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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL ATTITUDES, SUBJECTIVE NORMS, AND PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION OF URBAN YOUTH IN CHINA

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Abstract:

While China has developed comprehensive policies to boost urban economic development and foster an innovative environment, there is still a lack of entrepreneurial spirit among urban young people. The misalignment of national innovation agendas and entrepreneurial intentions of urban youth may impede the shift towards a knowledge-based economy and the generation of stable and sustainable jobs. Therefore, it is important to examine the personal and situational factors that may influence entrepreneurial intention for this group. This study is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour which extends entrepreneurship studies by shedding light on the entrepreneurial intentions of urban youth through the personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Measurement instruments were modified from validated research instruments. Quantitative cross-sectional descriptive correlational research was used to examine relationships between the study constructs. Partial Least Squares (PLS) Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyse the collected data and was done with the help of SmartPLS 4. The results indicated that personal attitude, perceived social expectations and perceived behavioural control positively and significantly influenced entrepreneurial intention each. The findings indicate that entrepreneurial attitudes, perceived ability to handle entrepreneurial role and encouragement from influential others are factors that are more likely to influence the entrepreneurial thinking of young people when

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entrepreneurial attitude is perceived positively. The longitudinal approach is recommended for future studies to observe the changes over time and give more concrete evidence of the causal relationships between the psychological variables and entrepreneurial intention.

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Keyword:

Personal Attitude, Norms, Entrepreneurial Intention, Youth, China.

Introduction

In the last four decades, China has witnessed an unprecedented economic shift from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, where innovation, entrepreneurship, and private sector growth have become more important. In the last 40 years, China has undergone a remarkable shift in its economic system, with greater emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurship, and private sector development (Zheng & Du, 2020). In this very dynamic economic scenario, entrepreneurial activity among the young people of the cities has become a topic of great focus, as it can contribute to technological advancement, job creation and strengthening national competitiveness. Urbanization rate in China currently over 70% and urban youth population over 400 million, China has a large base of entrepreneurial people. China is a country with a large entrepreneurial force, as its urbanization rate has reached 70% and the number of urban youths has topped 400 million (Song, 2022). However, the entrepreneurial intention of young people in China is still relatively small compared to the opportunities for youth entrepreneurs in the evolving market (Lyu et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurship education has become a crucial part of China's higher education system, with growing recognition of its importance. As a part of the national innovation and economic development agenda, the Ministry of Education has made entrepreneurship course, training programmes and practical activities an integral component of the academics in universities, including urban universities. But the provision of entrepreneurship education does not imply that students have a strong likelihood of starting up their own business.

Lv et al. (2022) pointed out that although a significant portion of urban university students are interested in entrepreneurship, a relatively small part eventually becomes entrepreneurs or formally operating businesses. This gap between entrepreneurial intention and participation also suggests that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by a mix of personal psychological factors, social factors and environmental factors. Individual confidence, motivation to be an entrepreneur, cultural beliefs, and perceptions about the availability of necessary resources are all factors that constitute an important dimension of attitude which leads to entrepreneurial intention (Londono et al., 2021). Social expectations and family influence are other factors that

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can influence youth's entrepreneurial choices. For many cities, career paths in government agencies or public institutions, or state-owned companies, remain seen as safer and more attractive than the prospects of launching a business (Shan et al., 2018; Lavelle, 2021). The social preferences may decrease the motivation and assistance given to young entrepreneurs wishing to become entrepreneurs.

Starting from the late 1970s, China has established one of the world's most comprehensive entrepreneurial ecosystem, which is facilitated by the market reforms, technological development and policy orientation toward innovation (Zheng & Du, 2020). Educated and technically skilled, with a positive attitude towards innovation, urban youth are an important target group for entrepreneurship strategies in countries. To boost the creation of businesses and innovative activities, an initiative like “Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation” policy has been established. (Wang, You, et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2008). Chunmei and Bahari (2024) also found that there were discrepancies between young people's entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial practices. The gap underscores the need to study the interaction between the personal beliefs, the social pressure, and the perceived capability, and the way these factors affect entrepreneurial decision making.

Hence, this study takes the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as the conceptual basis to explore the influence of personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on entrepreneurial intentions of urban youths. Through this approach, the research aims to shed light on the question of why positive aspects for education, such as strong structures, rapid tech development and supportive government policies, do not necessarily translate into entrepreneurial involvement. The findings should help policy makers and academic institutions in developing better strategies, training programs and support mechanisms to help young people turn their entrepreneurial dreams into actual business ventures, especially in emerging cities like Nanning (Charles, 2025) with urban innovation centers.

Literature Review

The personal beliefs, social expectations and individual behaviour capabilities are all determinants of entrepreneurial intention formation. The review is mainly based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and aims to analyze the personal and situational influences on entrepreneurial intentions of the urban youth of China.

Insights From A Study Of Entrepreneurial Intention Among Urban Youth In China.

Entrepreneurial intention is the conscious intent, determination and future-oriented plan of a person to create a new business venture (Ajzen, 1991). It reflects the mental readiness and motivation that a person has to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Liñán & Chen, 2009). The entrepreneurial intention is concentrated in the urban young population and is generally associated with aspirations for self-development, economic independence, self-determination, flexible career and innovation-driven economic growth (Huang et al., 2022; Ting et al., 2017).

Although China has launched a series of measures to promote entrepreneurship in recent years, including economic restructuring, establishing a favorable policy environment, and implementing innovation-oriented development strategies, the rate of youth entering entrepreneurship and their entrepreneurial confidence is still relatively low (Lyu et al., 2024; Wang, You, et al., 2023). This is evident from the significant difference between youth interest

in entrepreneurship and their involvement in real entrepreneurial activities which shows that there is a need to identify the factors that influence youth entrepreneurial decision making and choices.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of this phenomenon, in this study the TPB framework is used to investigate the psychological factors that influence entrepreneurial intention. According to Ajzen's theoretical model, three basic constructs – namely personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control – explain the influence of intention. This explains how individual perceptions, social influences, and perceived capabilities determinants in the choice of urban youth are to consider entrepreneurship as a career option (Hui et al., 2018).

Personal attitude is an individual's overall perception and evaluation of entrepreneurship which will affect the desire to create a business. Subjective norms are the impact of social networks and external norms, such as family, peer, and societal opinion and encouragement. Perceived behavioural control is defined as a person’s self-efficacy which is derived from their knowledge, skills, resources and self-confidence for performing entrepreneurial tasks successfully. These three dimensions can be taken together to capture the psychological reasons why entrepreneurial intentions are formed and what factors might hinder the realization of entrepreneurial actions by individuals.

Further, the TPB perspective offers an explanation for why urban youth might be reluctant to engage in entrepreneurship even when they have access to more sophisticated educational systems, technology and growing market opportunities. Entrepreneurs make decisions in a dynamic urban economy, where individual assessments, societal influences, and self-efficacy combine to determine entrepreneur choices. Hence, it is important to explore these relationships to uncover the process of the development and formation of entrepreneurial intention as well as how it can be reinforced in young people (Sharma, Bulsara, et al., 2024).

Empirical research of the past few years has shown a growth of young people's business confidence in urban areas.In recent years, empirical research has shown that the business confidence of the young people in urban areas is growing. A recent nationwide poll released by the China Institute for Youth and Social Service Research (CILSSR) in 2023 revealed that 62% of urban young people aged 18 to 35 years preferred to pursue entrepreneurship as their career.In 2018, 48 percent of urban youths (18 to 35 years) expressed their preference for entrepreneurial careers, and in 2023, this figure rose to 62 percent. Among them, 71% considered entrepreneurship as a way to gain personal freedom and ascendion, and 64% as a means to creative self-expression and influence in society (CILSSR, 2023). These findings highlight a shift ‘financial’ to ‘identity and self-actualization'. There is numerical evidence that this is the trend. Based on the TPB, Xie et al. (2018) found that the personal attitude towards entrepreneurship had the highest predictive power in students. They found that, in particular, when pupils had a positive rating of entrepreneurship, and they had some form of entrepreneurial education or entrepreneurial experience in the family, they were much more likely to exhibit entrepreneurial intents. In addition, Jiang (2022) reported that student participants in the pitch event or campus incubation had a tendency to correlate entrepreneurship with long-term professional fulfillment and purposeful innovation (Huang et al., 2022).

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Personal Attitudes (PA)

Entrepreneurial process is closely linked to personal attitude since it influences the intensity (Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2018). Entrepreneurial people are related to whether they find it desirable, beneficial or worthwhile to start and run a business. These assessments are not autonomous and self-made. They are developed based on previous experiences, education, cultural values and broader social context where a person lives (Liguori et al., 2020). Therefore, personal attitude to entrepreneurship is basically studied by analyzing the person's beliefs, feelings and probable behaviour orientation in entrepreneurship.

Maheshwari and Kha (2022) said that personal attitudes positively affect entrepreneurial intentions, hence enhancing the likelihood that an individual would want to establish their own firm via various means. Individuals who harbor positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship perceive entrepreneurial endeavours as valuable and financially rewarding, regarding them not only as a source of income but also as a pathway to self-fulfilment, autonomy, and self-actualization (Ambad, 2022). Vamvaka et al. (2020) posit that this perception leads to a strong motivational force that propels individuals towards entrepreneurship despite the fact that it is characterized by risk and uncertainty. For instance, an achievement-oriented and innovative person is likely to be pulled towards the challenges and creativity that come with entrepreneurship, hence contribute to a high entrepreneurial intention.

Secondly, the authors Boldureanu et al. (2020) opine that positive personal attitudes help in increasing success in entrepreneurship. High self-efficacy is essential for the ability to persevere over the challenges and failures that are inevitable in an entrepreneurial career (Amofah & Saladrigues, 2022). When people have confidence in their ability, they can proactively seek ways of starting their businesses, self-confidence will also help them push through the tough times and change the business when necessary, making them more successful entrepreneurs. This is further posited that someone with high self-esteem and self-perceived control is likely to perceive enterprise management as more doable hence high entrepreneurial intention (Jena, 2020). Personal attitude, in addition, determines the opportunities and threats entrepreneurship environment (Hueso et al. 2021). Nowiński et al. (2020), suggest that opportunistic perspective is crucial as it allows entrepreneurs to succeed. For instance, Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO) scale score in the innovation dimension, they will focus on exploring new markets and creating new products that will improve their entrepreneurial intention. This is shows that positive attitude people find business opportunities more because they always look at the opportunity side rather than the risks that are involved. For example, good risk managers always ensure that risks are well managed through proper planning and allocation of resources, which indirectly effect their entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, it is arguing the positive attitudes among urban youth in China could predict their entrepreneurial intention.

> *H1*: Personal attitudes have a direct and positive effect on the entrepreneurial intention of urban youth in China.

Subjective Norms (SN)

Two critical components of the TPB conduct that examine the determinants influencing conduct, including entrepreneurial aspirations, are personal and societal norms (Yasir et al., 2021; Hossain et al., 2023). These standards are assimilated via witnessing significant figures

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in an individual's life (Yangailo & Qutieshat, 2022). They are normative perceptions about the appropriateness of starting up entrepreneur according to Vamvaka et al. (2020). Social norms influence and perceived influence related to intended entrepreneurship. Subjective norms are generally assessed by calculating the level in which the individual believes that the referents approve or disapprove the entrepreneurial behaviour. As stated by Igwe et al. (2020), it can also be described in several ways based on the psychometric scales and surveys and questionnaires related to the evaluation of the social aspect (Wazni et al. 2023). One of the most popular techniques is the one where the respondents are asked to number their agreement with some statements concerning expectations of important others on business intentions on the Likert scale. For instance, as supported by Saraih et al. (2018), the respondent may be asked questions like ‘My family would disapprove if I did not start an entrepreneurship venture’ or ‘My friends would disapprove if I did not pursue an entrepreneurship venture,’ in order to determine the extent of perceived social pressure and the objective norms regarding decisions made concerning involvement in entrepreneurship ventures.

Nguyen et al (2022) argue that external factors affecting human decisions have a wide variety. Some people might have to follow societal norms, some people might feel pressured to follow the expectations of influential people in their life. However, there are some who may be more self-interested and may become more focused on personal achievements than conforming to group norms, which may lead to lower sensitivity to conformity (Ragazou et al., 2022). Peer networks, especially within the context of young people's groups who are digital natives, are thus gaining influence. Peer support is one of the most effective motivators for young businesspeople to start a business, as 58% of those surveyed by the CILSSR indicated it was a factor that encouraged them to take the plunge. Students that participated in startup contests, participated in startup incubator programs or had exposure to online groups of entrepreneurs reported extremely high peer impact. These networks foster a 'brotherhood' ethos that can help to offset the influence of the dominant family and mainstream entrepreneurial norms. A passive normative role is also played by the school system. The learning environment within the university and the attitudes of teachers and the importance of institutional support systems constitute a definition of what is considered “acceptable” or “desirable” behavior for deciding on a post-graduation job. According to Xie, et al. (2018), the students at the institutions where there was an entrepreneurship program were 24% more likely to state that conditions in their local environment were conducive to the development of companies. The latest platforms for creating subjective norms are social media platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Bilibili. If anyone ever takes the time to record the paths to start-up or promotes entrepreneurial life, it contributes to the growing perception that starting up is not only feasible, but also preferable. This visibility alters the expectations of youth of their peer group and society in general (Jiang, 2022).

In the meantime, the subjective norms of the urban Chinese youth are influenced by the multiple important social referents. The stress of the family is really powerful in early youth. Research by authors A Shan et al. (2018), indicated that the parents influence the students' career choice, 67% of the students in the eastern part of China stated this issue. This is in line with the traditional cultural beliefs in Confucianism, which perceived family acceptance as one of the key factors in a person's life choices such as self-employment (Vatsa et al., 2025). Lack of support from significant others in the form of negative thinking and/or disapproval or lack of support for entrepreneurship-related activities can lead to a reduction in entrepreneurial intentions for people. These negative social forces can include cultural norms on the behavioral aspects of risk-taking, social responsibilities to undertake traditional professions (Wijayati et

al., 2021). Moreover, the idea of lifelong employment is welcomed, and self-employment is seen as insecurity, with which people will have to cope with social obstacles in order to become entrepreneurs. Some of these negative subjective norms can lower self-efficacies and dissuade people from entering into entrepreneurship (Kobylińska, 2022). Subjective norms are the factors that are integrated into oneself, which lead to entrepreneurial intention. Chinese urban youth's subjective norms are multifaceted. The norms of family are still the strongest reference group, but peer and digital community norms are increasingly influencing entrepreneurial intentions, especially for those with a university education and who are digitally connected.

H2: Subjective norms have a direct and positive effect on the entrepreneurial intention of urban youth in China.

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC): The Individual's Belief In Their Ability To Carry Out The Behaviour.

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) is one of the basic components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and it means the perception of the person on his/her ability, capability or level of control to perform a specific action (Trivedi, 2017). In the field of entrepreneurship research, PBC is defined as a person's perceived ability and self-assurance in starting, running and managing a new enterprise. This perception is affected by the individual's characteristics and external factors that affect them as an individual to be involved in entrepreneurial activities.

There are a number of factors that affect the formation of a PBC. Internal factors refer to entrepreneurial knowledge, acquired skills, self-confidence and an individual's confidence in their own abilities. External influences are external financial resources, external professional networks, physical facilities, market connections and other aspects of business assistance. Thus, PBC is the individual's perceived ability to cope with the uncertainties and challenges of entrepreneurship due to his/her capability, autonomy and resource availability.

In the literature, previous research works by Feola et al. (2019) and Aloulou et al. (2024) highlight that PBC should be studied from two aspects: self-efficacy and control beliefs. Self-efficacy is about an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks, while control beliefs are about external conditions that could support or constrain entrepreneurial activities. For example, entrepreneurial self-efficacy can be measured by a person's confidence in his or her ability to formulate effective business strategies, identify opportunities, respond to uncertainty, and navigate risks in starting a business (Lim & Weissmann, 2023). These assessments will determine if the prospective entrepreneurs are able to see themselves as able to undertake the key tasks of an entrepreneur and handle the challenges of business formation.

Whereas control beliefs are related to a person's perception of external resources, supportive policies, market conditions, and other facilitating conditions that are relevant to the business activity (Sharma, Bulsara, et al., 2024). Kromidha et al. (2022) the perception of these can be measured through questions that ask respondents if they have access to financial resources, market opportunities and other elements of the commercial environment. The survey statements that relate to the respondents' confidence in getting the necessary capital for business and their confidence that sufficient opportunities are available in the market are recommended by Doanh and Bernat (2019). Self-efficacy and control beliefs are combined to make up the larger construct of perceived behavioural control.

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Individuals with self-confidence, who can identify potentially profitable business opportunities, access the resources they need and operate the business are more likely to take up entrepreneurship. This confidence is particularly significant since a lot of the barriers entrepreneurs face are often due to limited access to financing, severe competition, regulations, and uncertainty of operation (Shi et al., 2020). Likewise, Al Mamun et al. (2023) describe how confidence in the creation and survival of a business at the beginning relies on the ability to manage their finances and other critical resources. The sense of control over entrepreneurial activities can boost perceived opportunities for business and their seeming practicality and desirability, as argued by Chang et al. (2022). This makes entrepreneurship more appealing to entrepreneurs and will motivate them to take opportunities when they are available, due to the high levels of PBC. For example, a person who thinks that he or she can meet regulatory requirements and build proper business connections is more likely to initiate entrepreneurial activity in a highly regulated industry (Su et al., 2022).

PBCs are also linked with increased persistence and resilience during business. Entrepreneurship can have uncertainty, failures, risk and possible failure, so it is important to stick to the process even if there are difficulties that arise, in order to be successful in the long term (Utami, 2017). This resilience is reinforced by their confidence that they can overcome any difficulties they might face and that what they have can be used in a way to make the best of opportunities. When the business leaders have a good PBC, they are less likely to give up their plans if they do not work out the first time.

For instance, Vamvaka et al. (2020) propose that when entrepreneurs face the failure of their customer acquisition strategies due to low possibility of success, they could shift to another alternative strategy since they are confident in their problem-solving ability. Failure does not cause them to think that business goals are impossible, it is more likely that they will adjust their approach, look for new resources, and press ahead with the venture.

There are challenges and threats for young entrepreneurs in the constantly evolving economic landscape and fast technological advancement (Dubey & Sahu, 2022). Perceived behavioural control can empower young people in an urban context to take advantage of new opportunities, as well as to respond to new commercial challenges. Shi et al. (2020) in China, for instance, urban youth with high PBC might be more willing and able to modify their entrepreneurial behaviour as per the demands of the digital economy.

In the case of urban Chinese youth, PBC can be considered as two separate yet related aspects – intra-personal self-efficacy and extra-personal environmental control (Ajzen, 1991). Internal self-efficacy on the other hand pertains to the confidence in personal knowledge, skills and problem solving; while environmental control is related to the perceived availability of finance, institutional assistance, market opportunities, business networks and favourable policies.

> *H3*: Perceived behavioural control has a direct and positive effect on the entrepreneurial intention of urban youth in China.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, an extended version of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is used as a theoretical foundation to explain the determinants for entrepreneurial intentions of urban youth in China. The proposed model concentrates on the psychological and social processes in

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entrepreneurial decision-making process, while it involves three key determinants, namely personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These constructs refer to the personal assessment, social factors and perceived competences that together influence youth's willingness and preparedness to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This study incorporates these dimensions within the TPB perspective, providing a theoretical basis for studying the relationship among the personal perception, social expectation and perceived capabilities with entrepreneurial intention among the urban youth:

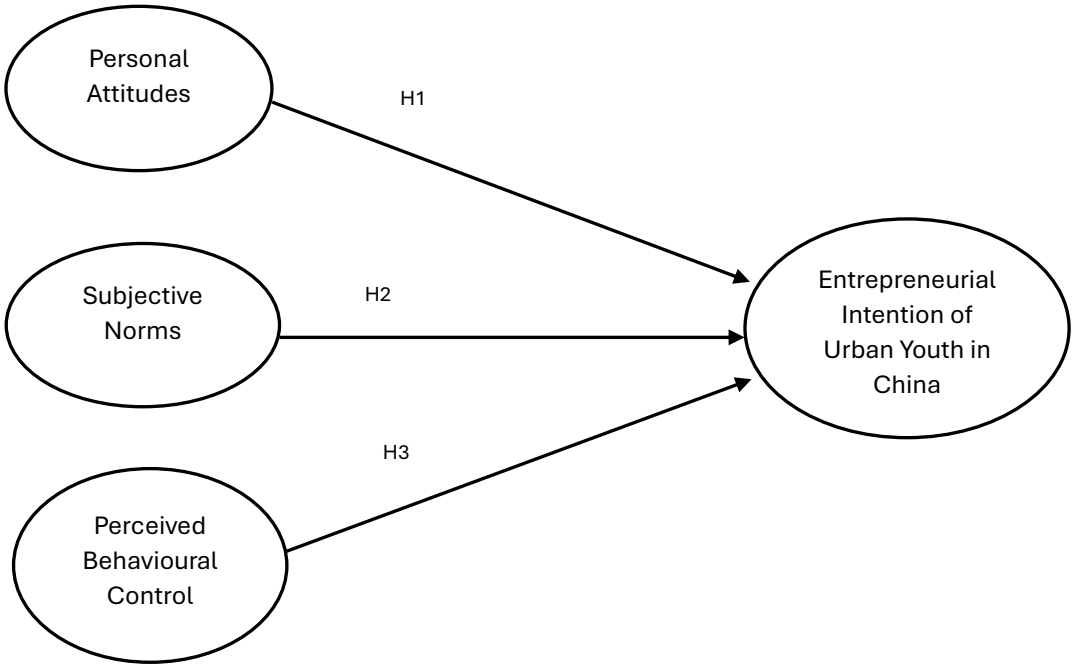

Figure 1: Conceptual diagram

Based on the proposed conceptual framework, this study assumes that the personal attitude (H1) will positively affect entrepreneurial intention of urban youth in China. People with positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship are more likely to gain high motivation, interest, and desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Saeed et al., 2018). Expressing positive evaluation of entrepreneurship can help to build self-confidence in the students to think that entrepreneurship is a viable, attractive and viable career options.

It also suggests that subjective norms (H2) is an important social factor that shapes entrepreneurial intention. Significant social networks (family, friends, peers, entrepreneurial role models) can influence the attitudes of young people towards entrepreneurship. Increased social acceptance and encouragement of entrepreneurial activities among youth are evidenced in their higher likelihood of having intentions to start a business (Cui & Bell, 2022).

Furthermore, the conceptual model shows that perceived behavioural control (H3) is a key factor in determining entrepreneurial intention. People who feel more confident about their entrepreneurship skills, knowledge and resources tend to be more likely to feel they can handle business challenges and create a new business. This makes individuals more likely to think of entrepreneurship as a viable and achievable path to take if they have more favorable perceptions of their personal capabilities and control (Elnadi & Gheith, 2021; Bhaskar & Seth, 2025).

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These theoretical assumptions suggest the hypotheses discussed in the next section.

H1: Personal attitudes have a direct and positive effect on the entrepreneurial intention of urban youth in China.
H2: Subjective norms have a direct and positive effect on the entrepreneurial intention of urban youth in China.
H3: Perceived behavioural control has a direct and positive effect on the entrepreneurial intention of urban youth in China.

Methodology

The research method used in this study is quantitative research that aims to solve the problem of the research by examining the factors affecting entrepreneurial intention among young people in Nanning City, China. Data was obtained from a structured questionnaire that captures the entrepreneurial intentions, perceptions and behavioural characteristics of participants. The study concentrates on the young people living in urban settings in Nanning. According to the latest estimates of demography, the total population of the city is about 8.97 million, with almost 2.7974 million being aged 18 and below. Based on the principle of representation, the target respondents were selected from the youth communities located in the 7 major urban districts of Nanning.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to increase the representativeness of the sample and reduce the possible sampling errors. Following the classification recommended by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), the respondents were classified based on their age range which falls within the age group 18-35 years. The number of samples required was determined based on the sampling principles offered by Mark, Philip and Adrian (2009) that there should be a sufficient representation of the population to be able to conduct reliable sampling analysis. A total of 418 valid responses were obtained from young people who are interested in entrepreneurial activities through the process of proportionate distribution in the strata identified. This was found to be adequate to yield meaningful statistical results on the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among urban youth.

The scales used in this research were modified from previously validated and established scales that were created in the context of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The measurement items proposed by Liñán and Chen (2009) were used to assess personal attitude, a set of seven statements, each of which was measured by a 5-point Likert scale. Likewise, seven adapted items based on the same validated instrument were used to assess subjective norms. The statements were rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The descriptive-correlational research design with cross sectional approach was used to analyze the relationship between variables being studied at one particular time. The collected data were analyzed with the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM 4) based on the guidelines given by Hair et al. (2017). This statistical technique was used for testing the conceptual model, the research hypotheses and the strength and significance of the relationships between the major constructs.

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Findings

The Measurement Model

The measurement model assessment was used to test for reliability, validity and internal consistency of the constructs used in this study. Both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) were used in order to establish the validity of the measures. All constructs had reliability scores higher than the recommended cut-off scores, as shown in Table 1, indicating that the measurement indicators were consistent with the variables that they were supposed to represent.

The results showed that the Entrepreneurial Intention construct has good reliability with Cronbach's Alpha 0.884 and Composite Reliability 0.912. The same reliability performance was found for the Personal Attitude construct with $\alpha = 0.884$, and CR = 0.912 indicating high consistency among the measure items. In addition, the other variables included in the model also showed satisfactory reliability levels. The Cronbach's Alpha values for Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) and Subjective Norms were 0.867 and 0.842, respectively. The results of Composite Reliability further confirmed the reliability of all constructs, suggesting that the measurement instruments yielded stable and reliable results for further analysis of structural models.

Table 1: Results of Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	EI1	0.912	0.884	0.636
	EI2			
	EI3			
	EI4			
	EI5			
	EI6			
Personal Attitudes (PA)	PA1	0.912	0.884	0.588
	PA2			
	PA3			
	PA4			
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	PBC1	0.898	0.867	0.638
	PBC2			
	PBC3			
	PBC4			
Subjective Norms (SN)	SN1	0.884	0.842	0.603
	SN2			
	SN3			
	SN4			

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These tests were carried out to establish that each construct was reliable and to measure a concept that was orthogonal to all of the other constructs that were used in the study. The results showed high level of convergent validity for every construct. The (AVE) of Entrepreneurial Intention was 0.636. At the same time, Personal Attitude (PA) had an acceptable convergent validity (AVE = 0.588). Likewise, the (PBC) had an AVE of 0.638, and Subjective Norms (SN) had an AVE of 0.603. Also, the (PBC) had an AVE of 0.638 and Subjective Norms (SN) had an AVE of 0.603. Following the above, discriminant validity was considered to establish if the constructs were conceptually and statistically distinct from the others. To assess discriminant validity in a more stringent way, the (HTMT) and this is deemed as a more stringent method of testing.

Table 2: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	EE	EI	GSP	PA	PBC	SN
EE	0.747					
EI	0.454	0.795				
GSP	0.191	0.718	0.812			
PA	0.253	0.584	0.530	0.795		
PBC	0.313	0.610	0.526	0.305	0.746	
SN	0.216	0.476	0.447	0.287	0.234	0.747

Table 3: HTMT Criterion

	EI	PA	PBC	SN
EI				
PA	0.660			
PBC	0.695	0.347		
SN	0.549	0.331	0.274	

The Structural Model

Collinearity was checked by calculating the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), to make sure that the multicollinearity did not affect the accuracy of the structural model estimates. As per the known methodological guidelines (cf. [22]), when VIF values are lower than 5, there are no such critical collinearity problems and lower than 3.3, is a more stringent criterion for establishing acceptable levels of independence between the predictor variables. Moreover, the predictive power of the research model was assessed based on cross-validated redundancy indicator (Q^2). The analysis resulted in a satisfactory level of predictive relevance for the entrepreneurial intention construct with a Q^2 value of 0.45, which is higher than the minimum acceptable value of zero. Results of the bootstrapping procedure for the structural model, such as path coefficients (β), standard deviations, t statistics and p values are presented in Table 4. This resampling technique allows to obtain reliable estimates by evaluating the statistical significance and consistency of the hypothesized relationships in the proposed model.

The first hypothesis (H1) provided that that an individual's attitude to entrepreneurship would positively influence the entrepreneurial intention. The results confirmed this assumption where the personal attitude was shown to have a statistically significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 8.644$, $p < 0.001$). This finding confirms that young

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people with positive perceptions of entrepreneurship are likely to have more positive intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

The second hypothesis (H2) was an whether there was a positive relationship between entrepreneurial intention and subjective norms. This relationship was confirmed in the results which reveal that the subjective norms significantly and positively influenced entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.185$, $t = 5.734$, $p<0.001$). This discovery underscores the role of social influence, indicating that the motivation of important people in the youth's life, such as family, friends and influential people can reinforce youth's intention to pursue a career in entrepreneurship.

The third hypothesis (H3) was directed towards the link between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intention. This hypothesis was confirmed by the statistical data which showed that perceived behavioural control variable was the best predictor among all the variables examined (Beta = 0.310, $t = 9.946$, $p < 0.001$). This discovery suggests that young people's self-efficacy in terms of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, abilities and available resources is a key determinant of their entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial skills of establishing and running new businesses.

Table 4: The Bootstrapping Result of the Study

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Beta (β)	Standard Error	*T* Values	*P* Values	Result
H1	PA → EI	0.256	0.030	8.644	0.000	Supported
H2	SN → EI	0.185	0.032	5.734	0.000	Supported
H3	PBC → EI	0.310	0.031	9.946	0.000	Supported

Discussion

The results suggest that in China's changing economic environment, positive perceptions of entrepreneurship, such as self-achievement, self-employment, and upward social mobility, are important aspects of entrepreneurial aspirations among the young urban population. The results presented in this study indicate that the family member, friends and influential people (Maheshwari & Kha, 2022; Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2018). Given the collectivist values, strong family bonds and social acceptance that are important in the Chinese culture, this is a significant finding in the context of China. The results of this study corroborate the observations of Shan et al (2018) that entrepreneurship is socially accepted and feasible career option because of encouraging, recognizing, and supporting attitude of influential social groups. This positive social reinforcement can help to build up the sense of legitimacy of entrepreneurial practices and diminish uncertainty, failure and social risk factors. In addition, the results further support the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which clearly indicates that subjective norm is an important factor in the TPB; as social norms and other people's approval play a significant role in a person's decision to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Yasir et al., 2021; Hossain et al., 2023).

They also show that young people in cities who are more confident about their entrepreneurial intentions are more confident in their ability to complete key entrepreneurial activities, such as opportunity identification, acquiring the required resources, developing the required

competencies, and dealing effectively with business operations. This result is consistent with the TPB model of Ajzen (1991) that argues that the more an individual thinks they can control and perform a behaviour, the more likely they are to do so. The greater the perceived behavioural control, the more confident young entrepreneurs are in facing challenges, the more they are committed, and the more they can do when the environment is uncertain and conditions change in the entrepreneurial journey.

Furthermore, the results show that personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are all significant factors in predicting entrepreneurial intention among young people in the city of China. Perceived behavioural control, personal attitude and subjective norms were among these three determinants, and the strongest influencing factor was perceived behavioural control, followed by personal attitude and subjective norms. This indicates that positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship and social support are essential but the most crucial factor in converting entrepreneurial interest into entrepreneurial intention is the confidence an individual has in their own ability and resources. Youth who have a positive attitude about entrepreneurial challenges and think they have the necessary skills, knowledge, and ability to succeed in business creation are more apt to view business creation as a viable option.

The findings in general support the TPB theory in explaining the entrepreneurial decision-making of urban youth in China. The study indicates that entrepreneurial intention is not triggered by external opportunities alone, but it is the interaction between personal evaluations, social influence and perceived ability. The implications for policy makers, universities and entrepreneurial development programmes are strong in the need to improve entrepreneurial confidence, build supportive social environments and offer viable resources that could be instrumental in supporting young people to translate their entrepreneurial intentions into a productive business enterprise.

Conclusion

The personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control all play a role in influencing entrepreneurial intentions among urban youth in Nanning, China. Using data obtained from a sample of 418 participants, this study adopted the approach of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to analyse the relationships between the suggested constructs in the study. Results from the empirical study showed that all three proposed factors were positively and statistically significant for entrepreneurial intention, thereby validating the use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPP) as an appropriate model to explain young people's entrepreneurial decision-making process.

The factors examined that most significantly predicted entrepreneurial intention were perceived behavioural control, personal attitude, and subjective norms. The results of this research emphasize the importance of youth entrepreneurs' self-efficacy in entrepreneurship—such as knowledge, skills, resources, and capability in solving business problems—in the motivation to engage in entrepreneurship. Providing young people with a sense of being in control and competent helps them to feel that entrepreneurship may be a realistic and achievable career path.

Moreover, the findings highlight the importance of an integrative process of internal evaluations and external influences in the development of entrepreneurial intention. Positive attitudes are important to help young people see entrepreneurship as a viable career choice and supportive social environments reinforce the desire of young people to pursue entrepreneurship. Confidence and uncertainty of potential entrepreneurs can be lowered with the family encouragement and peer influence and approval of significant social networks.

The results also have practical implications for educational institutions, government institutions, and entrepreneurship development institutions in China. Entrepreneurial knowledge should not be the only area of focus, but greater opportunities should be considered to foster practical skills, expand resource access, enhance mentorship and build supportive entrepreneurial clusters. Investing in the development of young people's perceived capabilities and confidence can help make their entrepreneurial aspirations a reality through the provision of more effective pathways. This study has made a significant contribution to entrepreneurship literature as it shows that psychological factors and social factors are important in the study of entrepreneurial intentions from an emerging economy based on innovation
.
Positive appraisals of entrepreneurship also enhance intention, and encouragement from family, peers, educators and networks lend legitimacy and diminish fear of uncertainty and failure. So, it is unlikely that any policy which concentrates solely on promoting entrepreneurship will be enough. Practical entrepreneurship education should be integrated with mentoring, access to finance, business networks, business incubation and supportive initiatives at universities and government agencies. This overall result confirms the proposed model and shows that the intention of entrepreneurship is a result of a combination of motivation, social recognition and perceived capability. But there is a need for longitudinal and comparative studies to see if such intentions actually result in sustainable venture creation and to establish causality.

Recommendations for Future Studies

In the future, the researchers suggest the need to integrate various theories to better understand entrepreneurial intention formation among the urban youth in China. Furthermore, future research may focus on the creation of a national entrepreneurial mentoring system that offers mentoring, resources and professional support to urban and non-metropolitan youth. These can help build the confidence of young people, their entrepreneurial skills and their interest in new ventures. There is also a call for further empirical studies to test the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in terms of real entrepreneurial intentions and actual entrepreneurial behaviours.

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