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Research Article

The Influence of Social Network on Chinese Farmers' Entrepreneurial Intention: The Moderating Role of Gender and Government Working Experience

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ABSTRACT

The entrepreneurial initiatives undertaken by farmers represent a crucial mechanism for attaining the strategic objectives associated with rural revitalization. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial endeavors of farmers serve as an intrinsic catalyst for the advancement of rural economic development. This study synthesizes existing theoretical frameworks and reviews relevant literature concerning the research subject. It specifically examines the guidance offered by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Entrepreneurship, highlighting their contributions to understanding the research object. It investigates the influence of social network on the entrepreneurial intention of farmers in rural China, with a particular focus on the the moderating role of gender and government working experience. Utilizing a quantitative research methodology, data were collected from a valid sample of 548 farmers. The independent variable examined is social network, while the dependent variable is the farmers' entrepreneurial intention, with gender and government working experience serving as the moderating variable. The research results show that first social network has positive and significant effect on farmers' entrepreneurial intention. Second, both gender and government working experience have moderating effect in social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention. While the findings hold significant implications for academia, policymakers, and regulatory bodies, future research could benefit from employing mixed methods approaches. Such methodologies would enable the integration of qualitative insights, which offer depth and context, with quantitative data that enhances breadth and generalizability. Additionally, future studies could explore variations across different demographic groups to provide a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Keywords: Social Network, Farmers' Entrepreneurial Intention, gender, government working experience

1 INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneurial activities of rural farmers have the potential to catalyze the diversified development of rural industries. By engaging in various business ventures, these farmers can create new employment opportunities within their communities, thereby enhancing the income levels of their households. This increase in income not only benefits individual farmers but also contributes to the overall economic vitality of rural areas. Consequently, the sustained growth of the rural economy can be promoted through the strategic engagement of farmers in entrepreneurial endeavors, which fosters a more resilient and diversified economic landscape.

Rural farmers often rely heavily on local networks, such as familial ties and community relationships, which can significantly limit their access to diverse resources necessary for entrepreneurial success. This reliance on close-knit networks can create a scenario where farmers are predominantly dependent on informal channels for support, leading to challenges in accessing formal resources such as credit, information, and technology.

Rural farmers frequently face barriers in accessing credit, which is essential for investing in agricultural inputs and technologies (Meher & Agrawal, 2023) and we cannot neglect the fact that many rural farmers lack awareness of available credit programs, as evidenced by research indicating that knowledge of rural bank credit programs significantly enhances the likelihood of accessing such resources (Missiame et al., 2021). Moreover, the limited access to diverse resources can hinder the adoption of innovative agricultural practices, the lack of formal support systems and information dissemination channels restricts farmers' ability to optimize resource use and improve productivity (Liu et al., 2023). Additionally, the informal financial systems that many rural farmers rely on, such as savings from family and friends, may not provide sufficient capital for significant investments, limiting their growth potential (Falola et al., 2022). The reliance on informal networks can also perpetuate cycles of poverty, as these networks may not offer the same level of support or resources that formal institutions could provide, thereby stifling economic development in rural areas (Yatulloh et al., 2024).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, China's rural labor force has faced increasing pressures to seek employment opportunities beyond their localities. This phenomenon can be attributed to shifts in the international trade landscape and the transformation and upgrading of labor-intensive manufacturing sectors(Xie et al., 2020). In response to these challenges, particularly in light of the economic and social repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese government has enacted a series of policy measures aimed at fostering entrepreneurship among farmers and enhancing the overall entrepreneurial climate. Notably, in 2022, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council issued the 'Opinions on the Key Work of Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization', which emphasizes the necessity of advancing the establishment of entrepreneurial parks for those returning to rural areas. This initiative is complemented by a suite of supportive policies designed to facilitate farmers' employment and entrepreneurial endeavors within their local regions.

2.1 The influence of social network on entrepreneurial intention of farmers

Social capital is a foundational element influencing entrepreneurial intentions among farmers. Liu et al. explore how the strength, diversity, and centrality of network connections significantly affect farmers' entrepreneurial decision-making. They indicate that personal networks play a vital role in decision-making processes and emphasize the necessity for communal trust and participation for effective entrepreneurship (Liu et al., 2024). Furthermore, Lin et al. establish a positive correlation between rural e-commerce participation and farmers' entrepreneurial behaviors, suggesting that well-developed social networks act as mediators that enhance motivation and opportunities for entrepreneurship among rural farmers (Lin et al., 2024). This analysis of social networks illustrates a duality where both informal connections and organized structures contribute to a conducive environment for entrepreneurial activities in rural contexts.

Moreover, social networks facilitate knowledge exchange and provide necessary resources for entrepreneurial engagement. The role of bridging social capital is particularly emphasized by Ferreira et al., who argue that lacking engagement with diverse business partners can inhibit farmers' self-efficacy and thereby their entrepreneurial intentions (Ferreira et al., 2022). In a similar vein, Shabsough et al. highlight how social networking behaviors significantly amplify entrepreneurial intentions, especially among populations that perceive barriers to entrepreneurship (Shabsough et al., 2020). This correlation implies that individuals embedded within robust networks are more likely to leverage these connections for entrepreneurial initiatives.

The influence of both online and face-to-face social networks further reinforces their positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Pérez-Fernández et al. document that both forms of social networks are crucial for resource acquisition during the early stages of entrepreneurship, emphasizing the integration of digital platforms in facilitating rural entrepreneurship (Pérez-Fernández et al., 2020). These platforms enhance communication and resource sharing while expanding farmers' access to broader markets, consequently promoting their entrepreneurial intention.

Additionally, cultural and educational frameworks underpinning social networks also play an influential role. Studies conducted by Wu et al. and Li suggest that education and pre-existing entrepreneurial knowledge significantly facilitate entrepreneurship. The enhancement of entrepreneurial skills through social interactions can lead to increased confidence and readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities, which is critical for the younger demographic within agricultural communities (Wu et al., 2023; Li, 2023). The synthesis of these perspectives highlights a dynamic interplay between social networks, education, and entrepreneurial intention that is integral to understanding rural entrepreneurship in China.

2.2 The moderation relationship of gender between social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention

Evidence suggests that social networking serves as a pivotal mechanism that enhances entrepreneurial intentions among female farmers. For instance, Shabsough et al. highlight that women showed stronger entrepreneurial intentions when actively engaging in social networking behaviors, and this relationship is strengthened by their perceptions of socio-economic constraints, such as the 'sticky floor' phenomenon in entrepreneurship (Shabsough et al., 2020). This aligns with Ryu and Kim's findings, which reveal that while opportunity recognition positively

influences entrepreneurial intentions across genders, the effect is notably weaker for women compared to men (Ryu & Kim, 2020). Such distinctions underline the critical need to consider gender as a moderating factor in the relationship between social networks and entrepreneurial opportunities in rural settings.

Moreover, psychological aspects embedded in social interactions further enrich this understanding. Villanueva-Flores et al. indicate that social groups act as significant predictors of entrepreneurial intention—notably for women—highlighting the impact of familial and communal support in fostering entrepreneurial aspirations (Villanueva-Flores et al., 2021). This view is also supported by findings from Wu et al., who identify that perceived entrepreneurial support may differentially affect entrepreneurial intentions based on gender, underscoring the complexity of social interactions within these contexts (Wu et al., 2022).

Research indicates that women often rely more heavily on their social networks for encouragement and information, which may facilitate their entrepreneurial intentions. The literature consistently indicates that women experience a stronger influence of social norms on entrepreneurial behavior. For instance, Ruiz-Alba et al. note that women are more likely to adjust their entrepreneurial intentions to conform to group expectations, illustrating a marked difference compared to their male counterparts, who may prioritize independence and personal goals less affected by social norms (Ruiz-Alba et al., 2015).

2.3 The moderation relationship of government working experience between social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention

Government working experience serves as a crucial moderator by bridging formal and informal social structures. The experience gained by individuals from governmental roles can enhance their ability to leverage social networks effectively, as they are often more familiar with resource allocation and strategic collaborations within these networks. This phenomenon is observed in studies that reflect on how government roles can facilitate the emergence and nurturing of social ties necessary for entrepreneurship, contributing positively to farmers' entrepreneurial intentions (Ruan et al., 2022). Specifically, government-sponsored initiatives in rural development have been shown to promote stronger social networks, enhancing cooperative behaviors among farmers and increasing their willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Tang et al., 2022).

Moreover, social capital derived from these networks significantly affects entrepreneurial intentions. Research indicates that high levels of bridging social capital (the connections between different social groups) are associated with better governance performance and higher participation rates in economic activities (Xia, 2011). In contrast, bonding social capital (the closeness within a homogeneous group) can lead to insularity and a reduced willingness to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities outside established boundaries (Fan, 2018). This means that while government experience can enhance access to external networks, it must also leverage existing local networks to foster an environment conducive to entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial intentions among rural farmers in China are influenced by their perception of support from social networks, which can be dependent on their previous experiences and existing relationships. The entrepreneurial intentions of rural farmers in China are significantly shaped by their perceptions of social support networks, which are influenced by their previous experiences and existing relationships. Research indicates that social capital, particularly within family and community networks, plays a critical role in farmers'

decision-making regarding entrepreneurship (Liu et al., 2024).

Family dynamics and kinship networks are essential as they provide emotional and resource support, facilitating entrepreneurial ventures (Luo et al., 2023). Additionally, digital literacy has been shown to enhance entrepreneurial behavior among farmers, emphasizing the relationship between technological proficiency and business engagement (Bai et al., 2023). Thus, fostering strong social networks and improving digital capabilities are vital for promoting entrepreneurship in rural areas.

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

This study takes farmers who are doing individual business in China as the research object, and sets social network as independent variable. Entrepreneurial intention is the dependent variable, gender and government working experience are moderating variables. This study investigates the influence of social network on the impact of entrepreneurial intention, as well as the mechanism by which it promotes entrepreneurial intention moderated by gender and government working experience. Referring to the above analysis, the Conceptual Framework of the relationship formation is as the figure below:

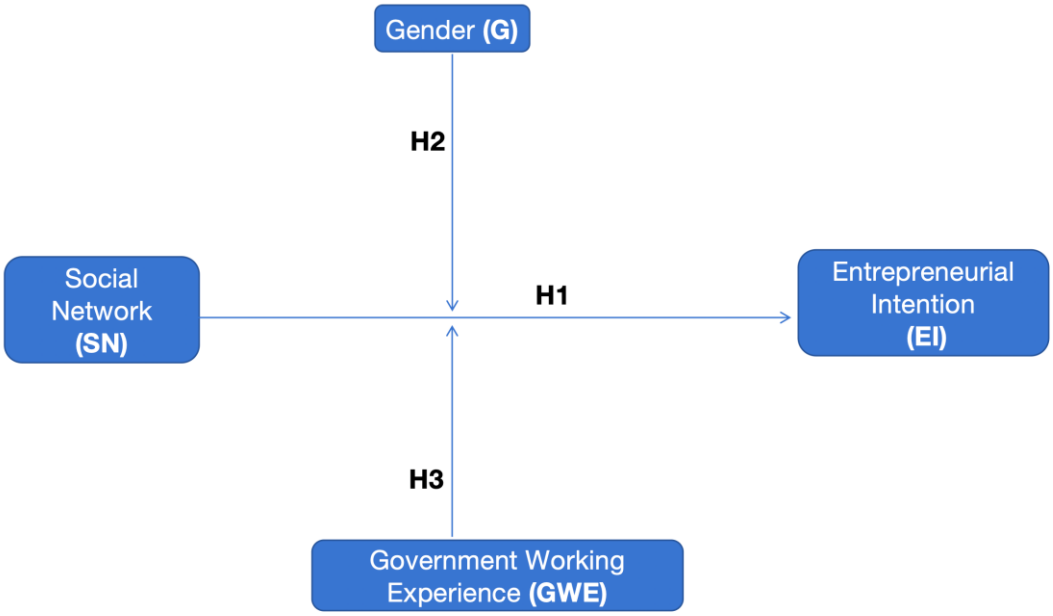

Figure1 Conceptual Framework

According to conceptual framework, the following hypotheses can be advocated:

H_1: Social networks have a positive effect on farmers' entrepreneurial intention.

H_2: Gender plays a moderating role in social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention.

H_3: Government working experience plays a moderating role in social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention.

In this study, a sample composed of rural non-entrepreneurial farmers was utilized, with data acquisition

accomplished through a questionnaire survey method. The data were extracted from the relevant statistical records pertaining to the subject group. This research was executed in Jiangsu Province, China, a region characterized by a well-developed economy and significant levels of entrepreneurial activity. Notably, the government of Jiangsu Province has undertaken substantial initiatives to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem by refining policies and measures and by developing supportive infrastructures and platforms, thereby increasing the intensity of the rural entrepreneurial environment. Annually, governmental support extends to approximately 65,000 self-employed farmers. Furthermore, Jiangsu Province stands at the forefront of the nation in terms of the number of exemplary cases representing outstanding leaders in rural entrepreneurship across China. According to data released by the Jiangsu Provincial Bureau of Statistics, the rural labor force population in Jiangsu Province reached a total of 26,225,700 as of December 2022. Consequently, the sample for this study included 650 individuals from the rural demographic (exceeding a minimum of 384), primarily within the age range of 20 to 60 years, selected randomly from various locations across Jiangsu Province, China.

4 FINDINGS

The large-scale questionnaire survey for this study was carried out from February to July 2023, utilizing a variety of distribution methods including random distribution of questionnaires, interviews, and emails. The survey targeted respondents in both the southern and northern regions of Jiangsu Province. Ultimately, a total of 650 questionnaires were gathered from these regions. Upon thorough examination, it was identified that several questionnaires contained incomplete responses, non-standardized options, or errors. Consequently, these invalid entries were excluded from further analysis, resulting in a total of 548 valid questionnaires, which corresponds to an effective response rate of 87.5%.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table1 Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Network	1.000	5.000	3.418	0.898	0.807	0.019	-0.975
Entrepreneurial Intention	1.667	5.000	3.449	0.794	0.630	0.075	-0.755

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the descriptive statistics derived from the formal survey utilized in this study. The analysis reveals that neither the maximum nor minimum values recorded exhibit any anomalies or exceptional cases. Furthermore, the skewness and kurtosis metrics are well within the acceptable limits established in the existing literature. As a result, it can be concluded that the data obtained from the questionnaire conforms to the requirements indicative of a normal distribution. This finding facilitates the continuation of subsequent research endeavors.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Table2 Summary of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Network	5	0.883
Entrepreneurial Intention	6	0.871

In conclusion, the reliability coefficient value of all variables are all greater than 0.8, which is good and suitable for exploratory factor analysis.

4.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table3 KMO and Bartlett's Test of Social Network

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.829
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1493.797
	df	10
	Sig.	0.000

Validity was verified using KMO and Bartlett's test, as can be seen from the table above: the KMO value is 0.829, which is greater than 0.8; Bartlett's test of sphericity shows an approximate chi-square value of 1493.797, with a degree of freedom of 10, and a probability of significance of 0.000, which is less than 0.001, which suggests that the data of the study is of good validity and is suitable for factor analysis.

Table4 KMO and Bartlett's Test of Entrepreneurial Intention

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.850
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1575.429
	df	15
	Sig.	0.000

The validity was verified using KMO and Bartlett's test, as can be seen from the table above, the KMO value is 0.850, which is greater than 0.8; Bartlett's test of sphericity shows an approximate chi-square value of 1575.429, with a degree of freedom of 15, and a probability of significance of 0.000, which is less than 0.001, which suggests that the data of the study has a better structure in terms of validity, and it is appropriate for factor analysis.

4.4 Correlation analysis

Table5 Correlations

	Mean	S.D.	SN	EI
Social Network	3.418	0.898	1	
Entrepreneurial Intention	3.449	0.794	.263**	1

In the above table. The mean value of social network is 3.418±0.898, the mean value of entrepreneurial intention is 3.449±0.794. The correlation between the twos variables is statistically significant ($p<0.05$), and both of them are positively correlated, with the strongest correlation between digital finance and entrepreneurial intention.

4.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variables	Title item	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	P	AVE	CR
Social Network	XB1	0.691	0.588	***	0.576	0.871
	XB2	0.753	0.476	***		
	XB3	0.793	0.449	***		
	XB4	0.761	0.515	***		
	XB5	0.792	0.469	***		
Entrepreneurial Intention	YA1	0.712	0.453	***	0.513	0.864
	YA2	0.718	0.467	***		
	YA3	0.712	0.510	***		
	YA4	0.703	0.601	***		
	YA5	0.734	0.473	***		
	YA6	0.719	0.520	***		

CMIN/DF=1.239，DF=162，CMIN=200.729，AGFI=0.955, CFI＝0.992, TLI＝0.991，IFI＝0.992，RFI＝0.956，NFI＝0.962，RMR＝0.032, RMSEA=0.021，

The above table shows the results of the validated factor analysis for the two factors, and the corresponding 11 analytical terms. According to the above table, the value of χ^2/df is 1.239, which is less than 3, the value of RMR is 0.032, which is less than 0.05, the values of AGFI, CFI, TLI, IFI, RFI, and NFI are all greater than 0.9, and the value of RMSEA is 0.021, which is less than 0.08, showing that the model is well fitted. The AVE values of the variables are 0.576 and 0.513, all are above 0.5. The CR values of the combined reliability are 0.871 and 0.864, which are all above 0.7. It indicates that the data of this analysis has good cluster validity.

4.6 Path analysis

Table7 Path analysis results

Path			Estimate	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
EI	<---	SN	0.187	0.201	0.048	3.913	***	Support

CMIN/DF=1.239，DF=162，CMIN=200.729, CFI＝0.992,TLI＝0.991, IFI=0.992，NFI＝0.962，AGFI=0.955，RMR＝0.032，RMSEA=0.021

The effects of social network on entrepreneurial intention is significant and positive ($p < 0.001$), with standardised path coefficients of 0.201. The greater the social network, the greater the entrepreneurial intention. Thus, H1 is supported.

4.7 Moderating Effects

4.7.1 Moderating Effect of Gender between Social Network (SN) and Entrepreneurial intention (EI)

Table8 Moderating effect of Gender between SN and EI

Gender		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients B	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	(Constant)	2.301	0.173		13.269	0.000	1.960	2.643
	SN	0.339	0.051	0.369	6.711	0.000	0.240	0.439
Female	(Constant)	3.077	0.192		16.007	0.000	2.699	3.456
	SN	0.113	0.053	0.132	2.132	0.034	0.009	0.216
F_M=45.037, F_F=4.547								

From the above table, it can be seen that the regression models for both the male and female groups are meaningful, with FM=45.037, p=0.000, FF=4.547, p=0.000. The regression coefficient of Social Network (SN) for Entrepreneurial intention (EI) in the male group is 0.369, P=0.000 (P<0.05), which is significant. The regression coefficient of Social Network (SN) for Entrepreneurial intention (EI) in the female group is 0.132, P=0.034 (P<0.05), which is statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval of the male Social Network (SN) regression coefficient is 0.240~0.439, and the 95% confidence interval of the female SN regression coefficient is 0.009~0.216. There is no overlap between the two 95% confidence intervals, and they are completely separated. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the two regression coefficients, further indicating that gender can regulate the effect of Social Network (SN) on Entrepreneurial intention (EI), that is, gender has a significant moderating effect between Social Network (SN) and Entrepreneurial intention (EI). Thus, H2 is supported.

4.7.2 Moderating Effect of Government Working Experience (GWE) between Social Network (SN) and Entrepreneurial intention (EI)

Table9 Moderating effect of Government Working Experience (GWE) between SN and EI

GW		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients B	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Yes	(Constant)	1.443	0.437		3.305	0.006	0.492	2.395
	SN	0.678	0.100	0.890	6.773	0.000	0.460	0.897
No	(Constant)	2.754	0.131		21.036	0.000	2.497	3.011
	SN	0.198	0.037	0.224	5.308	0.000	0.125	0.271
F_Y=45.867, F_N=28.171								

From the above table, it can be seen that the regression models for both the group working in the government and the group not working in the government are meaningful, with FM=45.867, P=0.000, FF=28.171, P=0.000. The regression coefficient of Social Network (SN) for Entrepreneurial intention (EI) in the government work group is 0.890, P=0.000 (P<0.05), which is significant. The regression coefficient of Social Network (SN) for

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) in the group without working in the government is 0.224, P=0.000 (P<0.05), which is statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval of the Social Network (SN) regression coefficient for the group working in the government is 0.460-0.897, while the 95% confidence interval for the group not working in the government is 0.125-0.271. The two 95% confidence intervals do not overlap and are completely separated. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the two regression coefficients, further indicating whether government work moderates the effect of Social Network (SN) on Entrepreneurial intention (EI), that is, whether the moderating effect of government work between Social Network (SN) and Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is significant. Thus, H3 is supported.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The first objective of this research is to investigate the correlation between social networks and the entrepreneurial intentions of farmers. The findings indicate that social networks exert a positive and statistically significant influence on the entrepreneurial intentions of farmers, thus lending support to the acceptability of Hypothesis 1. These results align with the classifications presented by Dong and Zhao (2019), who categorize farmers' social networks into five distinct types: political networks, entrepreneurial networks, financial networks, association networks, and interpersonal networks. Notably, political networks facilitate farmers' access to essential but limited resources, corroborating the research by Bowen and De Clercq (2008), which demonstrates the affirmative impact of political networks on farmers' confidence regarding business returns and property rights protection; this, in turn, plays a crucial role in fostering their entrepreneurial intentions. Regarding entrepreneurial networks, the current findings resonate with those reported by Hopp and Sonderegger (2015), who argue that a robust entrepreneurial network can significantly aid farmers in acquiring pertinent entrepreneurial information, knowledge, and experiential learning, thereby enhancing their potential for entrepreneurial success. Moreover, previous research conducted by Hao et al. (2012) highlighted the substantial influence of financial networks on farmers' access to entrepreneurial capital; these networks contribute to lowering financing costs and bolstering entrepreneurial intentions, a verification that is echoed in the present study. Additionally, both association networks and interpersonal networks demonstrate a favorable impact on farmer' entrepreneurial intentions, further reinforcing the validity of the study's conclusions.

The second research objective of this study is to analyse the effect of gender between social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention. The research finds that gender plays a moderating role between social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention. The conclusions are in line with those of Yıldız et al.(2021), Steinert et al.(2021), therefore, Hypothesis 2 is assumed to be acceptable. It is found that gender has significant moderating effects in the following aspects. The government plays a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship among rural women by actively guiding the establishment and expansion of diverse social networks tailored to their needs. Through initiatives aimed at developing rural financial systems, the government provides essential support to assist these women in embarking on entrepreneurial ventures(Tian, 2022). At the same time, the rising frequency of Internet usage exerts a significant positive influence on the entrepreneurial decisions made by rural women. This phenomenon not only enhances their traditional views regarding gender discrimination but also contributes to a

growing awareness of equal rights(Liu, 2022).

The third research objective of this study is to analyse the effect of government working experience between social network and farmers' entrepreneurial intention. The research finds that government working experience plays a moderating role between financial literacy and farmers' entrepreneurial intention. The findings suggest that enhancing the financial literacy and entrepreneurial capabilities of farmers necessitates a comprehensive approach that encompasses various forms of support and intervention strategies. Such initiatives not only facilitate the advancement of the rural economy but also offer substantial backing for the execution of rural revitalization strategies. The conclusions are in line with those of Emami et al.(2023), Khan ZA, et al.(2023), Jiang et al.(2022), therefore, Hypothesis 11 is assumed to be acceptable. It is found that government working experience has significant moderating effects in the following aspects. The experience gained from governmental work substantially contributes to the enhancement of an individual's credibility and trust within agricultural social networks. Farmers who possess backgrounds in government are often perceived as more trustworthy by their peers, a notion supported by the research conducted by Emami et al. (2023). Their findings suggest that such credibility serves as a catalyst for fostering trust among colleagues, which subsequently encourages the exchange of valuable resources and information, ultimately stimulating entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, possessing government experience can facilitate access to essential resources. Individuals with this background frequently enjoy increased access to governmental initiatives aimed at bolstering entrepreneurial activities. Research by Khan et al. (2023) reveals that this access enhances the benefits derived from social connections, providing additional opportunities that further amplify entrepreneurial ambitions. In addition, individuals with experience in government settings are often skilled at optimizing their social networks. According to the study by Jiang et al. (2022), these individuals are adept at pinpointing influential figures within their networks who can offer targeted assistance or mentorship tailored to their entrepreneurial objectives. Lastly, government experience may yield improved decision-making competencies pertaining to entrepreneurial pursuits. Jiang et al. (2022) corroborate this assertion; their investigation indicates that the heightened decision-making abilities gained from such experience empower farmers to leverage their social networks more effectively, which, in turn, cultivates stronger entrepreneurial intentions.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Policy Recommendations for the Chinese Government

It is recommended that the Chinese government actively promote social entrepreneurship as a strategy to enhance participation in social entrepreneurship initiatives, mitigate poverty, and stimulate regional development. The initial step should involve the establishment of comprehensive entrepreneurship education and training programs tailored for farmers. This initiative encompasses two primary components. First, the formulation of entrepreneurship education programs specifically designed for rural migrant workers who return to their communities, equipping them with the essential knowledge and skills to initiate and manage their own businesses. Second, the creation of dedicated learning platforms to deliver professional training aimed at aspiring entrepreneurs, thereby enhancing their entrepreneurial capabilities and foundational competencies.

Subsequently, the government should extend financial support and incentives to farmers engaged in social entrepreneurship. This can be achieved through the provision of various forms of financial assistance, including

grants, low-interest loans, or microfinance options, to facilitate the establishment and sustainability of social enterprises. Concurrently, it is crucial for the government to offer tax incentives and subsidies targeted towards social enterprises that specifically address local developmental challenges and create job opportunities within rural communities.

Furthermore, the government must prioritize the enhancement of infrastructure and market access for social enterprises. Improvements in rural infrastructure—including transportation networks, communication systems, and market access—are essential to the effective operation of these enterprises. In addition, the development of online platforms to connect rural social enterprises with potential customers and investors, both at the national and international levels, is highly advisable.

Another important course of action involves the facilitation of public-private partnerships. These collaborations should aim to leverage the expertise and resources of the private sector to foster the growth of social entrepreneurship in rural regions. Additionally, the government is tasked with establishing a comprehensive legal framework for social enterprises, which should clearly outline their roles, rights, and responsibilities within the rural economic landscape.

Moreover, the promotion of social capital in community entrepreneurship education is pivotal, with an emphasis on building robust business networks, enhancing legal knowledge, skill development, and securing funding. Lastly, fostering community engagement in the land consolidation process is essential, as it can stimulate local participation in public affairs and encourage villagers to adhere to contractual agreements, thereby reinforcing their commitment to collaborative efforts aimed at community development.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Social Network Development

There are two recommendations for farmer entrepreneurs to develop their social network. The first is to leverage social capital. Farmer entrepreneurs can enhance their ventures by utilizing social capital and engaging in community initiatives. This engagement can occur through participation in community forums and workshops organized by local organizations, providing opportunities for networking, idea exchange, and building relationships. Additionally, establishing local entrepreneur clubs or associations can cultivate a shared sense of purpose and community among rural business owners. The creation of mentorship and peer support programs is vital. Experienced entrepreneurs can guide aspiring farmer entrepreneurs, fostering peer-to-peer learning and collaboration by sharing experiences and challenges. Moreover, partnerships with educational institutions, such as universities and vocational schools, can facilitate knowledge exchange and network building, particularly through incubation and mentorship initiatives aimed at supporting rural entrepreneurs.

The second is to promote digital networking and local leadership. In the modern context, it is increasingly common for farmers to utilize social media to form virtual networks, enabling connections and resource access irrespective of geographic limitations. Supporting the emergence of local leaders who can act as facilitators in organizing networking events is equally essential. Furthermore, implementing intentional innovation communities (IICs) can stimulate grassroots-level entrepreneurship and innovation. To sustain these networks, government and community policies must encourage the formation of social networks, including funding for events and community-building activities.

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