International Journal of Management, Accounting, Governance and Education
2025, Volume 1, Issue 2

Rural Entrepreneurship Intention Among College Students: A Systematic Review of Push-Pull Factors, Resource Endowments, and the Moderating Role of Entrepreneurship Education

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ABSTRACT

This systematic review examines what drives rural entrepreneurship intention among college students in China's rural revitalization context. It draws on push-pull theory and resource endowment theory. Key factors include employment obstacles, city belonging, government support, role models, networking ability, and self-efficacy. Entrepreneurship education plays a central moderating role. It strengthens pull factors and resource effects, and weakens the negative impact of city attachment and job barriers. Rural entrepreneurial intention results from interactions among environmental pressure, institutional incentives, psychological resources, and education. Employment obstacles act as push factors. Government support and role models work as pull factors. These effects depend on city belonging, networking, and self-efficacy. Entrepreneurship education helps students interpret and use external opportunities. This review offers an integrated framework covering structural and individual factors. It provides a basis for future research and practical guidance for policy and education.

Keywords: rural entrepreneurship intention, push-pull theory, resource endowment theory, entrepreneurship education, rural revitalization

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of rural entrepreneurship among college students has attracted considerable scholarly attention. This interest has grown against the backdrop of global economic restructuring, rising youth unemployment, and strategic rural revitalization initiatives (Wang & Zhang, 2025). These phenomena are particularly evident in transitioning economies such as China (Yu et al., 2025). Urban labor markets have become increasingly saturated and competitive. Consequently, university graduates face mounting employment obstacles (Mensah et al., 2023). These pressures compel them to explore alternative career pathways beyond traditional urban employment (Huang et al., 2024).

At the same time, several developments have transformed rural areas. Government policies actively promote rural development (Moeller, 2025). Technological advances enable remote work and digital entrepreneurship(Hamzah & Othman, 2023) . Changing attitudes toward career fulfillment have also played a role(López-Núñez et al., 2022) . These factors collectively shift the perception of rural areas from career backwaters to viable entrepreneurial destinations (Song et al., 2025). This combination of push and pull forces positions rural entrepreneurship as a strategically significant phenomenon. Its implications extend to regional economic development,

graduate employment outcomes, and broader societal goals such as poverty alleviation and balanced urbanization (Yue et al., 2026).

Despite growing research interest, the literature on college students' rural entrepreneurial intention remains fragmented across theoretical perspectives and empirical contexts (Li et al., 2023). There is limited synthesis of the complex mechanisms through which various factors interact to shape entrepreneurial decision-making (Far et al., 2026). Some studies have examined individual determinants in isolation (Melhado et al., 2023). For example, researchers have focused on entrepreneurial self-efficacy or government support alone. However, there is a pressing need for integrated frameworks (Qin et al., 2026). Such frameworks should capture the interplay between environmental pressures, institutional incentives, psychological resources, and educational interventions (Xie & Wang, 2025).

Moreover, the role of entrepreneurship education as a moderating mechanism has received insufficient attention in previous reviews (Chirinda et al., 2024). This mechanism can fundamentally reshape how students respond to both constraints and opportunities (Li et al., 2023). This gap is particularly significant given the rapid expansion of entrepreneurship education programs in Chinese universities (Udekwe & Iwu, 2024). These programs have considerable potential to influence students' career trajectories (Xu et al., 2025).

The present systematic review addresses these gaps. It synthesizes recent theoretical and empirical developments in the study of college students' rural entrepreneurial intention, with a focus on the Chinese context (Bao et al., 2022). The review draws on push-pull theory and resource endowment theory as organizing frameworks. It examines six key determinants. These are employment obstacles (push factor), sense of belonging to the city (inhibiting factor), government support and entrepreneurial role models (pull factors), and entrepreneurial networking capability and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (resource endowment factors).

Critically, this review positions entrepreneurship education as a moderating mechanism. This mechanism can enhance the positive effects of pull factors and resource endowments (Dammicco & Diaz-Zagarra, 2025). It can also mitigate the negative influences of employment obstacles and urban attachment(Xian-zhou et al., 2024) .

By integrating these diverse streams of research, this paper contributes to the entrepreneurial intention literature in three ways. First, it offers a comprehensive synthesis of the multiple determinants of rural entrepreneurial intention (Malak & Qassim, 2025). Second, it identifies entrepreneurship education as a key moderator that can transform the relationship between antecedent factors and entrepreneurial intention (Tisu et al., 2023). Third, it provides a theoretically grounded framework. This framework is designed to guide future empirical research and inform policy interventions.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 Push-Pull Theory

Push-pull theory was originally formulated by Ravenstein (1885) to explain population migration. Over time, it has evolved into a versatile framework for understanding human decision-making across diverse domains(Hamzah & Othman, 2023) . These domains include labor mobility, tourism, consumer behavior, and increasingly, entrepreneurship (Song et al., 2025). The theory posits that individual decisions are shaped by the interaction of two categories of forces. Push factors are negative environmental pressures that individuals seek to escape (Huang et al., 2024). Pull factors are positive attractions that draw individuals toward a particular destination or activity (Lü et al., 2025).

In the entrepreneurial context, push factors typically include economic pressures, employment difficulties, and limited career prospects in existing pathways (Wang et al., 2024). Pull factors encompass perceived opportunities, supportive policies, and attractive conditions that make entrepreneurship appealing (Chen et al., 2024).

Contemporary applications of push-pull theory to entrepreneurship research have expanded beyond the original migration framework (Huang et al., 2024). Recent studies incorporate psychological and social dimensions. These dimensions condition how individuals respond to

environmental pressures and opportunities (Chirinda et al., 2024). Scholars increasingly recognize that push and pull forces do not operate in isolation(Huang et al., 2025) . Instead, these forces are filtered through individual perceptions, capabilities, and social contexts (Gao & Zhang, 2024).

For instance, the same employment obstacle may serve as a powerful push factor for students with high entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Valencia et al., 2025). However, it may discourage rather than motivate those lacking confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities (Antončić & Antončič, 2023). Similarly, the attractiveness of government support programs depends on students' awareness of these programs. It also depends on their capacity to navigate bureaucratic procedures (Lü et al., 2023). This recognition of conditional mechanisms has enriched the theoretical framework. It emphasizes the interaction between structural incentives and individual agency (Çokgez & İnce, 2025).

In the context of rural entrepreneurship among college students, push-pull theory provides a compelling lens for understanding career decision-making (Huang et al., 2024). This framework helps explain how urban employment pressures and rural opportunity structures jointly influence students' choices (Cook et al., 2024). The theory suggests that students' rural entrepreneurial intention emerges from the balance between push and pull factors. Push factors include employment obstacles and urban job market saturation (Xu et al., 2025). Pull factors include government support, entrepreneurial role models, and perceived opportunities in rural areas (Dirksmeier, 2025).

Importantly, push-pull theory also accommodates the role of place attachment and identity factors (Galleguillos-Torres & Grêt-Regamey, 2025). This is evidenced by the incorporation of sense of belonging to the city as a variable. This variable can moderate the influence of both push and pull forces (Prasannath et al., 2024).

2.2 Resource Endowment Theory

Resource endowment theory originates from classical economics and comparative advantage studies. It provides a complementary perspective to push-pull theory. The theory emphasizes that the type, quantity, and configuration of resources held by individuals fundamentally influence their decision-making processes and behavioral outcomes (Çokgez & İnce, 2025).

In entrepreneurship research, resource endowment theory explains why individuals with similar motivations may diverge in their entrepreneurial actions. Those endowed with greater or better-aligned resources are more capable of converting entrepreneurial intention into action (Hair et al., 2021). Conversely, those lacking key resources are constrained in their capacity to act on their aspirations (Yue et al., 2026).

The theory distinguishes between internal and external endowments. These two categories jointly shape entrepreneurial capacity (Gao & Zhang, 2024). Internal endowments include personal resources. Examples are entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial networking capability, professional knowledge, and psychological capital (Teodoro & Bernadó-Mansilla, 2025). External endowments encompass environmental resources. These include government support, entrepreneurial education, access to mentors, and institutional infrastructure (Ferreira et al., 2022). Both types of endowments influence not only aspirations but also the feasibility and sustainability of entrepreneurial action. They thereby determine students' eventual decisions to pursue rural entrepreneurship (Huang et al., 2024).

Critically, resource endowment theory highlights that resources are not static. They can be developed and transformed through educational interventions and experiential learning (Xu et al., 2025). This dynamic perspective is particularly relevant for understanding the role of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education functions simultaneously as a resource and as a mechanism for resource development (Lü et al., 2025). By providing knowledge, skills, and networking opportunities, entrepreneurship education can enhance students' internal endowments. It can also improve their capacity to leverage external resources effectively (Chen et al., 2024). This insight positions entrepreneurship education as a transformative intervention(Homer et al., 2026) . Such an intervention can alter the resource configuration

available to students (Song & Levine, 2024). It thereby influences their entrepreneurial intention and behavior.

3. KEY DETERMINANTS OF RURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

3.1 Employment Obstacles as a Push Factor

Employment obstacles encompass structural, personal, and social barriers that university students encounter during the job search process. These barriers include labor market imbalances, skill mismatches, lack of work experience, and institutional discrimination (Walton et al., 2023). Recent research consistently conceptualizes employment obstacles as a significant push factor. This factor drives students toward alternative career pathways, including rural entrepreneurship (Yue et al., 2026). In economies experiencing rapid higher education expansion, graduates increasingly face difficulties securing stable employment that matches their academic backgrounds. This situation heightens their perception of employment insecurity. It also encourages consideration of entrepreneurial alternatives (Xu et al., 2025).

The relationship between employment obstacles and entrepreneurial intention operates through multiple mechanisms. First, labor market saturation and high competition for desirable positions create necessity-driven motivations. These motivations make entrepreneurship appear as a viable escape route from unemployment or underemployment (J. C. S., 2024). Second, professional mismatches between academic majors and job requirements reduce employment satisfaction (Yue et al., 2026). This reduction increases the appeal of self-employment opportunities where graduates can apply their skills more directly (Antončić & Antončič, 2023). Third, employment obstacles may trigger cognitive reappraisal processes. Through these processes, students reinterpret rural areas as opportunity-rich environments rather than career backwaters. This reinterpretation is particularly likely when supported by government policies and digital platforms (Huang et al., 2024).

However, recent studies emphasize that the impact of employment obstacles on entrepreneurial intention is not uniform across individuals. This impact is moderated by psychological resources and contextual factors (Wang et al., 2025). Students with high entrepreneurial self-efficacy are more likely to respond to employment pressures proactively by pursuing entrepreneurship. Those with low self-efficacy may perceive employment barriers as insurmountable and opt for safer alternatives such as further education (Huang et al., 2024). Similarly, entrepreneurial networking capability can enhance the positive effect of employment obstacles. It facilitates access to resources, information, and social support that reduce perceived entrepreneurial risks (Gao & Zhang, 2024). Thus, while employment obstacles generally serve as a significant push factor for rural entrepreneurial intention, their influence is conditional upon students' internal resources and external support systems (Lü et al., 2025).

3.2 Sense of Belonging to the City as an Inhibiting Factor

Sense of belonging to the city refers to the degree of emotional attachment, identity recognition, and social integration that individuals develop toward the urban environment in which they live. This construct encompasses both subjective perceptions and objective experiences of inclusion within urban society (Mayuto et al., 2023). This psychological construct has increasingly been recognized as an important factor shaping career preferences and spatial decision-making. Its role is particularly significant in the context of rural entrepreneurial intention (Lü et al., 2023). Students with strong urban identity tend to associate cities with better career opportunities, higher living standards, and richer social networks. This association increases their preference for urban employment or urban entrepreneurship rather than rural ventures (Imran et al., 2026). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that sense of belonging to the city exerts a significant negative influence on rural entrepreneurial intention (Gao & Zhang, 2024). This inhibitory effect operates through several mechanisms. First, strong urban attachment creates psychological dependence on urban lifestyles, social networks, and career opportunities. This dependence reduces the perceived attractiveness of rural environments (Bao et al., 2022). Second, students with strong urban belonging tend to perceive rural areas as lacking infrastructure, market demand, and development opportunities. This perception reinforces their preference for urban-

based careers (Singh et al., 2025). Third, urban attachment may generate risk-averse attitudes toward rural environments. Rural areas are often perceived as uncertain and resource-constrained compared to cities (Li & Qian, 2024; Zhao et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, recent research highlights that the relationship between sense of belonging to the city and rural entrepreneurial intention is not fixed. It is contingent upon individual and contextual factors (Marín et al., 2025). Students from rural backgrounds or those with strong family ties in rural areas may retain a dual sense of belonging. This dual belonging allows them to balance urban aspirations with rural commitments. It thereby weakens the negative impact of urban belonging (Harms & Garrett-Ruffin, 2023). The presence of entrepreneurial role models experienced in urban-to-rural transitions can also alter students' perceptions. These role models demonstrate that rural entrepreneurship is viable and rewarding (Lin et al., 2023). Moreover, entrepreneurial networking capability can help students bridge urban and rural resource systems. This capability enables them to leverage urban knowledge and connections while engaging in rural entrepreneurship (Mensah et al., 2023). These findings suggest that the inhibitory effect of urban belonging is malleable and can be counteracted through targeted interventions (Li et al., 2023).

3.3 Government Support as a Pull Factor

Government support encompasses multiple dimensions. These include policy incentives, financial subsidies, tax reductions, training programs, and institutional facilitation. Together, these dimensions create a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem (Edgar et al., 2026). From the perspective of push-pull theory, government support functions as a powerful pull factor. It enhances the attractiveness and perceived feasibility of rural entrepreneurship by reducing uncertainty, lowering entry barriers, and providing institutional legitimacy (Kaus & Entsminger, 2026). Recent empirical research consistently confirms that government support has a significant positive effect on college students' rural entrepreneurial intention. This effect is particularly pronounced in policy-driven contexts such as China's rural revitalization strategy (Rutherford et al., 2023).

The positive influence of government support operates through multiple pathways. Financial support, including start-up grants and low-interest loans, directly reduces capital constraints and enhances feasibility. Policy incentives such as tax reductions and simplified administrative procedures lower operational barriers and transaction costs (Zhao et al., 2025). Training programs and entrepreneurship education initiatives enhance students' knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. These initiatives indirectly strengthen their intention to engage in rural entrepreneurship (Mensah et al., 2023). Moreover, the presence of government support signals institutional recognition of rural entrepreneurship opportunities. This recognition can transform students' perceptions of rural areas from undesirable to promising (Chahal et al., 2024).

However, the effectiveness of government support is not automatic. It depends on students' awareness of policies, their capacity to navigate administrative procedures, and the alignment of policies with students' actual needs and capabilities (Lü et al., 2025). Inconsistencies in policy implementation across regions can lead to unequal access to resources. This inconsistency weakens the overall impact of government support (Wang & Zhang, 2025). Similarly, complex administrative procedures and insufficient policy dissemination may discourage students from actively engaging with government programs (Zhou et al., 2025). These limitations suggest that the effectiveness of government support depends not only on its availability but also on its accessibility, clarity, and alignment with students' real demands and capabilities(Yue et al., 2026)
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3.4 Entrepreneurial Role Models as a Pull Factor

Entrepreneurial role models provide observable examples of successful entrepreneurial behavior. These examples shape students' entrepreneurial cognition and motivation through social learning mechanisms (Lü et al., 2025). Within the push-pull framework, role models function as an important pull factor. They demonstrate the feasibility and desirability of rural entrepreneurship. They also reduce perceived uncertainty and enhance students' confidence in

their entrepreneurial capabilities (Xiao et al., 2026). The importance of role models is particularly pronounced in rural entrepreneurship settings. In these settings, uncertainty is high and access to formal entrepreneurial guidance may be limited (Lin et al., 2023).

Recent research demonstrates that entrepreneurial role models significantly enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Zhao et al., 2025). They provide vicarious learning experiences and reduce perceived risk (Martin-Navarro et al., 2023). Students who interact with successful entrepreneurs, especially those with similar backgrounds, are more likely to internalize entrepreneurial skills and develop confidence in their own capabilities (Weng et al., 2026). The effectiveness of role models depends on their perceived similarity and accessibility. Students relate more strongly to role models who share similar educational, social, or cultural backgrounds (Chagna & Rodríguez, 2023). In the rural entrepreneurship context, local role models are more effective in promoting entrepreneurial intention than urban-based role models. Local role models demonstrate how to successfully utilize local resources and navigate rural institutional environments (Chirinda et al., 2024).

Importantly, the influence of entrepreneurial role models is not isolated. It interacts with other factors to shape entrepreneurial intention (Song et al., 2025). Entrepreneurship education can amplify the impact of role models by providing structured learning environments. In these environments, students can critically analyze and internalize role model experiences (Valencia et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial networking capability mediates the relationship between role models and entrepreneurial intention. Exposure to role models often facilitates access to broader social networks, mentorship opportunities, and resource channels (Li et al., 2026). This suggests that the influence of role models should be understood as part of an integrated system. This system combines psychological, educational, and social resource dimensions.

3.5 Entrepreneurial Networking Capability as a Resource Endowment

Entrepreneurial networking capability refers to an individual's capacity to proactively establish, maintain, and utilize social networks to acquire resources and support during the entrepreneurial process (Putra et al., 2025). Within the resource endowment framework, networking capability represents a critical personal resource. It enhances the accessibility and utilization efficiency of external resources. It thereby strengthens overall entrepreneurial capacity (Eid et al., 2026). In rural entrepreneurship contexts, formal institutional support and market mechanisms may be underdeveloped. In such contexts, networking capability becomes particularly important as an alternative mechanism for resource mobilization and opportunity identification (Möller et al., 2025).

Recent research demonstrates that entrepreneurial networking capability positively influences rural entrepreneurial intention through multiple mechanisms. First, networking capability facilitates resource acquisition. Individuals with stronger networking capabilities are more likely to access diverse and high-quality resources including financial capital, technological expertise, and market information (Basileo et al., 2024). Second, networks provide social support through emotional encouragement, professional advice, and practical guidance. This support reduces perceived entrepreneurial risk and enhances confidence (Yu et al., 2025). Third, networking capability enables students to bridge urban and rural resource systems. This bridging allows them to leverage urban knowledge and connections while engaging in rural entrepreneurship (Wang & Zhang, 2025).

The development of entrepreneurial networking capability is closely intertwined with other variables in the research framework (Ayoub & Mohamed, 2024). Entrepreneurship education significantly strengthens networking capabilities. It provides opportunities for collaborative projects, mentorship programs, and industry interactions (Jameel et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial role models serve as important nodes within entrepreneurial networks. They help students access valuable contacts and resources while providing guidance and inspiration (Wang & Zhang, 2025). Government support programs that facilitate networking opportunities, such as entrepreneurial competitions and incubation platforms, can further enhance students' networking capabilities (Yu et al., 2025). These interdependencies highlight that networking

capability should be understood as both an independent resource and a mechanism through which other resources are mobilized and leveraged(Wojtowicz et al., 2024) .

3.6 Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy as a Resource Endowment

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their capability to successfully perform entrepreneurial tasks. This construct has been widely recognized as a central psychological determinant of entrepreneurial behavior (Kavak et al., 2024). Within the resource endowment framework, self-efficacy represents a critical internal resource. It shapes students' confidence in overcoming employment obstacles, managing risks, and mobilizing resources for entrepreneurial activities (Peng et al., 2025). Research consistently demonstrates that entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly predicts entrepreneurial intention across diverse contexts, including rural entrepreneurship settings (Waiswa et al., 2024).

The positive influence of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on rural entrepreneurial intention operates through several pathways. From a cognitive perspective, self-efficacy enhances individuals' perceived behavioral control. This enhancement increases their likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activities even in uncertain rural environments (Lin et al., 2023). Students with higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy are more capable of identifying entrepreneurial opportunities. They are also better at mobilizing resources through networking and sustaining motivation despite setbacks (Imran et al., 2026). Moreover, self-efficacy reduces perceived risks associated with entrepreneurship. It enables students to interpret challenges as manageable rather than insurmountable (Huang et al., 2024).

Importantly, entrepreneurial self-efficacy is not a fixed trait. It is a dynamic construct that can be developed through educational interventions and experiential learning (Zhang et al., 2025). Entrepreneurship education significantly enhances self-efficacy by providing knowledge, skills, and practical experiences that build students' confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities (Lü et al., 2025). Exposure to entrepreneurial role models provides vicarious learning opportunities that strengthen self-efficacy. These opportunities demonstrate that entrepreneurial success is attainable (Huang et al., 2024). Similarly, entrepreneurial networking capability contributes to self-efficacy development. It enables access to information, mentorship, and emotional support that reduce uncertainty (Lee et al., 2023). These findings position self-efficacy as both a direct predictor of entrepreneurial intention and a mechanism through which other factors exert their influence (Li et al., 2026).

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A MODERATING MECHANISM

4.1 Theoretical Rationale for Moderation

Entrepreneurship education has emerged as a critical moderating mechanism. It can fundamentally reshape the relationships between antecedent factors and rural entrepreneurial intention (Far et al., 2026). Recent research increasingly recognizes that entrepreneurship education extends beyond knowledge transmission. It includes experiential learning, mentorship, entrepreneurial competitions, and incubation platforms. These interventions develop entrepreneurial competencies and mindsets (Xie & Wang, 2025). Through these multifaceted interventions, entrepreneurship education can enhance students' capacity to interpret and leverage environmental opportunities. It can also help students cope with constraints and translate motivations into concrete intentions (Chirinda et al., 2024).

The moderating role of entrepreneurship education is grounded in multiple theoretical mechanisms. From the perspective of resource endowment theory, entrepreneurship education functions simultaneously as an external resource and as a mechanism for developing internal resources (Li et al., 2023). By providing knowledge, skills, and networking opportunities, education enhances students' internal endowments. It particularly strengthens entrepreneurial self-efficacy and networking capability. These enhancements in turn strengthen students' capacity to leverage external resources such as government support (Udekwe & Iwu, 2024). From a cognitive perspective, entrepreneurship education reshapes how students interpret both constraints and opportunities. It provides frameworks for opportunity recognition, risk assessment, and strategic planning (Bao et al., 2022).

4.2 Moderation of Push and Pull Factor Relationships

Empirical evidence indicates that entrepreneurship education positively moderates the relationship between employment obstacles and rural entrepreneurial intention. It transforms necessity-driven motivations into opportunity-driven intentions (Dammicco & Diaz-Zagarra, 2025). Students who receive entrepreneurship education are better equipped to interpret employment barriers as challenges that can be overcome through entrepreneurial action. They do not view these barriers as insurmountable obstacles (Dammicco & Diaz-Zagarra, 2025). By enhancing entrepreneurial self-efficacy and providing practical tools for business creation, education enables students to respond proactively to employment pressures (Malak & Qassim, 2025). In contrast, students without such education may feel more discouraged by employment barriers. This discouragement stems from lower entrepreneurial confidence and limited exposure to alternative career frameworks.

Similarly, entrepreneurship education moderates the relationship between sense of belonging to the city and rural entrepreneurial intention. It reduces the negative influence of urban attachment (Hamzah & Othman, 2023). Through knowledge-based interventions that introduce rural development policies and agricultural innovation cases, education enables students to form more balanced evaluations of rural opportunities (Zhou et al., 2024). Experiential components including rural fieldwork and internships can enhance students' emotional connection to rural communities. These experiences foster a sense of "dual belonging" that integrates both urban and rural identities (Song et al., 2025). Thus, education transforms the potential constraint of urban belonging into part of a broader cognitive framework. This framework supports cross-regional opportunity recognition.

4.3 Moderation of Resource Endowment Relationships

Entrepreneurship education also positively moderates the relationships between resource endowment variables and rural entrepreneurial intention. Regarding entrepreneurial networking capability, education enhances the effectiveness of networks. It provides strategic guidance on network construction and cross-boundary integration (Song et al., 2025). Through case-based learning and scenario simulations, students develop the ability to align their existing urban networks with rural development needs. This alignment forms "urban-rural linkage" advantages (Chen et al., 2024). Experiential learning platforms, including rural fieldwork and entrepreneurial competitions, enable students to interact directly with local stakeholders. These interactions expand their social capital in rural contexts (Huang et al., 2024).

Similarly, entrepreneurship education strengthens the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and rural entrepreneurial intention. It enhances students' ability to translate perceived capabilities into concrete actions (Chirinda et al., 2024). Education provides contextual knowledge about rural markets and policies. This knowledge increases the applicability of self-efficacy in rural contexts (Gao & Zhang, 2024). Through experiential learning that mirrors real-world entrepreneurial challenges, education enables students to develop realistic confidence. This confidence is grounded in practical experience rather than abstract belief (Valencia et al., 2025). These mechanisms suggest that entrepreneurship education serves as a catalyst. It transforms potential capabilities into actual entrepreneurial intentions.

5. INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Building upon the synthesized literature, this review proposes an integrated conceptual framework. This framework combines push-pull theory and resource endowment theory. It also positions entrepreneurship education as a key moderating mechanism (Çokgez & İnce, 2025).

The framework conceptualizes rural entrepreneurial intention as the outcome of interactions among four categories of determinants. The first category is push factors, represented by employment obstacles(Cook et al., 2024) . The second category is pull factors, including government support and entrepreneurial role models. The third category is inhibiting factors, centered on sense of belonging to the city. The fourth category is resource endowment factors, comprising entrepreneurial networking capability and entrepreneurial self-efficacy(Dirksmeier, 2025) .

Entrepreneurship education is theorized as a moderator. It can enhance the positive effects of pull factors and resource endowments. It can also mitigate the negative influences of push factors and inhibiting factors.

This integrated framework addresses several limitations in existing research. First, it acknowledges that rural entrepreneurial intention is not solely determined by environmental pressures or individual capabilities(Galleguillos-Torres & Grêt-Regamey, 2025) . Instead, it emerges from their interaction. Second, it recognizes that the influence of push and pull forces is conditional upon students' psychological resources and capacity to leverage external support. Third, it positions entrepreneurship education as a transformative mechanism (Prasannath et al., 2024). This mechanism can fundamentally reshape students' cognitive frameworks and resource configurations. This multi-layered approach provides a more comprehensive explanation of entrepreneurial intention formation than single-theory models (Çokgez & İnce, 2025).

The framework also highlights important gaps in existing research. While studies have examined individual relationships in isolation, there is limited understanding of how multiple factors interact simultaneously to shape entrepreneurial intention. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and multi-level analytical frameworks (Yue et al., 2026) . These approaches can capture the dynamic evolution of these relationships over time (Gao & Zhang, 2024). Additionally, cross-cultural and regional comparisons are needed (Huang et al., 2024). Such comparisons can examine how contextual factors influence the strength and direction of these relationships (Lü et al., 2025).

The framework also suggests practical implications. Policymakers and educators should focus on enhancing students' resource endowments through education and support programs (Chen et al., 2024). They should also address the psychological barriers associated with urban attachment and employment obstacles.

6. CONCLUSION

This systematic review synthesizes recent theoretical and empirical advances in understanding the determinants of rural entrepreneurship intention among college students (Homer et al., 2026). The analysis pays particular attention to the Chinese rural revitalization context (Yue et al., 2026).

Integrating push-pull theory and resource endowment theory, the review reveals that rural entrepreneurial intention emerges from complex interactions between environmental pressures, institutional incentives, psychological resources, and educational interventions.

Six key determinants are identified (Xu et al., 2025). Employment obstacles function as a push factor. Sense of belonging to the city serves as an inhibiting factor. Government support and entrepreneurial role models act as pull factors (Yue et al., 2026). Entrepreneurial networking capability and entrepreneurial self-efficacy represent resource endowment factors.

Critically, entrepreneurship education is identified as a transformative mechanism (Huang et al., 2024). It moderates multiple relationships within this framework. It enhances positive influences while mitigating negative ones.

The review makes several contributions to entrepreneurial intention literature. First, it offers a comprehensive synthesis of multiple determinants that have typically been studied in isolation (Wang et al., 2025). This synthesis provides a more integrated understanding of rural entrepreneurial intention formation. Second, it identifies entrepreneurship education as a key moderating mechanism (Mayuto et al., 2023). This mechanism can reshape how students respond to both constraints and opportunities. This identification addresses a significant gap in previous research (Lü et al., 2023). Third, it provides a theoretically grounded framework that can guide future empirical research. This framework supports the development of testable hypotheses and research designs. Fourth, the review highlights practical implications for policymakers and educators seeking to promote rural entrepreneurship among university students (Imran et al., 2026). Effective interventions should address multiple determinants simultaneously. They should not focus on individual factors in isolation.

Despite these contributions, the review has limitations that should be acknowledged. The synthesis primarily draws on literature from the Chinese context. Findings may not be directly generalizable to other national contexts with different institutional structures and cultural norms (Singh et al., 2025). Additionally, the review is based on cross-sectional studies. These studies cannot capture the dynamic evolution of entrepreneurial intention over time.

Future research should employ longitudinal designs. Such designs can examine how the identified relationships evolve across different stages of students' academic and career development (Harms & Garrett-Ruffin, 2023). Cross-cultural comparative studies are also needed. These studies can examine how contextual factors influence the strength and direction of these relationships. Finally, experimental and quasi-experimental designs are needed. These designs can establish causal relationships and evaluate the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education interventions in promoting rural entrepreneurial intention (Mensah et al., 2023).

By addressing these limitations, future research can build upon the framework developed in this review. This will advance both theoretical understanding and practical interventions for promoting rural entrepreneurship among college students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere gratitude to Professor Cheok Mui Yee, our advisor, for her meticulous guidance throughout the research design and manuscript revision process. We also acknowledge the valuable feedback provided by the anonymous reviewers.

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