediation Analysis Table

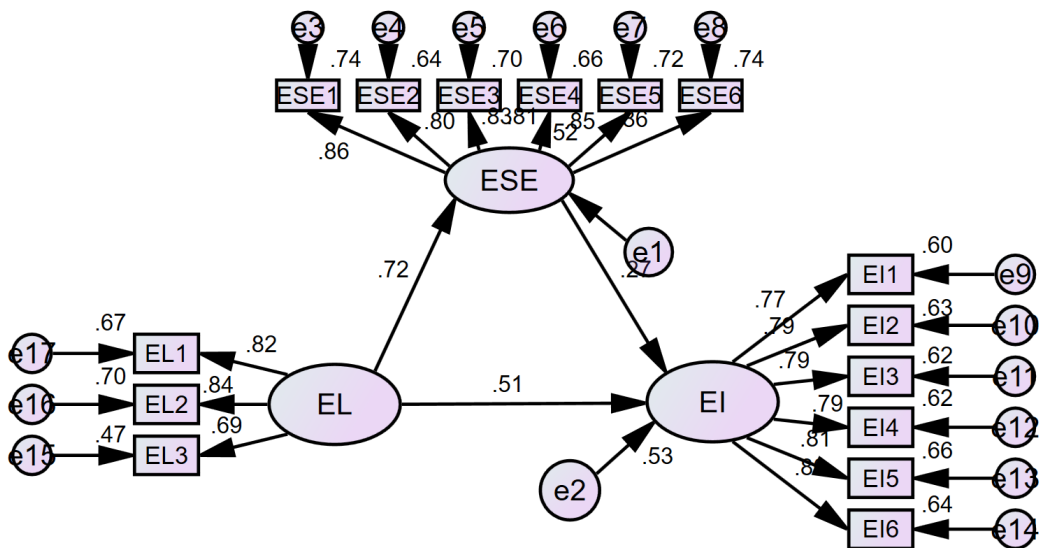
Path	Estimate	S.E.	95% (Lower)	95% (Upper)	p
EL→EI (Direct Effect)	.506***	.074	.404	.619	.000
EL→EI (Indirect Effect)	.198***	.042	.120	.527	.000
EL→EI (Total Effect)	.704***	.066	.651	.754	.000

Note. 1. This table presents the results of the mediation effect test, with data compiled from this study

2. ***p<.001

Figure 2

Structural Equation Model Coefficient



Findings and Discussion

This study, grounded in the framework of Social Cognitive Theory, aims to explore the potential impact of entrepreneurial learning on universities students' entrepreneurial intention. The findings suggest that entrepreneurial learning has a significant positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intention. As students continuously receive positive feedback and recognition of their abilities through entrepreneurial learning, they are more willing to consider entrepreneurship as a career choice. Ngah and Osman (2017) also supported the study of Malaysian university students, highlighting the applicability of this study's conclusions in specific cultural contexts. This study categorizes entrepreneurial learning into school-based,

social, and family-based types. The results show that all three types positively influence students' entrepreneurial intention, with school-based and social entrepreneurial learning having a stronger impact. A possible reason for this is that, through entrepreneurial learning, students not only acquire entrepreneurial knowledge but also gain exposure to more entrepreneurial opportunities through social practice, effectively stimulating entrepreneurial intention (Palma-Ruiz et al., 2013).

Entrepreneurial learning in Yunnan Province's private universities, has a notably positive effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Specifically, the results of this exploration, based upon a sample from private universities in Yunnan Province, tally with previous studies' conclusions, pointing out that entrepreneurial learning positively impacts entrepreneurial self-efficacy, manifesting a substantial positive relationship. This finding aligns with the research conclusions of (Fayolle, 2013; Lux et al., 2020; Palma-Ruiz et al., 2013) pointed out, entrepreneurial learning enhances individuals' entrepreneurial skills and psychological resilience, equipping learners with the ability to cope with entrepreneurial challenges, thereby significantly improving entrepreneurial self-efficacy. A possible reason for this is that, in recent years, private universities in Yunnan have actively promoted the development of entrepreneurship education programs. Through course offerings, simulated entrepreneurial competitions, and project incubation, students are able to improve their cognitive abilities and skills through hands-on learning, thereby enhancing their confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities.

The structural equation model confirms that entrepreneurial self-efficacy plays a central role in forming universities students' entrepreneurial intentions. Self-efficacy, as a core element of social cognitive theory, reflects confidence in identifying opportunities and solving problems (Nwosu et al., 2022). Higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy leads to greater confidence in overcoming challenges and stronger entrepreneurial intentions (Pihie & Bagheri, 2013; Zhao et al., 2005). This study's findings align with this consensus, showing that enhancing self-efficacy increases students' confidence and willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities, thereby strengthening their entrepreneurial intentions.

Within this broader analytical framework, this study also hypothesized that entrepreneurial self-efficacy appears to potentially mediate what might be characterized as the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial intention. Prior research tends to point toward what appears to be a dual role for entrepreneurial learning, suggesting it may not only directly influence entrepreneurial intention but also seems to indirectly enhance it, seemingly by boosting self-efficacy (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Lux et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial learning, by improving individuals' entrepreneurial skills and self-efficacy, can effectively drive the formation of entrepreneurial intention. By providing practical entrepreneurial tasks and simulated exercises, individuals can test their entrepreneurial abilities in practice, enhance their confidence through continuous learning and adjustment,

and ultimately develop a more determined entrepreneurial intention. What seems to emerge from this evidence, in other words, and given the complexity of these theoretical relationships, is that entrepreneurial learning ostensibly tends to suggest an enhancement of what might be characterized as individuals' entrepreneurial confidence. What appears to follow from this, in turn, is a tendency to lend support to what may represent the formation of entrepreneurial intention in substantially the majority of cases. What seems especially noteworthy about these findings, particularly within this broader analytical framework, is that entrepreneurial learning appears to extend beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, but also seems to involve what appears to represent growth and what tends to be the accumulation of confidence through practice. Given the complexity of these theoretical relationships, the data suggests that this process provides substantial support for the formation and development of entrepreneurial intention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper explores the issues of entrepreneurial learning, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intention among universities students in private universities. The study attempts to explore the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial intention through an in-depth analysis of explanatory variable, entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The research findings are as follows: Entrepreneurial learning has a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention among universities students in private universities in Yunnan Province, China. Entrepreneurial learning has been validated across three dimensions: school-based learning, social learning, and family-based learning. While school-based and social learning have a greater impact than family-based learning, all three have a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. Additionally, entrepreneurial self-efficacy plays a mediating role in the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial intention. Students gain practical entrepreneurial skills and experience through activities, family influences, and personal learning, which effectively enhance their entrepreneurial confidence, thereby promoting the formation of entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, it is recommended that educational institutions and policymakers adopt a more systematic approach to the entrepreneurial learning paradigm, forming an organic combination of entrepreneurial learning, family education, and social learning. This approach will improve the effectiveness of entrepreneurial learning among students. Emphasis should be placed on the interaction between individual learning and the social environment, focusing on the psychological impact of entrepreneurship on students' entrepreneurial activities. Enhancing students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy will help foster entrepreneurial intention and create a supportive environment that strengthens the formation of students' entrepreneurial intention.

This study primarily focuses on universities students in private universities in Yunnan Province, China. Future research could consider expanding to other regions, especially for cross-cultural comparisons in an international context. By comparing the effects of entrepreneurial learning in different cultural and social backgrounds, the global applicability and limitations of entrepreneurial learning can be further validated. Given that the formation of what might be characterized as entrepreneurial intention appears to be a highly dynamic process, what seems to warrant further consideration is the potentially evolving relationship between entrepreneurial learning, self-efficacy, and intention. Future studies might, therefore, explore this through longitudinal tracking surveys. What also appears significant, more specifically, is how future research could examine the kinds of challenges and changes universities students may typically face during this process and how these factors seem to influence their entrepreneurial intentions at various stages.

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