



# College Students Returning Hometown to Start a New Business for Rural Revitalization from the Perspective of Family

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

## **Article Information**

DOI: 10.9734/AJARR/2024/v18i6660

## **Open Peer Review History:**

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/116662>

**Original Research Article**

**Received: 26/02/2024**

**Accepted: 29/04/2024**

**Published: 02/05/2024**

## **ABSTRACT**

Entrepreneurship education is conducive to the development of entrepreneurial activities, such as the introduction of entrepreneurial activities into the countryside, more conducive to rural revitalization. However, few studies have explored the issue of college students returning hometown to start businesses from the perspective of family, and there is still a gap in the theory of entrepreneurship and rural revitalization. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore their views on college students returning hometown to start their own business based on the family view. The top application-oriented university in Guizhou Province, China, was taken as the research object, and interviews 13 families to obtain the data needed for analysis. The analysis results show that about 70% of families' support college students returning hometown to start businesses; Moreover, these supporters may be motivated by self-interest, hoping to have children to rely on when they are old. Secondly, families do not support their children to return hometown to start

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businesses, mainly because of the funding, policies and environment, which are basically consistent with the existing research. Whether college students can return hometown to start businesses successfully and whether rural revitalization can be enabled, a very important factor is the cultivation of college students' entrepreneurial spirit and the family's recognition of this entrepreneurial spirit. Finally, this study suggests that the party and government departments should strengthen policy support, strengthen publicity, and encourage college students with entrepreneurial ideas and relevant basic conditions to return hometown to start businesses. Higher educations should strengthen the integration of entrepreneurship courses and rural revitalization, and strengthen the connotation construction of entrepreneurship education and its contribution to rural revitalization.

*Keywords: Entrepreneurship education; empowerment; rural revitalization.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In research on the link between entrepreneurship education (EE) and entrepreneurship activities (EA), entrepreneurship education has been shown to improve entrepreneurial activity and thus promote economic growth [1,2,3,4]. This shows that good entrepreneurship education may lead to better entrepreneurial activities, and then promote the economic development of a specific region. If such entrepreneurship education is channeled into rural revitalization, it may also contribute to rural economic development. Research also confirms that entrepreneurship education can enhance overall early-stage entrepreneurial activity (both nascent and new entrepreneurial activity) [5]. Therefore, if the country wants to solve the employment problem of some college students through college students returning home to start businesses, the university side should think about how to improve the entrepreneurial education mechanism. In particular, application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities should pay more attention to the mechanism of entrepreneurship education in order to cultivate application-oriented talents. After all, college students' entrepreneurial education at higher educations will affect their entrepreneurial activities [6].

Moreover, the results of the literature show that college students returning hometown to start businesses can help rural revitalization [7,8] Promoting rural revitalization [9], and promoting rural economic development [10,11]. College students are a key factor in promoting the revitalization of rural talents [12] and returning hometown to start businesses can improve personal literacy [8] and inspire young people's confidence in learning to realize their self-worth in their hometown [11]. College students returning hometown to start businesses seems to

be the cure-all for rural revitalization. The research also points out that college students returning hometown to start businesses may face problems such as policies, market environment, capital, technology, talent and experience [6,13]. However, the degree of family support for college students returning hometown to start a business has not been paid attention to, which has formed a gap in the theory of entrepreneurship and the theory and practice of rural revitalization.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the views of students' family on their children's entrepreneurship when college students return hometown to help rural revitalization, and put forward relevant suggestions. According to the above, the college students referred to in this paper are applied undergraduate college students; The term "returning hometown to start a business" refers to the existing college students who have the intention and behavior of returning hometown to start a business in the future; The so-called empowered rural revitalization refers to the activities that help to improve the economy, talent, culture, ecology and grass-roots village organizations in the village where the hometown is located.

## 2. METHODS

Based on the nature of the research topic, the qualitative research method is chosen in this study. In terms of research objects, this paper chooses the first private university in Guizhou Province in China (2023) as the research object. The School of Management of the university is taken as the matrix, and the sample was carried out. The college closely focuses on the school's "Having two knowledge and one strong skill" talent training goal, which in terms of cultivating modern management talents with a sense of social responsibility, soliding professional foundation and forstering strongly practical ability

to meet the needs of economic and social development. It is in line with the definition of application-oriented universities. In terms of sampling method, the samples in this study should match the characteristics of the research topic based on the attributes of the research topic. The students should come from rural areas and the parents are willing to accept the interview. So the intentional sampling method is chosen in this study. The school counselor's office, and the researcher solicited a total of 13 students who were willing to cooperate and qualified.

Furthermore, in terms of data acquisition, this study sent the interview purpose and interview outline to the interviewees, who returned home to spend time with their families during the Qingming Holiday to conduct the interview. The interviews were conducted from April 4 to April 6, 2024. A total of 3540 words of text were obtained for subsequent analysis.

In terms of data analysis and interpretation, this study adopts context analysis and words were taken as the analysis unit. The analysis steps include coding, term classification, generalization, and interpretation. The purpose of qualitative research is to explain and interpret social phenomena and to explore the heterogeneity of research topics or subjects [14]. This study obtains data according to the research purpose and research steps, and the research process has a certain stability and the obtained data is reliable.

In the process of data acquisition, researchers used different questions for the same question and asked respondents to write written manuscripts for comparison, and the obtained data also had high reliability. Finally, in terms of data interpretation, the researcher does not add personal subjective opinions when obtaining data, and the recorded data is relatively objective. When interpreting data, this study tries to objectively analyze and interpret the obtained data without adding personal subjective consciousness. In this context, the data obtained in this study can indeed reflect the research purpose and have high validity.

### 3. RESULTS

This study recruited students from an applied undergraduate university in Guizhou, and a total of 13 students accepted the invitation for follow-up data collection. The basic data of

the interviewed students are summarized in Table 1. In terms of gender, there are 5 men and 8 women, which is basically in line with the gender ratio of students. In terms of levels, there are 7 people in 2023 and 6 people in 2022. In terms of majors, 2 students majoring in business administration, 5 students majoring in human resource management and 7 students majoring in administration management are all from the same college. On the whole, the respondents are representative.

Then, the respondents' responses to parents' support for college students' returning home to start businesses are summarized in Table 2. Overall, the support rate of parents (9/13) was 69%, close to 70%. It shows that most parents still support their children's decision to return home and start businesses. For example, "They think it is a good thing that I can find the direction of my future efforts, and it is even more gratifying to see that I choose to return to my hometown after graduating from university, apply the knowledge and skills I have learned to start a business and contribute to the development of my hometown." And they think returning home to start a business can be closer to home, so they don't have to worry about what will happen to me outside, and slow down the yearning for me (A8)." It can be seen that parents hope that their children will return home to contribute to their own efforts, and their work is close to home, and parents are more assured.

Second, the interview results also show that college students returning home to start businesses will help rural revitalization. For example, "You have this idea that you want to go back to your hometown, to contribute to your hometown, to help develop your hometown, as a father I am very supportive of you." (A2), "You return home to start a business for you is a challenge, but also an opportunity, maybe in the process you can learn a lot of missing things, but also can get what you want." Secondly, returning home to start a business can also help the development of hometown, promote the development of hometown characteristic industries, and solve the employment of rural labor. Finally, in the context of rural revitalization, returning home to start a business is also the key to helping rural revitalization (A2)".

**Table 1. Basic information of respondents**

No.	Gender	Class	Major
A1	Male	23	Business administration
A2	Female	23	Human resource management
A3	Female	23	Business administration
A4	Female	23	Administrative management
A5	Female	22	Administrative management
A6	Female	23	Administrative management
A7	Female	23	Administrative management
A8	Male	22	Administrative management
A9	Male	22	Human resource management
A10	Male	22	Administrative management
A11	Female	23	Human resource management
A12	Male	22	Human resource management
A13	Female	23	Human resource management

**Table 2. Parents' views of respondents**

No.	Gender	Class	Opinion
A1	Male	23	Support
A2	Female	23	Support
A3	Female	23	Not Support
A4	Female	23	Support
A5	Female	22	Support
A6	Female	23	Support
A7	Female	23	Support
A8	Male	22	Not Support
A9	Male	22	Not Support
A10	Male	22	Support
A11	Female	23	Support
A12	Male	22	Support
A13	Female	23	Not Support

However, there are also five students whose parents do not support their children to return home to start a business. For example, "Returning home to start a business is risky and has little chance of success; No stable establishment; Read more than 10 years of books, entrepreneurship waste more than 10 years of hard reading "(A3). This shows that parents still have a sense of risk in entrepreneurship, and parents may think that their children study to find a better job, and hope that their children's future work can be more stable. In addition, evidence suggests that the capital and capabilities required to start a business may not be available to parents, so they do not support it. For example, "entrepreneurship needs funds, and we do not have funds ourselves, it is basically impossible to rely on investment, loans can not lend much, by borrowing." How many people in this society dare to lend money to a newly graduated college student who has no financial support? When we encounter difficulties in starting a business, most

parents are unable to provide us with useful suggestions or solutions (parents themselves are not high in culture, and supporting a family is their limit). (A8) This reflects the reality of many rural families, who have no financial support and may not be able to help their children solve their problems after starting a business. Therefore, at this stage, children are not supported to return home to start a business.

Moreover, more rational parents point out that their children will face challenges in terms of policy, environment, technology and family background, which are not problems that rural families can face and deal with." Environmental aspects: In the business environment, such as intensified market competition, rising costs, and various infectious diseases, it is becoming more and more difficult to start a business (A9); Family background: I have to admit that with the rapid development of society, the society is too cruel. As a young man with "three nots", that is, no money, no background and no contacts, it is too

ideal to start a business from scratch (A9). In terms of policies, there are cases of national policies on paper, and most policies are not fully implemented and it is cumbersome to apply for various preferential policies (A9); "In terms of technology: first of all, they believe that college students lack real skills; Secondly, it is difficult for college students to introduce advanced technology and equipment and high-quality talents (A9) in the process of returning home to start a business."

In addition, although parents have positive and negative support for their children's attitude toward returning home to start a business, some parents also have positive and negative evaluations of this matter. It shows that parents not only respect children's ideas, but also give guidance in various aspects. Examples of empirical materials are as follows:

"My family is very supportive of returning home to start a business. Growing up in my hometown, my family understands my deep feelings with my hometown. And my family loved me deeply, trusted me, and wanted to see me shine in a familiar land. My family knows my love for my hometown, I know the local customs there, I know what is needed there, what can I contribute. They trust that my decision is well thought out and makes sense. Entrepreneurship, while challenging, also means endless possibilities. My family saw my determination and courage, and they believed in my ability to overcome all difficulties and realize my dreams. They are willing to be my solid backer and provide me with support and help when I encounter difficulties. Finally, returning home to start a business can also bring development to the hometown and provide more job opportunities for the villagers. My family sees my sense of responsibility and responsibility, and they believe I can contribute to making my hometown a better place." (A12).

"My parents were supportive of my return home to start a business. At the same time, my parents will also worry that I will encounter difficulties in the process of entrepreneurship. They hope that I can have enough courage and perseverance to face and overcome these difficulties, and hope that I can gain experience and grow in these unknown setbacks. And will give me the greatest support and encouragement in this process. They said their experience and wisdom may not provide me with advice and help to start my own business, but they will give me encouragement

and comfort when I encounter obstacles that I cannot overcome and things that I cannot figure out, so that I have the courage to stand up again." (A6)

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Based on the above analysis, in the sample of this study, the proportion of parents supporting college students to return hometown to start a business is close to 70%. This shows that college students returning to their hometown to start businesses can energize rural revitalization, and the analysis results are consistent with the study of Yan and Yu [6]. Secondly, if we further explore the nature of college students returning hometown to start businesses, the most basic is that young people return to work, so as to achieve the purpose of more young people returning hometown to accompany their families and the elderly in the village. Moreover, the children in the village have learned enough to return to their hometown to start a business, which is also an important part of the revitalization of talent in the rural revitalization. Therefore, this study believes that college students returning hometown to start businesses has the role of revitalizing rural talents.

Furthermore, college students returning hometown to start businesses may create job opportunities in rural areas, which will also drive rural consumption momentum. From the economic perspective, entrepreneurship can increase the investment in the rural economy. It requires investment in capital, manpower, equipment and land, etc. Its output (products and raw materials produced) may also drive rural consumption, and even form the development of a specific industrial chain in the countryside. There is input, output and promotion, which really promotes rural economic development, transformation and upgrading. This part, which is less mentioned by other scholars, is also a major innovative discovery of this study.

In addition, this study found that parents' approval of college students returning hometown to start a business is not completely unconditional, but it has attached conditions. For example, they want their children to stay with them, which is closer to being selfish. In other words, it seems to indicate that when you are old, you have children to rely on and don't have to worry about pension problems. Another

implication may be that the child returns hometown to start a business. They can help he/her when he needs it. It means the parents can help the child solve the problem of entrepreneurship when needed. However, with such a big world and so many opportunities, who can limit the future development of children? Therefore, this study concluded that some parents support their children to return hometown to start a business, which may be out of egoistic behavior rather than altruistic behavior. In any case, college students returning hometown to start businesses is indeed conducive to the younger population of rural areas, and has a positive contribution to the introduction and retention of young talents in rural areas from the perspective of parents. That is to say, under the parents' point of view, college students return to their hometown to start businesses, which is conducive to the revitalization of rural talents.

Finally, for the part of parents who do not support their children to return hometown to start a business, the main reason is that the funds, policies and environment are basically consistent with the existing research [15,16]. Moreover, existing studies have pointed out that one of the most important problems for college students returning home to start businesses is the lack of entrepreneurial spirit [6,13]. Therefore, this study suspects that the interviewed parents may have less involvement in the issue of entrepreneurship, so there is no relevant response. In other words, whether college students can return hometown to start a business successfully and whether rural revitalization can be enabled, a very important factor is the cultivation of college students' entrepreneurial spirit and parents' recognition of this entrepreneurial spirit.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to explore their views on college students returning hometown to start businesses from the point of view of family. Through interviews with 13 groups of parents, the following conclusions are obtained:

- Nearly 70% of the surveyed parents support college students returning to their hometown to start businesses, indicating that college students returning to their hometown to start businesses plays a role in empowering rural revitalization, and the analysis results are consistent with

previous studies.

- With the support of parents, college students returning hometown to start businesses can revitalize talents and economy in rural area.
- Parents support their children to return hometown to start a business, perhaps out of selfish views, and hoping to have children to rely on when they become old.
- Parents do not support their children to return hometown to start businesses, mainly because of the funding, policies and environment, which are basically consistent with the existing research. Whether college students can return hometown to start businesses successfully and the rural revitalization can be enabled, a very important factor is the cultivation of college students' entrepreneurial spirit, and parents' recognition of this entrepreneurial spirit.

Based on the above conclusions, this study puts forward the following recommendations:

- College students returning hometown to start businesses have the role of empowering rural revitalization. Therefore, the party and government departments should strengthen policy support, strengthen publicity, and encourage college students with entrepreneurial ideas and relevant basic conditions to return hometown to start businesses. Higher educations should strengthen the integration of entrepreneurship courses and rural revitalization, and strengthen the connotation construction of entrepreneurship education and its contribution to rural revitalization.
- College students returning hometown to start businesses has the role of revitalizing rural talents and economy. Therefore, the rural revitalization policy of the party and government departments should be more specific and detailed in the reference and retention of talents. Moreover, a set of counseling and evaluation mechanism should be established for the rural youth after entrepreneurship to form a positive circular system for rural economic development.
- On the issue of parents supporting children to return hometown to start businesses and elderly care. The party and government departments should consider the issue of inter-departmental

integration and propose corresponding policies.

- In the part of parents' spiritual cognition of entrepreneurs, the party and government departments should strengthen publicity in a reasonable and orderly manner. At the same time, we should also cooperate with universities and scientific research institutions to sort out more rural parents' ideas on college students returning hometown to start businesses and develop countermeasures.

Finally, the suggestions for future research are summarized as follows:

- This study has preliminarily analyzed the problems of college students returning hometown to start their own businesses from the perspective of family. However, this paper only obtains data from students of one applied university. Future research may consider increasing the breadth of data collection and obtaining data from more applied universities.
- Secondly, the sample of this paper is only for the students of the school of management, and the analysis results are only for the reference of the students of the school of management. Future research could compare the results of different types of student backgrounds and data analysis. In this way, it provides the applicability of the findings.
- In addition, this study adopts qualitative research design to explore the nature of the problems of college students returning hometown to start a business. Future research can refer to the analysis results of this study to develop the entrepreneurship scale and conduct quantitative research.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper is part of the achievements of the Humanities and Social Sciences Project in colleges and universities of Guizhou Provincial Department of Education (Project name: Research on the deep coupling mechanism between Guizhou's health care industry and regional economy from the perspective of "Healthy China") and the project of Guizhou Qiannan Social Sciences Association (Project name: Research on the development path of Qiannan's digital health care industry under the

background of digital divide). The authors acknowledge the supports.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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