

INFLUENCING FACTORS AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Fang Wang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Program in Management
Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship
Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin
Academic Year 2026
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2026

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Thesis of Title	Influencing Factors and Development Strategies of Entrepreneurial Behavior among University Students
Researcher	Miss Fang Wang
Degree Sought	Doctor of Philosophy Program in Management (International Program)
Thesis Advisor	Assistant Professor Jirawan Deeprasert, Ed.D.

Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin Approved this Thesis in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

..... Director
(Dr. Nuttapong Jotikasthira)

Thesis Committee

..... Chairperson
(Professor Dr. Poomthan Rangkakulnuwat)

..... Member
(Associate Professor Dr. Kornchai Phornlaphatrachakorn)

..... Member
(Dr. Kessara Kanchanapoom)

..... Member
(Associate Professor Dr. Cheng-Jui Tseng)

..... Member and Advisor
(Assistant Professor Dr. Jirawan Deeprasert)

Title of Thesis Influencing Factors and Development Strategies of Entrepreneurial Behavior among University Students

Researcher: Miss Fang Wang, (M.A.); **Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (Management);
Advisor: Jirawan Deeprasert, (Ed.D.), Assistant Professor; **Academic Year:** 2026

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were (1) to explore the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, and (2) to verify the relationships between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions.

This study adopted a mixed method approach. The study utilized a qualitative research method, with semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 participants and analyzed the data using NVIVO. A quantitative research approach was adopted through a questionnaire survey conducted with 456 undergraduate students from three universities in Guizhou Province, data were collected on students' entrepreneurial intentions and analyzed the impact of perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity on their entrepreneurial intentions.

Major findings: (1) On the issue of key factors, perceived organizational support and proactive personality had a significant positive influence on students' creativity, and proactive personality significantly enhanced creativity; and (2) On the issue of verifying factors, perceived organizational support positively influenced both proactive personality and entrepreneurial intentions, while creativity had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions. This study provided valuable insights for educational administrators, emphasizing the importance of creating a supportive environment and fostering creative thinking in cultivating entrepreneurial awareness and intentions.

Keywords: Creativity, Entrepreneurial intentions, Perceived organizational support, Proactive personality, University students

Advisor's Signature .....

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List of Abbreviation and Glossary

Abbreviation / Glossary	Explanation
AVE	Average Variation Extraction
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CR	Combined Reliability
EB	Entrepreneurial Behavior
ILO	International Labour Organization
POS	Perceived Organizational Support
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SYB	Start Your Business
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research background and motivation. The first subsection focuses on the research background, including an introduction to entrepreneurial education among Chinese university students and an overview of the entrepreneurial landscape among university students in Guizhou Province. The second subsection focuses on the significance of the study, highlighting the importance of understanding and promoting entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province for regional economic development, innovation, and job creation. The third subsection briefly outlines the research questions. The fourth subsection briefly outlines the research objectives. The final subsection summarizes the key points discussed in the chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study and Problem Statement

1.1.1 Current Status of Entrepreneurship among Chinese University Students

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 122, adopted in 1964, explicitly mandates member countries to actively address unemployment and underemployment issues and to set important goals for achieving freely chosen employment opportunities. This implies that member countries need to adopt proactive policy measures to address unemployment and underemployment issues, thereby enabling individuals to autonomously choose suitable careers. Since 2004, the enrollment scale of ordinary institutions of higher education in China has been continuously expanding. In that year, the number of graduates nationwide reached 2.8 million, which surged to 7.27 million by 2014. Subsequently, in 2018, it soared to 8.2 million. As of 2019, the number of Chinese university graduates approached 8.3 million, which further exacerbating employment pressures. Given the significance of employment to people's livelihoods, the Chinese government attaches great importance to the issue of employment for university graduates, considering employment priority policies as equally vital components of proactive fiscal and prudent monetary policies (National Bureau of Statistics of China,

2019, (http://www.stats.gov.cn/sj/). As of 2023, the number of university graduates in China has reached 11.58 million, with Guizhou Province breaking historical records by surpassing 274,000 graduates. However, despite the large number of graduates, the employment rate has shown a declining trend, making the insufficient employment of university students a widely discussed topic in society. Entrepreneurship is considered an effective approach to university graduates' employment (Bulturbayevich, 2022). Recognized as one of the important pathways to alleviate the pressure of insufficient employment for university graduates, entrepreneurship has garnered increasing attention from the Chinese government and society. To support university students' entrepreneurship, a series of relevant policies have been successively introduced. By reviewing the development of Chinese university students entrepreneurship policies over the past twenty years, China has divided the formulation and development of relevant policies into four stages: the exploratory stage, the gradual advancement stage, the comprehensive deepening stage, and the stage of perfection and development, currently being in the fourth stage (Li et al., 2021). Perfecting and developing entrepreneurship policies to promote employment through entrepreneurship among Guizhou university students and address the issue of insufficient employment of university students are topics of high concern for the Guizhou government and universities.

Entrepreneurship is defined as the process of starting and managing a company with the aim of pursuing economic growth and profit (Diandra & Azmy, 2020). Entrepreneurship contributes to promoting national innovation and economic growth, accelerating economic structural adjustments, narrowing wealth disparities between regions, and addressing employment and poverty issues (Stoica et al., 2020; Zainea et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship can serve as a vital force for promoting economic growth, driving social progress, and simultaneously, it is a key measure for facilitating employment (Méndez-Picazo et al., 2021; Tien et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship is regarded as a crucial engine for job creation, it helps to address employment pressures and challenges. In order to inspire active participation in entrepreneurial behavior among university students, the primary task is to cultivate their entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial behavior is driven by entrepreneurial intentions (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021; Gieure et al., 2020). In this regard, researchers should focus more on nurturing entrepreneurial intentions, with university students being considered the most promising source of these

intentions. Therefore, it is essential to actively enhance the entrepreneurial intentions of university students (Adu et al., 2020). In order to enhance the entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors of Chinese university students, the Chinese government continuously issues supportive policies for student entrepreneurship, while universities actively implement measures to promote entrepreneurship, aiming to stimulate employment through entrepreneurial behavior. According to the *"2020 China University Student Entrepreneurship Report,"* there was a sustained increase in entrepreneurial intentions among Chinese university students, with as many as 49.86% of current students expressing strong desires for entrepreneurship. However, the actual entrepreneurship rate has not increased proportionally. Considering entrepreneurship as a significant driver for employment and economic growth, and in conjunction with recent employment data in China, entrepreneurship has long been an indispensable aspect of university student employment, exhibiting an upward trend year by year.

Against this backdrop, governments at all levels in China continuously refine entrepreneurship policies while increasing investment in entrepreneurial education. They provide entrepreneurial platforms and industrial incubation opportunities for university students, aiming to encourage entrepreneurship among them. Since 2008, the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Commerce have been organizing the China university students' Service Outsourcing Innovation and entrepreneurship Competition for 15 consecutive years. They have established a dedicated platform at *http://www.fwwb.org.cn/* to promote entrepreneurship among university students nationwide. Despite the implementation of a series of incentive policies by the government to encourage students to actively engage in entrepreneurship, there remains significant room for improvement in the success rate of entrepreneurship among Chinese university students. According to Ma and Bai (2015), entrepreneurial education at universities plays a crucial role in influencing students' entrepreneurial behavior. They argue that conducting innovation and entrepreneurial education at the university level has a significant positive impact on students' entrepreneurial behavior (Adeel et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the Chinese Ministry of Education has incorporated the "Innovation and entrepreneurship Course" as a mandatory course for every student into the educational program, aiming to promote students' entrepreneurial behavior. Against this backdrop, the education department of Guizhou Province has also introduced the Start Your Business (SYB) entrepreneurship

special training program into some universities. (SYB is an entrepreneurship training program designed to inspire students' entrepreneurial aspirations and subsequently assist them in establishing their own businesses, thereby contributing to the enhancement of the employment rate among university graduates.) This study will take universities that have implemented the SYB training as the research field, aiming to explore the factors influencing entrepreneurship intention and entrepreneurial behavior among Guizhou university students. It will propose corresponding strategies to promote entrepreneurial behavior among Guizhou university students.

First and foremost, the Chinese government's high regard for innovation and entrepreneurship, they provided policy support for university students' entrepreneurship. The National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy of China places innovation and entrepreneurship at the core of national economic development. The government has successively promulgated a series of policies related to entrepreneurial innovation and entrepreneurship, including funding support, tax relief, and reforms in entrepreneurial innovation and entrepreneurial education. These policies have created a policy environment and provided economic support for university students' entrepreneurship. In response to the initial financial difficulties faced by university students in entrepreneurship, a notice from the State Council explicitly requires local public employment service agencies to register self-employed university graduates who are unemployed. Those with insufficient self-raised funds can apply for small guarantee loans of up to 50,000 yuan, for those engaged in partnership businesses or organized employment, loan sizes can be appropriately expanded according to regulations. Additionally, for those undertaking locally designated low-profit projects, interest subsidies are available as stipulated. In addition to the national subsidized small loans policy, numerous provinces and cities across China have announced or implemented policy measures aimed at supporting entrepreneurship among university students. Taking Shanghai as an example, the city issued the "Several Opinions on Encouraging entrepreneurship to Promote Employment," with the first article being particularly noteworthy: graduates from universities within two years of graduation who invest in limited liability companies with registered capital of less than 500,000 yuan can enjoy "zero down payment" registration and are required to fully pay the registered capital within two years from the establishment of the company. Furthermore, Hangzhou has also issued

the "Several Opinions on Encouraging and Supporting University Students to Start Businesses Independently in Hangzhou," which raises the maximum amount of non-repayable entrepreneurship assistance for student entrepreneurship projects from the original 100,000 yuan to 200,000 yuan, and provides many tax incentives.

The introduction of these policy measures aims to incentivize and support entrepreneurship among university students, thereby promoting employment development. By providing financial support and tax incentives, among other means, the government encourages university students to engage in entrepreneurship actively and creates a more favorable environment for their entrepreneurial endeavors. This can ease the job-hunting pressure for university students, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and support the sustainable development of the economy and society. Therefore, the improvement and implementation of relevant entrepreneurship policies are of significant importance and value for promoting entrepreneurship and employment among university students and enhancing the quality of employment. These policies not only encourage university students to bravely venture into entrepreneurship but also provide them with a relatively stable entrepreneurial platform and resources. Furthermore, the reform of the higher education system and the deepening of entrepreneurial education provide theoretical foundations and practical support for university students' entrepreneurship. With the continuous development of higher education in China, an increasing number of universities are incorporating innovation and entrepreneurship into their curriculum systems, offering entrepreneurship courses, practical projects, and entrepreneurship mentor-ship programs. The Chinese Ministry of Education issued the "Notice on Doing a Good Job in the Employment and Entrepreneurship of the 2024 National Ordinary University Graduates," which emphasizes the importance of actively encouraging and supporting university graduates' independent entrepreneurship. The notice requires the implementation of entrepreneurship policies, with priority given to funding and venue resources for university students to promote their entrepreneurship and provide corresponding services. However, due to geographical conditions and limitations in human resources, Guizhou's attractiveness for entrepreneurship has not yet reached an ideal level. In response, the Education Department, and the Department of Human Resources and Social Security of Guizhou Province have issued the "Notice on Doing a Good Job in the Employment and Entrepreneurship of the 2023 Graduates of General

Universities in the Province." The first article, explicitly requires all universities to strengthen the construction of innovation and entrepreneurship platforms, provide preferential venues and professional incubation services, and guide entrepreneurship mentors to provide practical guidance. These measures aim to actively encourage, support, and serve entrepreneurship activities among university students in Guizhou, China, thereby promoting employment development driven by entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the deepening of entrepreneurial education is beneficial for cultivating students' innovative thinking, market insights, and teamwork skills, providing strong support in knowledge, skills, and resources for student entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, China's unique social and cultural background profoundly influences university students' entrepreneurial behavior. The importance of family concepts and the tight-knit social networks in China provide interpersonal resources and support for university students, thereby reducing entrepreneurial risks. The rapid expansion of the Chinese market and the upgrading of consumption provide broad market opportunities for entrepreneurs. Moreover, the traditional Chinese recognition and encouragement of entrepreneurship also contribute to the emergence of university students' entrepreneurial behavior to a certain extent. However, university students' entrepreneurial behavior also faces a series of challenges, factors such as entrepreneurial risks, funding difficulties, and market competition may influence entrepreneurs' decision-making and behavior (Turker & Sonmez Selçuk, 2009; Yue, 2024). In addition, there is still a need for further improvement in aspects such as the alignment between entrepreneurial education content and practical activities, and the cultivation of entrepreneurship culture, to enhance the quality and effectiveness of university students' entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, in-depth research on the background and influencing factors of Chinese university students' entrepreneurial behavior is of great significance for formulating more accurate strategies to enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions, optimize entrepreneurial education content, and promote entrepreneurial education. This not only contributes to the improvement of the university innovation and entrepreneurial education curriculum system but also further unleashes the entrepreneurial potential of university students, driving employment through entrepreneurship, and providing strong support and impetus for the sustainable development of China's economy and society.

This study is of significant relevance to the educational and socioeconomic development of Guizhou Province. From an educational management perspective, it addresses multiple critical issues. First, it responds to the regional imperative of promoting economic development through human capital cultivation and innovation. Second, it contributes to alleviating the persistent challenge of low employment rates among university graduates in Guizhou by exploring entrepreneurship as a viable alternative career path. Third, the study offers valuable insights into the reform and optimization of entrepreneurship education models within higher education institutions, thereby informing strategies for more effective allocation of educational resources and the enhancement of students' entrepreneurial competencies. Lastly, at the policy level, a comprehensive understanding of the specific barriers and opportunities faced by university student entrepreneurs can inform the development of targeted governmental policies. The theoretical and empirical findings of this research have the potential to support evidence-based policymaking aimed at fostering an enabling environment for student entrepreneurship and improving the overall effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in the region.

1.1.2 Research Gaps and Contribution

In 2019, the number of graduating university students in China approached nearly 8.3 million, further exacerbating the significant increase in employment pressure. Underemployment is widely regarded as core concerns of people's livelihoods, and the Chinese government has continuously elevated its attention to the underemployment of university students, placing the resolution of employment problems on par with livelihood issues in the economic policy agenda (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2019, http://www.stats.gov.cn/sj/). In 2022, the number of graduates from Chinese universities reached 10.76 million, an increase of 1.67 million compared to 2021, marking the first time in history to surpass the ten million mark. In this context, entrepreneurship is considered one of the effective ways to address the employment issues of university students. Entrepreneurship is defined as the process of pursuing economic growth and profit by founding and effectively managing a company (Diandra & Azmy, 2020). Entrepreneurship not only contributes to driving national innovation and economic growth but also facilitates economic structural adjustments, reduces wealth disparities among regions, and addresses issues related to employment and poverty (Stoica et al., 2020;

Zainea et al., 2020). Additionally, entrepreneurship serves as one of the crucial means to propel economic growth and accelerate social progress (Méndez-Picazo et al., 2021; Tien et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship is regarded as one of the key engines driving employment growth and also an effective method to address employment pressure. To encourage more university students to actively participate in entrepreneurial behavior, the primary task is to cultivate their entrepreneurial willingness, as strong entrepreneurial intention lies behind entrepreneurial behavior (Gieure et al., 2020). Researchers should pay closer attention to potential entrepreneurs, with university students being considered the most promising segment among these potential entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is imperative to actively enhance the entrepreneurial intention of university students (Adu et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial intention is a stable and influential predictor of specific entrepreneurial behavior (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021; Nakara et al., 2020). Pérez-Macías et al. pointed out that entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's belief in intending to start a new venture and consciously planning to put it into practice at some point in the future (Pérez-Macías et al., 2022).

According to previous research findings, perceived organizational support has been found to be beneficial in increasing university students' entrepreneurial intention (Saeed et al., 2018a). Among these, (Huyghe & Knockaert, 2015) indicated that organizational cultural support both within and outside higher education positively influences students' interest in becoming entrepreneurs. Previous empirical studies have only mentioned that perceived organizational support and proactive personality traits are in one model, but have not verified the relationship between these two variables. My study mainly proves the significant positive impact of perceived organizational support on proactive personality. It fills a gap in previous research. Active and comprehensive support from higher education often stimulates students to envision their future role as entrepreneurs through perceived behavioral control variables. Additionally, research suggests that a positive organizational culture enhances students' interest in direct or indirect participation in entrepreneurial behavior. Positive support from higher education typically motivates students to envision their future as entrepreneurs through perceived behavioral control variables. Furthermore, studies have shown that a good organizational culture enhances students' interest in participating in entrepreneurial behavior, whether directly or indirectly. At the same time, perceived organizational support significantly

positively influences proactive personality traits (Kanten & Ulker, 2012). Previous research has indeed found that perceived organizational support and proactive personality influence entrepreneurial behavior. In the Chinese cultural context, perceived university support provides students with resources and a sense of security, thereby strengthening their entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Meanwhile, proactive personality encourages students to seize opportunities and take initiative. Together, these factors not only enhance entrepreneurial motivation but also help overcome the cultural tendency to avoid risk, thus fostering entrepreneurial behavior. However, little research indicating that perceptions of organizational support significantly contribute to the prediction of proactive behavior (Kanten & Ulker, 2012). Recent research has indicated the influence of perceived organizational support and proactive personality on creativity. However, there hasn't been verification of the relationship between perceived organizational support and proactive personality (Hidayat, Febrianto, et al., 2023). This study fill a gap in previous research by exploring the impact of perceived organizational support on proactive personality. Individuals who perceive organizational support believe that the organization is willing to offer assistance when needed for work and life support, feel respected, cared for, and recognized by the organization, and helpful forms of organizational support encourage self-direction and self-management, thus enhancing proactivity (Hashemi et al., 2012). Proactive personality refers to a personal trait characterized by the proactive use of initiative, persistence, and effort in shaping one's behavior and environment (Kim et al., 2009). There is ample empirical evidence to suggest that individuals with a proactive personality are more likely to possess a stronger sense of autonomy in their work and career (Seibert, 1999). A proactive personality manifests in various proactive behaviors, such as actively seeking opportunities and taking initiative. For instance, having a proactive personality is conducive to increasing creative intentions and entrepreneurial behavior (Delle & Amadu, 2016). Additionally, creativity is often regarded as a key variable influencing entrepreneurial intentions (Y. Shi et al., 2020a).

Based on previous research analysis, this study aims to explore the impact relationships of perceived organizational support, creativity, and proactive personality on entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors. The research delves into understanding how perceived organizational support, creativity, and proactive personality influence individuals' entrepreneurial intentions, revealing the mechanisms through which

internal and external factors affect entrepreneurial intentions. By analyzing these influencing factors, it enables more accurate predictions of whether individuals will engage in entrepreneurial behavior, providing guidance for businesses, governments, and educational institutions to develop more effective entrepreneurial policies and measures to promote entrepreneurial development. Moreover, identifying the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors can also provide guidance for entrepreneurship training and education, facilitating the development of more targeted training content and methods. This study aims to address the issue of enhancing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. Importantly, studying the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors can promote innovative activities, drive economic structural adjustments and development, increase employment opportunities, and ultimately foster social prosperity and stability.

1.2 Significance of the Study

1.2.1 Theoretical Significance

Firstly, in recent years, research on entrepreneurial intentions has been a prominent topic. Researchers have investigated entrepreneurial intentions from various perspectives and have proposed valuable theories (Anjum et al., 2021; Y. Shi et al., 2020a). However, most of these studies have been conducted within Western cultural contexts. Due to differences in Eastern and Western cultures , and social backgrounds, the existing research findings may not necessarily fully apply to Chinese university students. Therefore, this study aims to further empirically examine the phenomenon within the context of China.

Furthermore, previous research has found that perceived organizational support and proactive personality influence entrepreneurial behavior (Kanten & Ulker, 2012). However, there is limited research indicating that perceptions of organizational support significantly contribute to the prediction of proactive behavior (Kanten & Ulker, 2012). Currently, there has been no verification of the relationship between perceived organizational support and proactive personality (Hidayat, Eliyana, et al., 2023). This study fills the gap in previous research by exploring the impact of perceived organizational support on proactive personality, which is a significant highlight of this study.

Thirdly, previous studies have typically employed singular quantitative research methods to explore the factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in different contexts. This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods. Initially, qualitative research methods are employed to investigate the factors related to entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, China. Subsequently, quantitative research methods are utilized to validate the relationships between perceived organizational support, creativity, and proactive personality and their impact on entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Guizhou Province, China. Finally, strategies and recommendations are provided to enhance entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, China. Through this approach, the study significantly enriches the methodological landscape of research on entrepreneurial behavior among university students.

Fourthly, the results of this study not only extend the application scope of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) but also enrich its theoretical framework, providing further empirical support for the theoretical model. Previous research has rarely explored the influence of perceived organizational support on university students' proactive personality. This study is expected to investigate previously unstudied variables and relationships, analyze these variables using structural models, and lay the groundwork for future research, thereby making academic contributions to this field.

Lastly, reviewing recent study on entrepreneurship among university students, the research focus has mainly been on the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions, yielding rich results in this area. However, having entrepreneurial intentions does not necessarily translate into actual entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, further exploration of the factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior is of considerable significance if this study aims to ultimately increase the entrepreneurship rate among university students in China. This study also enriches the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the study of entrepreneurial behavior. Through a review of previous literature, it is found that in the theory of planned behavior, the focus is often placed on subjective norms and perceived behavioral control before behavioral intentions, with relatively little emphasis on the relationship between “Behavioral Intentions →Behavior”. This study empirically tests the direct effect of entrepreneurial intentions on entrepreneurial behavior.

First, perceived organizational support plays a crucial role in this process. It provides students with the necessary resources, guidance, and emotional support, which not only boosts their confidence but also motivates them to pursue entrepreneurship. When students perceive strong support from their university and surrounding environment, they are more likely to form a solid entrepreneurial intention and take practical steps toward turning this intention into action. Particularly, students who feel supported are better equipped to overcome the various challenges faced in the entrepreneurial journey, making them more likely to convert their entrepreneurial intentions into reality. Secondly, proactive personality is a core driver that propels students to engage in entrepreneurial behavior. Students with a proactive personality tend to actively seek out entrepreneurial opportunities and tackle challenges head-on. They do not simply possess entrepreneurial intention; they take deliberate action to translate that intention into real entrepreneurial ventures. Their proactive nature allows them to quickly respond to opportunities and demonstrate innovation and persistence throughout the process. Creativity is another key variable that plays an important role in both the formation of entrepreneurial intentions and the execution of entrepreneurial behavior. Creativity stimulates students to come up with innovative business ideas, helps them identify potential market opportunities, and enables them to develop unique solutions. With creative thinking, students are more likely to recognize entrepreneurial potential from different perspectives, which enhances their ability to take action. Creativity also enables them to navigate unforeseen challenges during the entrepreneurial process, further strengthening the feasibility of their entrepreneurial intentions. Finally, entrepreneurial intention itself serves as a powerful driver of entrepreneurial behavior. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), intention is the precursor to behavior. Students with a clear entrepreneurial intention are more likely to take the necessary steps to realize their entrepreneurial goals. Entrepreneurial intention is not merely an internal decision; it is the starting point for translating ideas into action. When students have a strong sense of purpose and motivation toward entrepreneurship, they are more inclined to take practical actions to achieve their entrepreneurial objectives. In conclusion, these variables work together by enhancing individual traits, providing essential external support, and fostering creative thinking, thereby creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurship. This environment not only facilitates the formation of entrepreneurial intentions but also drives students to

transform these intentions into actual entrepreneurial behaviors. Therefore, perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention interact as key mechanisms in driving entrepreneurial behavior among university students.

1.2.2 Practical Significance

Enhancing entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors among university students is not only crucial for individual development but also has profound implications for social and economic progress and the construction of an innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem. The practical significance of this endeavor is evident in several aspects:

Firstly, boosting entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors among university students helps stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship vitality. Representing the younger generation, university students possess sharp thinking and creativity. They often bring fresh ideas, unique perspectives, and forward-looking innovations to the entrepreneurial process. By nurturing and encouraging entrepreneurial intentions among university students, the vitality of innovation and entrepreneurship can be effectively unleashed, driving optimization of economic structures, upgrading of industries, and enhancing regional economic competitiveness.

Secondly, increasing entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors among university students promotes employment diversity. Currently, societal employment pressures are growing, and traditional employment models may not meet the employment needs of university students. Encouraging entrepreneurship among university students not only provides them with opportunities for independent entrepreneurship but also promotes employment diversity, creating more job opportunities for society. Additionally, diversified entrepreneurial behaviors help drive the diversification of industrial structures, alleviating both unemployment and insufficient active development.

Furthermore, enhancing entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors among university students positively contributes to local economic development. Entrepreneurship among university students not only introduces emerging industries and promotes the application of new technologies but also drives the construction of an innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem. Entrepreneurial university students often possess strong innovation and adaptability capabilities. Their entrepreneurial behavior inject new

development impetus into local economies, promoting regional economic transformation and upgrading.

In summary, enhancing entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors among university students is not only related to individual career development but is also a crucial issue closely linked to socio-economic development. Through effective entrepreneurial education and policy support, more university students with innovative entrepreneurial spirits can be cultivated, driving the implementation of innovation-driven development strategies and promoting sustainable economic prosperity.

1.3 Statement of Research Questions

RQ1: How do the key factors influence the entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, China?

RQ2: How do the relationships between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity among university students in Guizhou Province relate to entrepreneurial intentions?

1.4 Statement of Research Objectives

RO1: To identify the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, China.

RO2: To verify the relationship between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions.

1.5 Methodology

Firstly, the study used a qualitative research method and conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 participants to explore the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behaviour among university students in Guizhou Province. Secondly, a quantitative research approach was adopted. Through a questionnaire survey conducted with 456 undergraduate students from three universities in Guizhou Province, this study collected data on students' entrepreneurial intentions and analyzed the impact of perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity on their entrepreneurial intentions. Researchers used data analysis software to analyse the data in this study. First, this study conducted a descriptive statistical analysis of the population statistics of the sample. Next, it was subjected the data to a series of tests to determine its reliability and

validity and performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Finally, it was tested the structural model and examined the hypothesis.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

1.6.1 Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to the degree to which individuals believe that the organization they are part of values their contributions and cares about their well-being,The subjective evaluation by individuals of the extent to which the organization cares for and supports them. This evaluation may be based on perceptions of the organization's care, support, and assistance to employees, as well as the extent to which the organization facilitates the achievement of individuals' personal and career goals (Cho et al., 2009). Originally applied in workplace contexts, this concept has been extended to the educational setting, where it reflects how students perceive the support provided by their university. Perceived university support refers to the degree to which students believe that their university values their efforts, recognizes their potential, and provides adequate support for their academic and personal development.

In the university context, perceived support encompasses a range of factors, including access to entrepreneurship education, availability of resources such as funding and mentorship, encouragement from faculty and administrators, and the presence of a campus culture that fosters innovation and self-initiative (Kurtessis et al., 2017). When students perceive that their university actively supports their goals—particularly entrepreneurial goals—they are more likely to develop confidence, creativity, and motivation to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

In this study, perceived university support refers specifically to the extent to which undergraduate students in Guizhou Province feel that their university offers emotional encouragement, practical resources, and a supportive environment to foster and realize their entrepreneurial intentions.

1.6.2 Proactive Personality

Proactive personality (PP) refers to a stable individual trait characterized by the tendency to take initiative, identify opportunities, and act to bring about meaningful change in one’s environment (Trifiletti et al., 2009). Individuals exhibiting Proactive Personality display proactive, seeking new experiences and challenges, creative, and self-

motivated personality traits. They tend to actively engage in various activities and are willing to embrace new opportunities and challenges to achieve personal and professional goals. Individuals with a proactive personality do not passively adapt to their surroundings, instead, they actively seek to improve conditions and influence outcomes. In the context of higher education and student entrepreneurship, a proactive personality is particularly important. Students with proactive traits are more likely to seek out entrepreneurial opportunities, overcome obstacles, and mobilize resources to implement their ideas (Crant, 2000). They tend to be self-starting, future-oriented, and persistent in pursuing goals, all of which are critical characteristics in the entrepreneurial process.

Research has shown that proactive individuals are more inclined to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour because they perceive fewer external constraints and possess a stronger sense of personal agency (Seibert, 1999). In university settings, such students are more likely to participate in innovation activities, apply for funding, or lead student-led ventures.

In this study, proactive personality refers to the extent to which undergraduate students in Guizhou Province demonstrate initiative, actively seek out entrepreneurial opportunities, and persist in pursuing entrepreneurial goals regardless of challenges or uncertainty.

1.6.3 Creativity

Creativity is commonly defined as the ability to generate novel and useful ideas (Jiang et al., 2020). Operational definitions typically operationalize creativity into measurable indicators, such as observing individuals' performance in creative tasks, evaluating the quantity and quality of innovative ideas they propose, or assessing individuals' self-evaluation of creative thinking and behavior through questions in a questionnaire survey. It involves thinking beyond conventional boundaries, identifying original solutions to problems, and combining existing concepts in new and meaningful ways. Creativity is widely recognized as a fundamental component of entrepreneurial behaviour, as it enables individuals to identify market gaps, design innovative products or services, and develop unique business models (Ward, 2004). In the context of university students, creativity plays a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Students who exhibit higher levels of creativity may be more inclined to engage in opportunity recognition, problem-solving, and idea development—factors associated with

entrepreneurial behaviour (Zhou & George, 2001). Moreover, universities that foster creative thinking through interdisciplinary education, experiential learning, and innovation-oriented environments can influence students' entrepreneurial potential.

In this study, creativity refers to the tendency of undergraduate students in Guizhou Province to display original thinking and problem-solving ability in academic or idea-generation contexts that may be relevant to entrepreneurial activities.

1.6.4 Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) refer to an individual's conscious state of mind that precedes the decision to start a new business or engage in entrepreneurial activities (Thompson, 2009). Entrepreneurial intention is the inclination or willingness of individuals to engage in Entrepreneurial Behavior, often manifested as a positive attitude, vision,and motivation towards entrepreneurship. It includes cognitive awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities, acceptance of entrepreneurial risks, and expectations of entrepreneurial success. Intention is widely considered the most immediate and reliable predictor of entrepreneurial behaviour, based on the premise that starting a business is typically a planned and deliberate action. Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been extensively used to explain entrepreneurial intentions, suggesting that attitudes toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control together influence an individual's intention to engage in entrepreneurial activity (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of university students, entrepreneurial intentions often represent early indicators of future entrepreneurial actions, shaped by both individual factors (such as personality traits and creativity) and external influences (such as university support or exposure to entrepreneurship education). However, it is important to note that having entrepreneurial intentions does not necessarily guarantee entrepreneurial action; rather, it reflects a willingness or inclination to consider entrepreneurship as a potential career path. In this study, entrepreneurial intentions refer to the self-reported willingness or tendency of undergraduate students in Guizhou Province to consider starting a business or engaging in entrepreneurial activity at some point in the future.

1.6.5 Entrepreneurial Behavior

Entrepreneurial behavior (EB) refers to the actions individuals take to identify, develop, and exploit business opportunities through the creation of new products, services, or ventures (Abubakar et al., 2022). Entrepreneurial behavior refers to the actions or

activities individuals undertake that are related to entrepreneurship, including but not limited to establishing new businesses, conducting commercial activities, seeking entrepreneurial opportunities, developing business plans, acquiring resources, collaborating with partners, and implementing marketing strategies. This behavior typically reflects individuals' ability to identify, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as their pursuit and effort towards entrepreneurial goals. These behaviors may include opportunity recognition, innovation, risk-taking, resource mobilization, and business execution. Entrepreneurial behavior is considered a critical component of the entrepreneurial process, representing the transition from intention to action. In the context of university students, entrepreneurial behavior can manifest in various forms. While many students may only engage in preparatory or exploratory actions—such as participating in entrepreneurship training, business plan competitions, or developing startup ideas—others may already be involved in concrete entrepreneurial activities. For instance, some undergraduate students have launched their own online shops, started content-based businesses on platforms like TikTok (Douyin), or run small-scale e-commerce operations and personal brands.

(Rauch & Frese, 2007) emphasize that entrepreneurial behavior among students is influenced by personal traits, prior exposure, and support from the academic environment. In research involving student populations, it is therefore important to consider both actual entrepreneurial engagement and early-stage behaviors that may lead to future ventures.
In this study, entrepreneurial behavior refers to the self-reported actions of undergraduate students in Guizhou Province related to entrepreneurship, including both preparatory activities (e.g. developing business ideas, seeking resources) and actual entrepreneurial practices (e.g. operating online shops, managing social media-based businesses, or engaging in e-commerce).

1.7 Delimitation of the Thesis

The findings of this study are subject to certain limitations regarding their generalizability. Firstly, the study was geographically confined to Guizhou Province, China, which may limit the applicability of the results to other regions with different economic, cultural, or educational contexts. Secondly, the sample consisted solely of undergraduate students from three universities, which may not fully represent the broader

population of university students, including those from vocational colleges, postgraduate programs, or institutions with varying levels of entrepreneurship support. Thirdly, the study focused on a specific set of variables--perceived university support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions and behaviour--while other potentially influential factors, such as socioeconomic background, prior entrepreneurial exposure, or family influence, were not included. Therefore, caution should be exercised when applying these findings beyond the specific context and population studied.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters, each with a specific framework. The details are as follows: Chapter 1 provides an overview of the research background, the theoretical and practical significance, research problems and objectives, research methods, definitions of key terms, and an outline of the research structure. Chapter 2 presents a literature review from three perspectives: the broader research background, the parent discipline, and the immediate discipline. It also introduces the theoretical framework and proposes the research hypotheses. Chapter 3 discusses the research paradigm, outlines the research design, describes the processes of data collection and management, and explains the methods of data analysis. Ethical considerations relevant to the study are also addressed. Chapter 4 presents the research results based on both qualitative and quantitative data. It discusses insights gained from semi-structured interviews and statistical analysis, and explains how the results collectively address the research questions. Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings, draws conclusions based on the data, and highlights the theoretical and practical contributions of the study. It also outlines the study's limitations and offers suggestions for future research.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter primarily delves into the research background, including the research context, significance, research questions, and objectives. The literature review section of this study will be conducted in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into five sections: An introduction to the research background in the first part. The second part introduces the parent discipline. Following that, the third section presents the sub-discipline. Then, the fourth section outlines the development of the theoretical model and hypotheses. Finally, the fifth section summarizes the content of this chapter.

2.1 Context of the Study

2.1.1 The Current Situation of Entrepreneurship among University Students in Guizhou Province

Guizhou Province, located in western China, exhibits relatively lower economic and educational levels. Since the expansion of higher education enrollment in 2004, the enrollment scale of ordinary higher education institutions in Guizhou has been increasing annually. In 2004, the number of universities graduates from Guizhou was 49,000, which rose to 104,000 in 2014 and further to 167,000 in 2018. By the year 2023, the number of universities graduates from Guizhou was reached a historical high of 274,000. However, the ensuing issue of employment for university graduates has become a challenging problem faced by the Guizhou government and various universities. To address this, State Council of China issued the "Opinions on Supporting Guizhou in Pioneering New Paths in the Western Development in the New Era" in 2022, explicitly proposing comprehensive promotion of employment and support for university graduates' entrepreneurship and employment. The Guizhou Provincial Government also promulgated a series of documents, such as the "Notice on Doing a Good Job in the Employment and Entrepreneurship of the 2023 Graduates of General Universities in the Province," to support and encourage entrepreneurship among Guizhou university students. The economic development and employment issues in Guizhou hold a unique position in the development of western China. The current situation of university student entrepreneurship

in Guizhou is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple interacting factors, including policy environment, regional characteristics, and social culture.

Firstly, the impact of policy environment on university student entrepreneurship cannot be overlooked. Guizhou provincial government continuously introduces a series of policies aimed at encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship, including financial support, tax exemptions, and the construction of entrepreneurial bases. These policies provide substantial policy support for university student entrepreneurship. Positive policy guidance and support offer entrepreneurs a certain level of resource security and risk reduction, thereby facilitating the occurrence and development of entrepreneurial behavior.

Moreover, regional characteristics and resource endowments also exert profound influences on university student's entrepreneurship in Guizhou Province. As a significant province in southwestern China, Guizhou boasts abundant natural resources and unique regional culture, providing rich opportunities for university student entrepreneurship. Local characteristic industries such as agriculture, mountain tourism, and ethnic minority cultural creativity play a crucial role in guiding entrepreneurs' choice of entry points and differentiated development directions. The full play of regional characteristics and resource endowments not only serves as a source of innovation for university student entrepreneurship but also brings market advantages to their entrepreneurial behavior.

However, university student's entrepreneurship in Guizhou Province also faces several challenges. Firstly, despite proactive policy support, the overall economy of Guizhou province lags behind, and market competition is fierce, which may impose certain pressures on the survival and development of entrepreneurs. Secondly, there is a need to further strengthen entrepreneurial education and the cultivation of entrepreneurial culture to enhance entrepreneurs' innovation capabilities and market adaptability. Additionally, the unique geographical conditions and location of Guizhou province result in inconvenient transportation, which may pose constraints on accessing entrepreneurial resources and expanding markets.

In conclusion, the current state of university student's entrepreneurship in Guizhou province is a phenomenon influenced by multiple factors such as policy environment, regional characteristics, and social culture. Under the guidance of government policies and by fully leveraging regional characteristics and resource advantages, university student's

entrepreneurship in Guizhou province is poised to achieve more significant results in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, making positive contributions to local economic development and social progress. However, in reality, university students in Guizhou encounter several issues during the entrepreneurial process. Firstly, there is a relatively low rate of transformation from entrepreneurial intention to entrepreneurial behavior. Although most students acknowledge the value of independent entrepreneurship and possess a high intention for entrepreneurship, they face challenges and difficulties in translating these intentions into actual entrepreneurial actions. While university students are generally receptive to new ideas and have strong motivations for entrepreneurship, there is a significant gap between intention and action due to various factors such as practical constraints and the prevailing environment. Secondly, there is a lack of practical entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship requires creative and challenging activities that demand comprehensive abilities from university students. Insufficient practical entrepreneurial education, characterized by overly theoretical approaches and instructors lacking practical entrepreneurial experience, fails to meet the actual needs of university students, thereby affecting the effectiveness of entrepreneurship (Loi et al., 2022). Therefore, in order to improve university students' entrepreneurial behavior, it is important for universities to provide adequate support to university students and enhance their proactive personality.

Under the guidance of national policies, the Guizhou provincial government has actively promulgated a series of policies to support the employment and entrepreneurship of college graduates. Among them, the State Council issued the "Opinions on Supporting Guizhou in Pioneering New Paths in the Western Development in the New Era" (State Council Document No. [2022] 2), emphasizing the high importance placed on the employment and entrepreneurship of graduates in Guizhou Province, encouraging more graduates to start their own businesses independently, and increasing the proportion of entrepreneurship. Additionally, the General Office of the State Council of China issued the "Guiding Opinions on Further Strengthening Innovation and entrepreneurship among university students" (hereinafter referred to as the "Guiding Opinions"), which calls for enhanced support for innovation and entrepreneurship among university students. The Guizhou provincial government also issued the "Implementation Plan for Further supporting university students' innovation and entrepreneurship in Guizhou," clearly

stating its commitment to fully promote university students' innovation and entrepreneurship, strive to enhance their entrepreneurial awareness and capabilities, actively cultivate an atmosphere of "entrepreneurial Guizhou," and promote an increase in the intention and proportion of entrepreneurship among university students in Guizhou Province. This plan covers various aspects including financial support, tax incentives, technical support, support for school entrepreneurship park facilities, and theoretical guidance. In addition, students participating in employment and entrepreneurship training courses on campus will receive credit recognition. Entrepreneurial teams participating in the national university student entrepreneurship competition and winning prizes will also receive certain financial rewards. Since 2020, the Guizhou government has provided financial support of 1500 yuan per person to students who register entrepreneurial companies.

However, despite the effectiveness of these policies, the proportion of university students engaged in entrepreneurship in Guizhou Province has not reached the desired level. According to the 2022 Guizhou Higher Education Graduates Employment Quality Report, the proportion of university students engaged in entrepreneurship in Guizhou Province is only 3.26%. The relatively low rate of college student entrepreneurship has been a significant challenge. According to the "Chinese University Students Entrepreneurship Report, " the actual entrepreneurship rate of the 2022 graduates is much lower than their intention to start a business. Although the entrepreneurship rate may increase with the extended time after graduation, there is still a significant gap that falls short of the expected level by universities. For instance, the proportion of self-employment among undergraduate graduates in 2019 was 1.6%, while that among vocational college graduates was 3.4%, which is much lower than the 20% to 30% proportion in similar categories in Western countries. The research found that policies at the talent, financial, and infrastructure levels have a positive impact on the policy effectiveness of college student entrepreneurship (Obaji & Olugu, 2014). Against this backdrop, in 2023, the Guizhou provincial government issued a notice regarding the implementation of subsidy distribution for job-seeking and entrepreneurial endeavors among the graduating class of 2023. This initiative, structured as financial support, aimed to encourage entrepreneurial behavior among graduates of higher education institutions in Guizhou Province. Consequently, major universities in Guizhou responded actively to governmental policies

at all levels, engaging in innovative entrepreneurial practices. Entrepreneurial intention, as the subjective attitude of potential entrepreneurial university students towards engaging in entrepreneurial behavior, not only serves as the starting point and driving force for entrepreneurial behavior but also effectively guides actual entrepreneurial actions (Ibidunni et al., 2020). However, However, this study also recognizes that there are still shortcomings in the behavior of entrepreneurship among Chinese university students. Given this reality, the objective of this study is to explore the factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among Guizhou university students, with the aim of proposing corresponding strategies and recommendations to enhance the success rate of entrepreneurship among Guizhou university students and alleviate the challenges of insufficient employment opportunities for graduates.

This study provides the background of entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors among Chinese university students. In recent years, Chinese Ministry of Education has implemented a series of policies to encourage entrepreneurship among university students. These policies aim to stimulate entrepreneurial intentions and activities among students by providing entrepreneurial education and training, as well as financial support for startups. However, despite the positive attitudes of policymakers toward student entrepreneurship, the actual number of students engaged in entrepreneurship remains relatively low. Entrepreneurship holds significant importance for a country's economic development and social progress. It not only creates new job opportunities and promotes technological innovation but also brings more vitality and diversity to society. Therefore, enhancing students' entrepreneurial intention and capabilities is crucial. Against this backdrop, understanding the factors influencing students' entrepreneurial intentions is vital for improving their entrepreneurial behavior. This is particularly significant for educational management, as it can help education administrators better design and optimize entrepreneurial education programs, providing personalized training and guidance based on students' characteristics and needs. Moreover, by comprehending the factors influencing students' entrepreneurial intentions, education administrators can more effectively allocate resources and offer support measures such as entrepreneurship mentors and funds to promote students' entrepreneurial behavior. Furthermore, understanding the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions can also help education administrators guide students in career planning, nurturing their innovative

spirit and entrepreneurial abilities to better adapt to the future development needs of society. Therefore, gaining a deeper understanding of the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors among university students is essential for enhancing their entrepreneurial behavior, promoting the development of innovative entrepreneurial education management, and cultivating a greater number of high-quality talents with entrepreneurial spirit and practical capabilities.

Although Chinese Ministry of Education has taken measures to encourage entrepreneurship among university students, the current level of entrepreneurial activity among them remains relatively low. Several main reasons contribute to this situation: Firstly, there is a lack of entrepreneurial education and practical opportunities. Many university students lack systematic entrepreneurial education and practical experience, leading to a limited understanding of the entrepreneurial process and associated risks. Additionally, some students are influenced by traditional employment concepts and are more inclined towards stable jobs rather than entrepreneurship. Secondly, there is a lack of financial support. Entrepreneurship requires initial capital investment, which is a significant constraint for most university students. While some policies offer financial support, many students fail to obtain sufficient funding due to complex application processes or limited support. Lastly, there is a lack of organizational support. University students often face challenges in building professional guidelines and acquiring industry-specific knowledge and resources necessary for entrepreneurship. Moreover, some students encounter family and societal pressures and concerns regarding the risks associated with entrepreneurship.

By elucidating these backgrounds, this study provides valuable insights for university entrepreneurial education and students, aiding in the formulation of practical strategies to enhance entrepreneurship among university students. It aims to improve the quality of student entrepreneurship within the evolving educational landscape.

2.1.2 The Importance of Entrepreneurship in the Economic Development of Chinese Context

Undergraduate entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the economic development of China. As the economic landscape undergoes transformation and market competition intensifies, entrepreneurship emerges as a pivotal driver of innovation, job creation, and economic growth. Young undergraduates, with their innovative spirit and fresh

perspectives, inject new vitality into the economy through their entrepreneurial ventures. They not only contribute to the development of new technologies, products, and services but also facilitate the optimization and upgrading of industrial structures. Furthermore, undergraduate entrepreneurship nurtures a new generation of entrepreneurial leaders, fostering sustainable economic development and positioning China at the forefront of global innovation. Thus, supporting and encouraging undergraduate entrepreneurship is essential for advancing China's economy in the context of rapid change and global competitiveness.

2.2 Parent Discipline

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

Theory of planned behavior (TPB) is developed based on the theory of reasoned action and the multi-attribute attitude theory. Initially proposed by Fishbein in 1963, the multi-attribute attitude theory suggests that the anticipated outcomes of behavior influence attitude toward the behavior, thereby affecting behavioral intentions (Fishbein, 1963). Subsequently, expanded upon the theory of reasoned action in 1975, proposing the theory of planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior posits that behavior is directly influenced by intention, which is not only influenced by the attitude toward the behavior but also by subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). This theory posited that behavioral intentions are solely influenced by individual attitudes, and that actual behavior is unaffected by other factors, being solely controlled by individual behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1985). However, in practical application, this fails to comprehensively reflect the factors influencing actual individual behavior. To address this limitation, Ajzen introduced perceived behavioral control in 1991, thereby forming the theory of planned behavior. This theory posits that behavioral attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are three antecedents that can predict behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Individual purposive and planned rational behavior is governed and influenced by their behavioral intentions. Entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by educational experiences, and entrepreneurial intentions serve as a key intermediary in entrepreneurial behavior. Thus, the theory of planned behavior can effectively predict the impact of university students' entrepreneurial intentions on entrepreneurial behavior (Maheshwari, 2021). In this theoretical model, entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral

control are the primary determinants that influence the decision to engage in specific behaviors and subsequently translate into actual actions.

The theory of planned behavior comprises five elements: entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention, and behavior. According to this theory, behavioral intention is the most direct factor influencing behavior, and it is influenced by three conceptually independent predictors of entrepreneurial intention. Firstly, there is the external factor of "Subjective Norms," which refers to the subjective perception derived by individuals after considering social norms and external pressures. Secondly, there is "Entrepreneurial Attitude," which reflects individuals' preferences based on evaluations of the outcomes associated with a specific behavior. Lastly, there is "Perceived Behavioral Control," which refers to individuals' subjective perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behavior. The theory of planned behavior operates as a three-stage analytical model: the first stage posits that behavioral intention determines individual behavior; the second stage suggests that subjective norms, behavioral attitudes, and perceived behavioral control collectively determine behavioral Intention; and the third stage indicates that beliefs determine subjective norms, behavioral attitudes, and perceived behavioral control. Typically, individuals seek to achieve better outcomes by altering their plans, often evaluating them from these three perspectives.

This study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to better understand the factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, thereby providing practical implications for university education management and entrepreneurial education programs. The TPB has proven effective in predicting intentions and behaviors, with a particular emphasis on individual behavioral inclinations. Previous research on entrepreneurial education management, as well as studies on entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviors, has frequently utilized the TPB as a theoretical foundation (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). Building on this theory, the present study conceptualizes university students’ proactive personality as analogous to attitude. Prior studies have shown that a proactive personality encourages individuals to evaluate entrepreneurial outcomes more positively, thereby exerting a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions (Crant, 1996; Li & Wu, 2019). At the same time, creativity is not only an individual trait but also closely tied to the social and

cultural recognition of innovation and entrepreneurship; thus, in the entrepreneurial context, it can be regarded as an external manifestation of subjective norms (Runco & Jaeger, 2012; Zampetakis, 2008). Accordingly, creativity is treated as analogous to subjective norms. Moreover, perceived organizational support enhances students' perceptions of resource availability and controllability, thereby reducing uncertainty in the entrepreneurial process. This aligns closely with the construct of perceived behavioral control in the TPB (R Eisenberger et al., 1986; Turker & Sonmez Selçuk, 2009). Therefore, perceived organizational support is considered analogous to perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurial intention to intention, and entrepreneurial behavior to behavior within the theoretical framework.

2.2.2 Social Cognitive Theory

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Bandura (1986) based on Social Learning Theory, emphasizes that behavior is the result of the interaction between individual factors (such as cognitive abilities, personality, and self-efficacy), environmental factors, and behavior itself through "triadic reciprocal causation" (Bandura, 1986). The theory highlights that an individual's expectations of the outcomes of their behavior (outcome expectations) and observational learning through role models play a key role in shaping their intentions and actual behavior. Based on Social Cognitive Theory, this study views perceived organizational support as a key environmental factor and creativity and proactivity personality as important individual factors: perceived organizational support (such as entrepreneurship courses, mentor guidance, financial and policy support) provides university students with a positive learning environment and resources, reinforcing their expectations for successful entrepreneurial outcomes; creativity and proactivity personality help students identify opportunities, solve problems, and take proactive actions, thereby enhancing their entrepreneurial intentions. The interaction of environmental and individual factors, by generating positive outcome expectations, further strengthens students' entrepreneurial intentions and increases the likelihood of engaging in actual entrepreneurial behavior. This logic is consistent with existing research, which views entrepreneurship as a planned behavior, with intention as a direct precursor to behavior (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). Empirical studies based on Social Cognitive Theory have also shown that factors such as proactivity personality,

creativity, and educational or organizational support enhance individuals' entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors (Naz et al., 2020; Luo et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2025).

In summary, this study applies the TPB and SCT to explore the relationships among perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, entrepreneurial intention, and entrepreneurial behavior.

2.3 Immediate Discipline

This study involves five variables, including perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, entrepreneurial intention, and entrepreneurial behavior. Each variable comprises different dimensions.

2.3.1 Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger introduced the concept of perceived organizational support, which suggests that organizations can promote support by meeting employees' needs, valuing their contributions, and attending to their interests. Such support, in turn, increases the likelihood of employees remaining with the company (Eisenberger et al., 2020). These organizational behaviors leading to higher job satisfaction also elicit positive emotions among employees. According to the more organizations value their employees, the higher the return employees provide to the organization (Rasool et al., 2021). Perceived organizational support (POS) is theoretically rooted in Social Exchange Theory (SET), which emphasizes the norm of reciprocity in social relationships. SET suggests that when individuals perceive care, recognition, and resources from the organization, they feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate through greater commitment, effort, and loyalty (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Eisenberger et al. (1986) further developed POS within this framework, POS serves as a key application of SET in understanding the exchange dynamics between organizations and individuals. Eisenberger applied social exchange theory to explain the level of trust and dedication employees have toward the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2020). They developed the concept of perceived organizational support to understand the exchange relationship between employees and employers. Research indicates a clear correlation between employees' social exchange consciousness and stronger organizational commitment, willingness to contribute to the organization, and higher levels of perceived organizational support. Employees believe that when they perceive support from the organization, they feel more motivated to

contribute to the organization's success and prosperity and support the team in achieving its goals (Yücel et al., 2020). When perceived organizational support exists, both the organization and employees benefit. Employees feel motivated to put forth their best efforts at work when they believe that their employer genuinely values and appreciates their contributions. Consequently, they are more satisfied with their wages, benefits, and working conditions (Asgari et al., 2020). Employees motivated by perceived organizational support are more likely to invest themselves in the success of the company and willingly expend additional time and effort when needed, in exchange for financial compensation and promotion opportunities. The success of perceived organizational support is determined by the degree of alignment between individual values and company values (Rockstuhl et al., 2020). In summary, companies must demonstrate a commitment to valuing their employees and meeting both their material and emotional needs. Employees will develop strong loyalty to the organization and share a set of common core values. Perceived organizational support refers to individuals' subjective perception and evaluation of the various support and resources provided by the organization, including academic support, social support, and emotional support (Su et al., 2021).

The perceived organizational support examined in this study refers to the support perceived by university students from their respective universities. Within this specific demographic of university students, perceived organizational support typically manifests as the attention, assistance, and resource support provided by the university, as well as the degree of concern for student needs and interests (Su et al., 2021). This support may encompass academic support such as teaching resources, guidance, and tutoring; social support such as event organization, club activities, and social network development; emotional support such as psychological counseling, emotional assistance, group activities, and entrepreneurial support. When university students perceive support from the organization, it typically has positive effects on their learning, personal development, and overall well-being. Organizational support in university life can manifest in various aspects, including academic support, social support, and emotional support. Recent literature suggests that organizational support is crucial for the growth and development of students in university life (Torbergsen et al., 2023). Students' perception of organizational support typically involves support in academic, social, emotional, and daily life aspects. Firstly, academic support is one of the crucial aspects of organizational

support perceived by university students. This encompasses academic guidance, course tutoring, and access to learning resources provided by teachers and counselors, aiding students in achieving academic success. Through teacher guidance and support, students can better comprehend course content, enhance learning efficiency, and boost academic confidence. Secondly, social support is also a key factor in university students' perception of organizational support. In the university campus, students may face social pressures from peers, mentors, and alumni. Thus, the social support provided by organizations is vital in helping students build interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts, and establish support networks. Social support also includes social activities organized by student organizations, clubs, and groups, as well as volunteer opportunities and team collaboration projects. These activities help students forge friendships, enhance teamwork skills, and enrich their university experience. Additionally, emotional support is an important component of organizational support perceived by university students. When dealing with academic stress, emotional distress, and personal challenges, students require emotional support from family, friends, and school organizations to help them alleviate stress, regulate emotions, and enhance psychological resilience. By offering psychological counseling services, mental health education, and support groups, organizations can assist students in better coping with challenges and maintaining mental well-being.

Literature related to entrepreneurial support provided by universities covers various aspects, including entrepreneurial education, incubators, resource support and more (Bazan et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial support aims to assist students in fully realizing their innovative entrepreneurial potential, fostering their entrepreneurial success, and nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit. Firstly, entrepreneurial education is one of the core components of entrepreneurial support provided by universities (Hahn et al., 2020). Universities impart entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to students, fostering their entrepreneurial awareness and capabilities through methods such as offering entrepreneurship courses, organizing entrepreneurship seminars, and hosting entrepreneurship competitions. Research indicates that students who receive entrepreneurial education are more likely to engage in entrepreneurship and have a higher success rate. Additionally, entrepreneurship incubators are one of the vital avenues through which universities provide entrepreneurial support. Entrepreneurship incubators provide students with resources such as entrepreneurial mentor-ship, office space, and

funding support, assisting them in the development and implementation of entrepreneurial projects from ideation to fruition. Through collaboration with entrepreneurship incubators, students can leverage various resources within the campus entrepreneurial ecosystem, thereby reducing entrepreneurial risks and increasing the likelihood of entrepreneurial success. Additionally, universities can support student entrepreneurship by providing entrepreneurial resources and network support (Longva, 2021). Which includes providing entrepreneurial funding, technical support, marketing resources, as well as establishing entrepreneurial communities, mentor-ship networks, etc., to offer students broader support and assistance in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

In summary, entrepreneurial support provided by universities encompasses various aspects such as entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurship incubators, and resource support. These supports aim to assist students in fully unleashing their innovative entrepreneurial potential, fostering their entrepreneurial success, and nurturing their entrepreneurial intention. With the continuous improvement of entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial support systems, the vitality and effectiveness of university student entrepreneurship will be further enhanced. Overall, students' perception of organizational support is crucial for their learning, social interactions, emotional well-being, and entrepreneurship. By providing various forms of support such as academic guidance, social activities, and emotional assistance, organizations can help students maximize their potential, achieve personal and professional goals, and enjoy a rich and meaningful university experience.

2.3.2 Creativity

American psychologist Guilford defined creativity as the characteristic ability that best represents creative individual (Guilford, 2017). The theoretical foundation of creativity in this study is Amabile’s Componential Theory of Creativity (1996). This theory posits that creativity arises from the interaction of three core components: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic motivation. Moreover, it highlights the crucial role of the surrounding environment, such as organizational or educational support, in fostering creativity. In the university context, when students receive academic, social, and entrepreneurial support, their creativity can be effectively stimulated. Enhanced creativity not only enables students to generate novel and valuable ideas but also strengthens their entrepreneurial intention, as creative students are more

likely to recognize opportunities, design innovative solutions, and engage actively in entrepreneurial activities. Amabile pointed out that creativity is the creativity of a product, and should be evaluated by qualified and appropriate assessors (Amabile, 1983). A product is deemed creative if it meets two criteria: novelty and value. Creativity refers to an individual's ability to combine existing ideas and resources to generate new and feasible ideas, thereby initiating new ventures (Ferreira et al., 2020). Creativity as the ability to produce work results that are both novel and appropriate (Dow, 2022). Creativity as the ability, through certain intellectual activities, to form new images of products in the mind through certain transformations and reorganizations, and to transform these new images into new products (Hills & Bird, 2018). Creativity as the cognitive process of transforming an individual's prior knowledge structure to meet the needs of current problems, thereby smoothly resolving the issues at hand (Forbes & Domm, 2004). As psychology delves deeper into the study of creativity, researchers tend to view creativity as a cognitive process and a synthesis of restructuring knowledge structures (Ward & Kolomyts, 2010). Creativity as the psychological ability of human beings to comprehensively utilize all suitable conditions to produce novel, unique, and applicable products (Chang et al., 2014). Creativity as the transformation of information, thereby revealing new relationships among things (De Pisapia & Rastelli, 2022). Based on the comprehensive analysis above, this study defines creativity as the ability or characteristic to generate novel, unique, socially or personally valuable spiritual or material products, based on a certain purpose and the utilization of known information (Cho & Park, 2022).

In the context of entrepreneurial support, the role of creativity becomes particularly crucial. In the entrepreneurial process, creativity is not only manifested in the innovation of products or services but also in problem-solving approaches, marketing strategies, and organizational management, among other aspects (Anjum et al., 2020). Therefore, the entrepreneurial support provided by universities is not only aimed at cultivating students' entrepreneurial spirit but also, more importantly, at stimulating and harnessing the creativity of students. This enables students to continuously generate novel ideas and solutions during the entrepreneurial process, thereby standing out in competitive market environments. Research indicates that the creativity of entrepreneurs is crucial for the innovation and development of enterprises (Juliana et al., 2021). Entrepreneurs with high levels of creativity are often better able to identify market opportunities, adapt flexibly to

changes, and continuously enhance the competitiveness of their enterprises through sustained innovation. Therefore, while providing entrepreneurial support, universities should also focus on cultivating students' creativity, laying a solid foundation for their future entrepreneurial endeavors.

In recent years, there has been increasing attention on the study of creativity among university students. The cultivation and development of creativity during the university stage are crucial for their future career development and social engagement (Chua & Iyengar, 2008). Some studies suggest that the level of creativity among university students is influenced not only by individual talents and academic strengths but also by the learning environment. Recently, in the field of higher education research, the cultivation of creativity has become one of the core objectives of education (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). For instance, many universities offer innovation and entrepreneurship courses or provide entrepreneurial opportunities to inspire students' creativity and innovation awareness. Additionally, universities organize research projects, entrepreneurship competitions, and other activities to provide platforms for students to showcase and practice their creativity. However, some studies also indicate that current university education often places excessive emphasis on knowledge dissemination and examination scores, neglecting the cultivation of students' creativity (Wang & Guo, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to further explore how to effectively promote the development of students' creativity in university education. This may involve changing teaching methods, adjusting curriculum settings, and providing more practical opportunities, among other measures. In general, research on students' creativity not only contributes to understanding the formation and development process of creativity but also provides theoretical support and practical guidance for the reform of university education. By strengthening research on students' creativity, we can better meet the society's demand for innovative talents, and promote progress and development in higher education.

In general, the creativity of university students can be understood as their ability to generate novel, unique, and valuable ideas or solutions within specific domains.

2.3.3 Proactive Personality

The concept of proactive personality originates from the work of Bateman and Crant (1993), who conceptualized it as a stable dispositional trait that reflects an individual’s tendency to take initiative to influence and change the environment rather than

passively adapt to it. This theoretical perspective is grounded in proactive behavior theory, which emphasizes the role of personality in shaping individuals' self-starting and future-oriented actions. Together, these frameworks highlight that proactive personality is not merely a reactive adaptation to external circumstances but rather a driving psychological trait that enables individuals, such as university students, to actively create opportunities, initiate change, and pursue entrepreneurial intentions. Crant defined proactive personality as a tendency which not constrained by the environment, but rather a trait of taking initiative to induce changes in the environment (Crant et al., 2016). Individuals with proactive personality trait are typically more inclined to take initiative rather than passively accept situations. They possess a spirit of challenge, are adept at identifying opportunities, and are able to make decisive decisions and take action to achieve their goals (Abid et al., 2021). The empirical study conducted by Chen et al (2020) explored the moderating effect of proactive personality on the relationship between entrepreneurial role models and entrepreneurial intentions among university students. The results indicated a significant positive moderating effect of proactive personality on this relationship, suggesting that the influence of entrepreneurial role models on entrepreneurial intentions is more pronounced among individuals with proactive personalities. Additionally, the study found that proactive personality has a significant direct positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions, indicating that proactive personality itself encourages individuals to have a greater inclination towards entrepreneurial intentions (Kumar & Shukla, 2022). These research findings reveal the significant role of proactive personality in the entrepreneurial process among university students. In order to cultivate entrepreneurial spirit and intentions among university students, targeted efforts can be made to enhance the cultivation and guidance of proactive personality traits. When studying proactive personality among university students, we can draw insights from previous research on proactive personality. Proactive Personality can be defined as a psychological trait or behavioral tendency among university students characterized by a propensity to take initiative, actively engage, and create opportunities (Luo et al., 2022). This personality trait makes them more willing to spontaneously engage in various activities, face challenges courageously, and effectively adapt to constantly changing environments. According to past research, proactive personality holds significant importance within the university student population. For instance, Crant suggested that proactive personality refers to an individual's tendency to

take spontaneous action to change the environment without being constrained by external circumstances (Crant et al., 2016). The university students, this proactivity may manifest in behaviors such as active participation in extracurricular activities, entrepreneurial endeavors, or leadership projects. Furthermore, research has also found that proactive personality among university students significantly influences their entrepreneurial intentions (Chen et al. 2022). University students with higher levels of proactive personality are more inclined to engage in entrepreneurial behavior, making them more likely to emerge as leaders in the entrepreneurial field.

Therefore, this study can identify proactive personality among university students as a prevalent psychological trait within this demographic. It manifests as a positive inclination towards engagement, creativity, and change, which aids them in better adapting to and leading in ever-changing environments, thereby promoting their personal development and achievements.

2.3.4 Entrepreneurial Intention

The concept of entrepreneurial intention is primarily grounded in Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB, 1991). TPB posits that intention is the most immediate predictor of behavior and is shaped by three factors: an individual's attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Within this framework, entrepreneurial intention serves as a crucial antecedent of entrepreneurial behavior, providing a reliable theoretical basis for explaining and predicting university students' likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurship (Bird, 1988) was the first to introduce the concept of entrepreneurial intention, defining it as a psychological state characterized by a high degree of individual attention to specific goals, with this attention influencing behavior and guiding changes in personal experiences. Meanwhile, entrepreneurial intention as the likelihood of an individual establishing a new company (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993), and later in 2000, he delineated it as the willingness and preference of individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Krueger Jr et al., 2000). Entrepreneurial Intention as the likelihood and behavioral intentions of university students to engage in entrepreneurship (Botsaris & Vamvaka, 2016). Entrepreneurial Intention refers to the subjective psychological readiness of individuals to start a new business (Margaça et al., 2021). Furthermore, Entrepreneurial intention as the conscious planning and intention of individuals to start a new company at some point in the future (Gilmartin

et al., 2019). In summary, this study adopts the definition proposed by Gilmartin and Thompson, defining entrepreneurial intention as the conscious planning of individuals to start a new company and the intention to possibly put it into practice at some point in the future (Gilmartin et al., 2019). Additionally, the investigation of entrepreneurial intention needs to be approached from two angles: establishing entrepreneurial goal intentions and pursuing entrepreneurial execution intentions (Pham et al., 2021). Sebora & Theerapatvong (2010) divided entrepreneurial intention into aspects such as entrepreneurial planning, resource acquisition for entrepreneurship, interpersonal relationships, risk-taking propensity, and innovation and change. In addition to the definitions provided by the aforementioned scholars, many researchers have explored entrepreneurial intention from different perspectives. For instance, The defined entrepreneurial intention as the likelihood of future entrepreneurship among university students, focusing on individual future behavioral tendencies (Zhang et al., 2015). Meanwhile, Aditya regarded entrepreneurial intention as individuals' subjective thoughts about whether to start a business, emphasizing the intrinsic psychological state of individuals when facing entrepreneurial choices (Aditya, 2020). Entrepreneurial intention is a crucial factor driving specific entrepreneurial behaviors, playing a pivotal role in the initial stages of the entrepreneurial process (Harima et al., 2021). Behavioral science suggests that intentions are more effective in explaining actual behavior than other factors. Generally, the clearer an individual’s intention to engage in a certain behavior, the higher the likelihood of them actually engaging in that behavior (Gieure et al., 2020). Many scholars have introduced behavioral intention into the entrepreneurial domain and conducted related research, offering new theoretical perspectives for exploring entrepreneurial behavior.

Ajzen (1991) based on the theory of planned behavior, suggested that entrepreneurial intention precedes actual entrepreneurial behavior and effectively predicts and promotes its generation. The entrepreneurial intention is a prerequisite for engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Lihua, 2022). Entrepreneurial intention represents the subjective attitude of potential entrepreneurs towards starting a business, serving as a necessary precursor to entrepreneurial action (Maâlej & Cabagnols, 2020). Previous research has found that entrepreneurial opportunities and resources do not directly lead to entrepreneurial behavior, but rather entrepreneurial intention is the primary variable for

explaining and predicting entrepreneurial behavior (Chang & Chen, 2020). Cha and Bae (2010) indicated that entrepreneurial intention represents the initial stage of a series of entrepreneurial behaviors, known as the intention-behavior phase. During this phase, nascent entrepreneurs begin preparing for entrepreneurship, clarify their entrepreneurial goals, and express intention to become entrepreneurs in the near future. Individuals with entrepreneurial intention prepare extensively driven by entrepreneurial goals, continuously enhance their entrepreneurial capabilities, and facilitate the achievement of entrepreneurial performance.

Therefore, it is essential to study entrepreneurial intention as the initial stage of entrepreneurial behavior among university students. However, in China, research on entrepreneurial intention started relatively late, but many scholars have discussed it from different perspectives. Some scholars choose to adopt mature definitions from abroad, For instance, The university students' entrepreneurial intention as the likelihood of their autonomous entrepreneurship (Al-Jubari et al., 2017). On the other hand, Lihua (2022) defined entrepreneurial intention as the subjective thought of whether potential entrepreneurs have the intention to start their own business. Similarly, Nabi et al (2018) provided a similar explanation of entrepreneurial intention, emphasizing that it reflects the traits, attitudes, and capabilities of entrepreneurs. Many scholars have also proposed new understandings based on their own research. For instance, Krueger Jr et al (2017) suggests that entrepreneurial intention reflects the magnitude of potential entrepreneurs' likelihood to start a business. These different dimensions enrich the understanding of entrepreneurial intention and provide a more comprehensive perspective for research. The study of entrepreneurial intention has gradually expanded from a single dimension to multidimensional analysis. According to entrepreneurial intention into entrepreneurial goal intention and entrepreneurial implementation intention, emphasizing the importance of goal setting and execution planning in the entrepreneurial process (Solesvik, 2013). Meanwhile, entrepreneurial intention as individuals' drive toward entrepreneurship, highlighting the intrinsic entrepreneurial motives and driving forces within individuals (Saraswati & Hermawan, 2022). The Entrepreneurial Intention scale developed by Linan and Chen measured the entrepreneurial intention of professional degree graduates and has been widely referenced in academia (Liñán & Chen, 2009). On the other hand, entrepreneurial intention into three dimensions: readiness, motivation and attitude

(Samsudin et al., 2016) . Meanwhile, Sang and Peterson categorized entrepreneurial intention into six dimensions: autonomy, innovation, risk acceptance, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial intention from four dimensions: risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness (SO et al., 2017). Bilgiseven divided entrepreneurial intention from five aspects: personal, psychological, environmental, cognitive and demographic (Bilgiseven, 2019).

In summary, a multidimensional definition and understanding of entrepreneurial intention contribute to a more comprehensive grasp of both the intrinsic motivations and external behavioral manifestations of individual entrepreneurship. This study will comprehensively consider the various dimensions of Entrepreneurial Intention defined by different scholars to explore in depth the mechanisms and influencing factors of university students' entrepreneurial intentions, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for entrepreneurial education and policy-making. While this study will adopt Thompson's definition of entrepreneurial intention for research, it will also integrate considerations of other scholars' definitions of entrepreneurial intention to gain a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of university students' entrepreneurial intentions (Thompson, 2009).

2.3.5 Entrepreneurial Behavior

The entrepreneurial behavior is primarily grounded in Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB, 1991). TPB posits that actual behavior is the outcome of prior behavioral intentions, which are shaped by an individual’s attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Within this framework, entrepreneurial behavior is understood as the realization of entrepreneurial intention, representing the translation of motivational and cognitive factors into concrete entrepreneurial actions. Entrepreneurial behavior is a complex concept, with some scholars emphasizing the specific manifestations of entrepreneurial behavior from an outcome perspective. For instance, early research on entrepreneurial behavior, suggesting that entrepreneurial behavior refers to the actions of entrepreneurs who, after conceiving entrepreneurial ideas, make tangible contributions to entrepreneurship through various types of entrepreneurial behavior (Foss & Grandori, 2020). From their perspective, entrepreneurial behavior primarily entails the establishment of a new enterprise. Similarly, Bird and Schjoed (2017) posited that entrepreneurial behavior involves the establishment of new ventures and engaging in and implementing

opportunity development behaviors closely associated with the survival and growth of the enterprise. He placed a stronger emphasis on the creation of new ventures, thus excluding behaviors related to maintaining and transforming existing organizational operations from the scope of entrepreneurial behavior. Carter (2011) also underscored the outcome-oriented nature of entrepreneurial behavior, suggesting that entrepreneurial behavior refers to actions implemented in the process of founding a new venture that are closely tied to the survival of the enterprise. These behaviors encompass a series of activities conducted throughout various stages, from business planning to the implementation of strategies.

Holcombe (2015) based on the process of entrepreneurial behavior, proposed that entrepreneurial behavior primarily revolves around entrepreneurial goals, orchestrating various resources, identifying and developing entrepreneurial opportunities, and the process of producing new products or reducing existing production costs. In contrast, domestic scholars such as Dhahri et al (2021) pointed out that entrepreneurial behavior refers to a series of actions undertaken by individuals based on entrepreneurial intent, including opportunity identification and entrepreneurial practice, to achieve entrepreneurial goals. Meanwhile, Amir (2015) defined entrepreneurial behavior as the process of seeking entrepreneurial opportunities in the external entrepreneurial environment, preparing entrepreneurial capital, and continuously making efforts to establish new ventures. Entrepreneurial behavior from two conceptual levels: broad and narrow, broad entrepreneurial behavior mainly refers to individuals' involvement in the process of creating a business (Sternberg et al., 2019). On the other hand, the narrow concept of entrepreneurial behavior emphasizes the proactive nature of entrepreneurial behavior, primarily referring to entrepreneurs actively engaging in the establishment and operation of a business and being willing to take on entrepreneurial risks (Gartner et al., 2010). Similarly, Ma and Yang (2022) also discussed entrepreneurial behavior from broad and narrow perspectives. They believe that broadly, entrepreneurial behavior mainly refers to the process of creating new ventures, while narrowly, entrepreneurial behavior primarily refers to entrepreneurs' perception of entrepreneurial opportunities, resource integration, and the process of implementing the establishment of new ventures.

According to Kreiser and Davis (2010) , entrepreneurial behavior can be measured from three dimensions: innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness. Entrepreneurship involves four aspects: personality attributes of optimism, innovativeness, risk-taking

propensity and entrepreneurial intention associated with entrepreneurship (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Additionally, Timmons suggests that an individual's entrepreneurial behavior consists of three aspects: entrepreneurial opportunity, resources, and team collaboration (Timmons et al., 2004). It is only through the organic combination of these three elements that entrepreneurship can progress from initial planning to development stages and ultimately achieve entrepreneurial success. Timmons delineates the entrepreneurial process into three dimensions: opportunity recognition, resource integration, and entrepreneurial team formation. Some scholars drawing on Timmons' entrepreneurial behavior process theory, decomposed the entrepreneurial process of university students into three dynamic stages: entrepreneurial preparation, establishment, and growth management. On the other hand, Chinese scholar Liu (2019) believe that Entrepreneurial behavior can effectively identify and utilize opportunities. Therefore, they divide the dimensions of entrepreneurial behavior into the starting point of entrepreneurship, the utilization and allocation of resources by entrepreneurs and teams, and the strategic selection of target markets.

The perspective of entrepreneurial practice, divided entrepreneurial behavior into three dimensions: behavioral velocity, behavioral focus, and the timing of behavioral occurrence (Liao & Gartner, 2009; Lichtenstein et al., 2007). After summarizing relevant studies, they proposed that entrepreneurial behavior not only includes the dimensions of planning and decision-making but also encompasses cooperation and motivation-related dimensions. Regarding the selection of entrepreneurial behavior dimensions by Chinese scholars, most focus on the narrow definition of entrepreneurial behavior. In her research on the correlation between entrepreneurial attitudes and preparatory behaviors, Zozimo et al. defined Entrepreneurial Behavior as entrepreneurial learning, participation in entrepreneurial behavior, and entrepreneurial preparation (Zozimo et al., 2017). In studying the mechanism of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial behavior, Dimov categorized entrepreneurial behavior into three dimensions: entrepreneurial preparation, entrepreneurial opportunity search, and entrepreneurial capital preparation (Dimov, 2010). The former categorized the dimensions of entrepreneurial behavior into the degree of preparation in terms of energy investment, opportunity search, building social networks, and financial inspections, while the latter further refined these dimensions into a five-dimensional structure including knowledge preparation, relationship preparation,

information preparation, team preparation, and financial preparation. This study adopts the definition of entrepreneurial behavior, it as a single dimension (Abubakar et al., 2022) . Entrepreneurial behavior is the commercial activities undertaken by individuals or teams with the aim of profit generation.

2.4 Theoretical Model and Hypotheses Development

This study, based on the theory of planned behavior and social cognitive theory, in the model, the independent variables (perceived organizational support, creativity, and proactive personality) and the dependent variables (entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior).

2.4.1 Theoretical Model

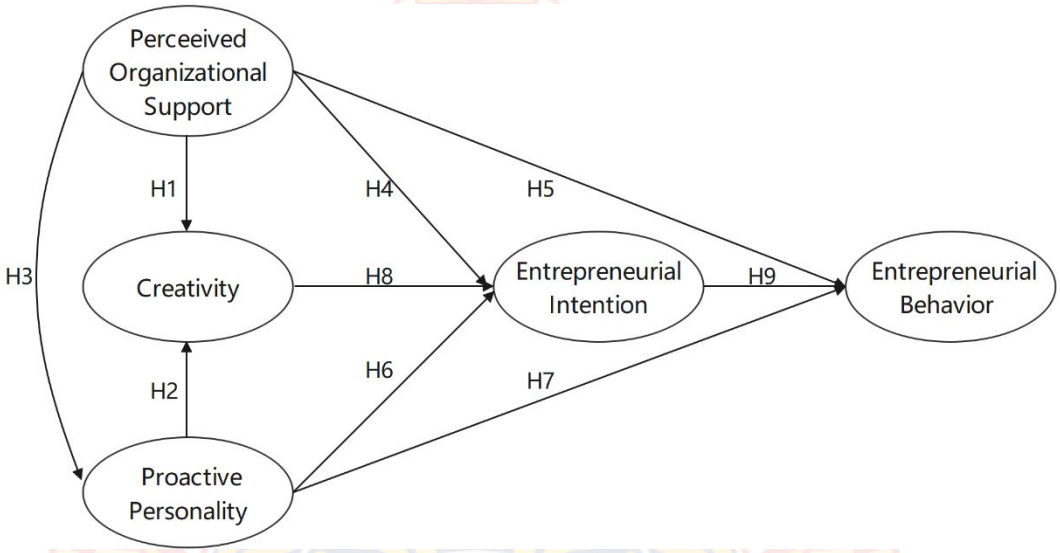


Figure 2.1 Empirical Model
Source: Elaborated by this research

2.4.2 Hypotheses Development

2.4.2.1 The Relationships between Perceived Organizational Support and Creativity

The hypothesis regarding the influence of perceived organizational support on creativity development aims to explore the impact of individuals' perception of organizational support in the work environment on their creativity levels. This hypothesis is based on Amabile's organizational innovation and creativity model, along with relevant research, which suggests that organizational support for employee creativity positively

influences their creative performance (Amabile, 1988). Amabile's model of organizational innovation and creativity provides us with a framework for a deeper understanding of how perceived organizational support is associated with creativity. The impact of perceived organizational support on employee creativity can be achieved through inspiring employees' positive emotions and affect. In a supportive organizational environment, employees are more likely to feel understood, respected, and recognized, which in turn motivates them to express creative ideas and thoughts. The ability for individuals and teams to perceive support for creativity in the workplace is crucial for stimulating and fostering creative thinking and behavior (Yu & Frenkel, 2013). Perceived organizational support can also facilitate employees' creative thinking and behavior by providing resources and assistance. Organizations may offer necessary training, tools, and technical support to create a creative work environment and platform for employees, encouraging them to boldly experiment with new ideas and approaches. Creativity, as a broadly encompassing concept, has different interpretations and applications across various fields, including arts, music, science, education, advertising, and management (El-Murad & Oliveira, 2015). In entrepreneurship research, Amabile's definition of Creativity, which involves generating novel and useful ideas, is widely accepted because such novel and useful ideas are considered crucial drivers of entrepreneurial success (Tuksatit & Rajiani, 2020).

Recent research has shed light on the relationship between perceived organizational support, job engagement, and employee creativity. For instance, Aldabbas et al (2021) found that employees who perceive higher levels of organizational support tend to exhibit greater job engagement and demonstrate higher levels of creativity compared to those who perceive lower levels of organizational support. The integrated leadership and creativity theory, it aims to validate the direct impact of perceived organizational support on employee creativity (Hidayat, Febrianto, et al., 2023). Perceived organizational support, along with the meaningfulness of work, is considered essential factors that directly stimulate and enhance employee creativity. Additionally, empirical research has found that perceived organizational support has a significant positive impact on the creativity of technology professionals (Yang & Zhou, 2022). Past studies have shown that perceived organizational support contributes to enhancing employees' levels of

creativity (Duan et al., 2020). Therefore, based on the literature review and theoretical background, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on creativity

2.4.2.2 The relationships between proactive personality and creativity

Previous research has revealed a direct relationship between proactive personality and creativity, highlighting how proactive personality traits influence creativity through individuals' internal mechanisms (Chen & Chang, 2013). Studies focusing on creativity have found that proactive personality is a strong predictor of creativity (Alikaj et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2015) . Previous research, considering the complexity of creativity and the influence of social factors on individual creativity (Perry-Smith, 2020). This study discuss the relationship between proactive personality and individual creativity within the context of China. Proactive individuals often exhibit a strong sense of initiative, which may lead to creative outcomes in the future (Kim et al., 2010). Proactive personality encompasses individual traits such as self-starting, change-oriented, and visionary characteristics, which influence the development of creative thinking and actions during the process of task completion (Parker et al., 2010). Employees with proactive personalities can enhance their creative performance in multiple ways. Firstly, proactive individuals focus on developing their own initiative to generate new ideas about tasks and organizational-level changes (McCormick et al., 2019). Employees with proactive personalities may embrace change-oriented organizational cultures, visionary initiatives, and organizational integrity, which are key driving factors for creative performance (Choi et al., 2021). Secondly, employees with proactive personalities often engage in learning-based organizational activities to gain benefits for their self-development (Li et al., 2020). This learning initiative fostered by proactive employees. Who encourages acquiring new knowledge and creatively applying it to tasks assigned by the organization, ultimately enhancing creative performance. Thirdly, proactive employees not only take proactive actions in self-development but also may proactively share the knowledge they acquire with other colleagues (Sun et al., 2021). Conversely, a collaborative work atmosphere facilitated by proactive employees may promote both individual and collective creative performance (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2013). Proactive employees enhance individual and team-level collaboration by facilitating interpersonal information exchange, sharing ideas, and building trust-based relationships with

organizational members, which are crucial sources for creative performance. Recent studies have indicated a positive and significant impact of proactive personality on creativity (Alikaj et al., 2021; Chae & Park, 2022). Therefore, based on the literature analysis above, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Proactive personality has a positive effect on creativity.

2.4.2.3 The Relationships between Perceived Organizational Support and proactive personality

Individuals who perceive organizational support believe that the organization is willing to extend a helping hand not only in work but also in life, fostering a sense of respect, care, and recognition within the organization. Beneficial forms of organizational support not only encourage individuals' self-direction and self-management but also cultivate a positive mindset, thereby enhancing positivity in both work and life (Hashemi et al., 2012). In higher education, positive support not only implies academic support but also entails caring for students' overall development. This kind of support often inspires students to envision their future through perceived behavioral control variables, especially concerning entrepreneurship and autonomous career choices. For example, a college student who feels supported and encouraged by the school may be more inclined to explore entrepreneurial opportunities because they believe the school will support their decisions and provide necessary resources and guidance. Research also indicates that a positive organizational culture is crucial in stimulating students' interest in engaging in entrepreneurial behavior, whether directly or indirectly through interaction with entrepreneurial-related organizations. For instance, a environment that actively supports entrepreneurship, students may be more inclined to join entrepreneurial clubs or participate in entrepreneurial competitions because they perceive organizational support and encouragement for Entrepreneurial Behavior, while also gaining inspiration and support from interacting with like-minded peers. Additionally, perceived organizational support has a positive impact on individuals' proactive personality (Kanten & Ulker, 2012). This suggests that organizational support increasingly stimulates employees to exhibit more proactive personality traits. For example, an employee who perceives organizational support may be more motivated to proactively solve problems, seek new opportunities, and challenges because they believe the organization will provide them with support and encouragement.

Early research has found that perceived organizational support and proactive personality influence entrepreneurial behavior, but surprisingly, there has been little research directly exploring whether perceptions of organizational support contribute significantly to the prediction of proactive behavior (Kanten & Ulker, 2012). More recent studies have emphasized the impact of perceived organizational support and proactive personality on creativity, but have yet to thoroughly examine the relationship between perceived organizational support and proactive personality (Hidayat, et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to fill the research gap in the current field by comprehensively exploring how perceived organizational support influences individuals' proactive personality. When individuals perceive support from the organization, they are more likely to exhibit proactive personality traits, thereby laying the foundation for creative thinking and behavior. Therefore, this study proposes the hypothesis:

H3: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on proactive personality.

2.4.2.4 The Relationships between Perceived Organizational Support and Entrepreneurial Intention

Some research suggests that the role of universities should not be viewed solely from an educational perspective but as an entity that promotes entrepreneurship (Saeed, 2015; L. Shi et al., 2020). Universities can also create an environment for entrepreneurial innovation through knowledge and technology development, stakeholder engagement, and resource provision, encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial initiatives (Davey et al., 2016). Firstly, educational support provided through various programs can offer students knowledge, skills, as well as internship and networking opportunities to help them translate their ideas into viable concepts (Davey et al., 2016; Saeed, 2015). By offering perceived concept development support, universities can enhance students' entrepreneurial awareness and motivation, particularly in the early stages of the entrepreneurial process, which primarily involve opportunity recognition and developing opportunities into business ideas (Saeed et al., 2018b). Universities can help students in further developing their ventures through business development support after graduation. Overall, an entrepreneurial-supportive university environment can increase students' interest in entrepreneurship by enhancing knowledge, building confidence, and boosting self-efficacy, qualifying them to consider entrepreneurship as a career choice

(Mustafa et al., 2016; Saeed, 2015). Previous research has shown that students' perception of university support positively influences the formation of entrepreneurial intentions (Nasiru et al., 2015). In terms of education support, imparting knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurial abilities increases interest in becoming an entrepreneur (Hussain et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial education can also foster students' entrepreneurial intentions (Nasiru et al., 2015). Regarding perceived concept development support, universities can help students in developing and validating business concepts at early stages (Mustafa et al., 2016).

Furthermore, perceived business development support can foster students' strong interest in entrepreneurial behavior by providing them with opportunities to operate prototype companies on campus (Nasiru et al., 2015). Perceived organizational support plays a significant role in entrepreneurial behavior and the creation of new ventures, as the support and assistance provided by universities help meet needs better and maximize profits at minimal ecological costs (Bergmann et al., 2016). And universities are considered to be the source and resource for cultivating students' entrepreneurial awareness (Hameed et al., 2021). Franke & Lüthje (2004) elucidated that the perceived university environment influences entrepreneurial intentions. The importance of perceived university support on entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial education programs impact individuals' entrepreneurial intentions (Nasiru et al., 2015). Chinese scholar discovered that entrepreneurial education programs positively influence students' entrepreneurial intentions (Wu et al., 2022). Many universities are still striving to translate students' ideas into tangible concepts (Saeed, 2015). The researcher suggested that measuring the extent of university support on students is crucial (Lu et al., 2021). Barba-Sánchez et al (2022) also recognized that students' perceptions of the university environment significantly influence their entrepreneurial intentions. According to Guerrero et al (2020) entrepreneurial education and support provided by universities are practical pathways to acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge, which can influence students' career choices. Students gain necessary knowledge, skills, and internships, which contribute to enhancing their entrepreneurial intentions (Saeed, 2015). Díaz-Casero et al. studied the relationship between university support and entrepreneurial intentions, finding that among environmental factors, university support significantly influences

entrepreneurial intentions (Díaz-Casero et al., 2017). Therefore, based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions.

2.4.2.5 The Relationships between Perceived Organizational Support and Entrepreneurial Behavior

Previous research has regarded organizational support as a key factor in fostering entrepreneurial spirit within existing organizations (Gonzalez-Serrano et al., 2018). According to the theory of organizational support, this support reflects the extent to which organizations value employee contributions and care about their well-being (Robert Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organizational support entails organizations caring about their employees and their overall satisfaction, valuing their contributions, and appreciating their extra efforts (Behram & Özdemirci, 2014). Furthermore, organizations also acknowledge their exceptional performance, take pride in their achievements, and address their concerns (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Additionally, in the entrepreneurial process, resource support is scarce, and entrepreneurs' performance directly impacts organizational performance (Nguyen et al., 2021). Therefore, in situations where entrepreneurial behavior is considered to involve significant risks, organizational support is particularly useful (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2012). Some researchers acknowledge that management measures encouraging innovation within organizations can be effective by focusing on both organizational and individual levels (Aguilar et al., 2019). Employees need support from organizations and an environment conducive to entrepreneurial behavior, along with managers who encourage such behavior (Valka et al., 2020). Their perception of these factors constitutes an important area of research for understanding the potential influences on entrepreneurial behavior. Indeed, research on the perceived quality of organizational support and its impact on the entrepreneurial process, spanning from intention to behavior, remains relatively sparse. Based on recent research, we hypothesize a significant positive relationship between perceived university support and entrepreneurial behavior. Studies indicate that perceiving support from universities for entrepreneurship can stimulate individuals' entrepreneurial intentions and actions. Universities may support student entrepreneurship through avenues such as offering entrepreneurship courses, training, mentorship, and resources. With this support, students

may feel more confident and motivated to engage in entrepreneurship, be more willing to take entrepreneurial risks, and better equipped to address challenges in the entrepreneurial process. Therefore, we speculate that the higher the perceived level of university support, the greater the likelihood of individuals engaging in entrepreneurial behavior. However, while there is theoretical and empirical support for the positive relationship between perceived university support and entrepreneurial behavior, this relationship may be influenced by certain conditions and factors. For example, factors such as individual entrepreneurial abilities, entrepreneurial experience, personal backgrounds, and external factors such as changes in the entrepreneurial environment and differences in policy support may moderate the relationship between perceived university support and entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, this study investigate these potential key factors to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which perceived university support influences entrepreneurial behavior, and to provide more specific recommendations for university entrepreneurial education and support policies. Thus, based on the above analysis and discussion, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on entrepreneurial behavior.

2.4.2.6 The relationships between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention.

Many researchers widely acknowledge the positive impact of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention. Proactive personality is defined as a characteristic demonstrating strong internal motivation and a tendency to take initiative to achieve desired goals (Presbitero, 2015). This personality trait is possessed by individuals who can act independently of situational forces, proactively initiate meaningful changes in their environment, and take action (Liao, 2023). One of its most important features is considering all possible future consequences comprehensively (Kumar & Shukla, 2022). Employees with a proactive personality often exhibit innovativeness (Hanif & Sarwat, 2022), intrinsic motivation (Karimi et al., 2022), performance goal orientation (Lochab & Nath, 2020), job commitment (Li et al., 2014), career adaptability (Hou et al., 2014; Tolentino et al., 2014), voice behavior (Xie et al., 2014), self-esteem and independent work ability (Cai et al., 2015). In summary, a proactive personality tends to lead employees to generate positive outcomes beneficial to their organizations. This proactive disposition is

reflected not only in individual traits but also in attitudes towards future opportunities and challenges. Such a personality trait makes individuals more willing to face uncertainty and take risks, daring to challenge the status quo and pursue new opportunities. Meanwhile, proactive personality is closely associated with the innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities required by entrepreneurs, which are particularly crucial in the entrepreneurial process. Research indicates that individuals with a proactive personality are more inclined to seek new solutions and venture into new business models and market opportunities, thereby increasing their likelihood of choosing entrepreneurship.

Past research has begun to focus on the relationship between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention. For instance, the proactive personality scale might influence career choices, particularly entrepreneurship (Li et al., 2020). Recent studies also support this viewpoint, finding that proactive personality has a significantly positive impact on entrepreneurial intention (Biswas & Verma, 2021; Luc, 2021; Phong et al., 2020). Proactive personality is a key factor influencing entrepreneurial intention (Kumar & Shukla, 2022). Additionally, research has found that individuals with a proactive personality are more motivated to scan the environment (Prabhu et al., 2012), more likely to take initiative in seeking and processing information (Brandstätter, 2011), and better able to identify entrepreneurial opportunities (Luca et al., 2013; Mustafa et al., 2016). In summary, proactive personality not only manifests positive effects on individual traits and behaviors but also plays an important role in the formation of entrepreneurial intention. In an increasingly competitive business environment, individuals with a proactive personality are more likely to actively seek and process information, take proactive actions to create new opportunities or improve the status quo. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Proactive personality has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.

2.4.2.7 The relationships between proactive personality and entrepreneurial behavior

The proactive personality trait is closely associated with individuals making proactive attempts to adapt to environmental changes (Delle & Amadu, 2016). This personality trait plays a crucial role in the process of translating entrepreneurial intention into actual entrepreneurial behavior, as an increasing amount of research reveals how different personality traits influence entrepreneurial intention and subsequent actions (Hu

et al., 2018; Neneh, 2019). Individuals with a proactive personality trait are typically able to identify opportunities promptly and take effective action (Marler et al., 2017; Mustafa et al., 2016). Research has also observed that within organizational frameworks, proactive behavior has a positive impact on entrepreneurs' attitudes toward seeking opportunities and being competitive (Viinikainen et al., 2017). Studies have shown that many individuals exhibit proactive traits in response to various environmental stimuli, always shaping and improving their environment in constructive ways (Chipeta & Surujlal, 2017; Fuller et al., 2018). For example, Luo et al (2022) investigated entrepreneurial intentions among university students and found that students with higher levels of proactivity were more likely to choose the entrepreneurial path.

In a cross-sectional study, the entrepreneurial intentions of Chinese students with proactive personalities and creativity, revealing that proactive personality had a more significant and positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions compared to creativity (Hu et al., 2018). Additionally, Travis and Freeman (2017) conducted a predictive study on entrepreneurial intentions involving 471 participants from private and public universities in the southeastern United States. They found that proactive personality traits significantly contributed to entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions. (Bateman & Crant, 1993) constructed a scale to assess proactive personality based on literature research and found that individuals with highly proactive personalities were more likely to achieve career success, job performance,and pursue adventurous developments. Prabhu et al (2012) conducted a cross-cultural examination of businesses from different countries, revealing that proactive personality significantly influenced entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, students with proactive personalities are more likely to identify market opportunities and persistently strive until meaningful results are achieved before starting their entrepreneurial ventures. Based on this comprehensive analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

H7: The proactive personality has a positive effect on entrepreneurial behavior.

2.4.2.8 The Relationships between Creativity and Entrepreneurial Intention

Creativity plays a crucial role in helping entrepreneurs identify opportunities and generate new innovative ideas (Baum & Locke, 2004; Ferreira et al., 2017). Therefore, it is considered as one of the important antecedents of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial

intention (Shi et al., 2020b). Additionally, individuals with creativity are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial behavior (Tantawy et al., 2021). Bellòet et al (2018) found that peer encouragement positively influences entrepreneurial intentions and strengthens the impact of creativity on entrepreneurial intentions (Bello et al., 2018). Creativity plays a significant role in entrepreneurship as it facilitates the generation of novel and useful ideas (Murad et al., 2021). Creativity helps entrepreneurs identify opportunities and generate new innovative approaches (Carayannis, 2020). Therefore, creativity is considered a key determinant of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions (Satriadi et al., 2022). Moreover, individuals with creativity are more likely to engage in entrepreneurship (Juliana et al., 2021). Peer encouragement has a positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions and enhances the impact of creativity on entrepreneurial intentions (Bello et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs can foster employees' creativity by granting them more freedom and autonomy, thereby promoting innovation and creative thinking (Islam & Asad, 2024). Adventurous, innovative, and proactive leaders may stimulate and guide employees to generate more patents (Lee et al., 2021). Past research has also confirmed the relationship between creativity and entrepreneurial intentions. For instance, Zampetakis & Moustakis reported a strong positive correlation between self-perceived creativity and entrepreneurial intent in a survey of 181 university student from two technical universities in Greece (Zampetakis & Moustakis, 2006). Further studies have corroborated the close association between creativity and entrepreneurial intentions. The relationship in a survey of 180 undergraduate business students. They found a positive correlation between family support and entrepreneurial intentions, with creativity mediating this influence (Zampetakis et al., 2011). Biraglia and Kadile (2017) found a direct link between creativity and entrepreneurial intentions in their research (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017; Ip et al., 2017). Biraglia and Kadile (2017) consider creativity as one of the two antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017).

Researchers have also begun to focus on the significant influence of individual creativity on entrepreneurial intentions among university students (Anjum et al 2020) found that creativity has a significantly positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Individuals with high creativity can enhance their personal entrepreneurial self-efficacy, thereby strengthening their entrepreneurial intentions (Brundin et al., 2008; Dimov, 2010). Past research has also found that university students with high individual

creativity have higher entrepreneurial intentions (Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2020). Overall, creativity, as an important predictor variable, should be included in the entrepreneurial intention model (Abdelfattah et al., 2022). Laguía et al (2019) explained the positive influence of creativity on entrepreneurial intentions based on the theory of planned behavior. The university students with high creativity tend to have stronger entrepreneurial intentions (Saptono et al., 2019). This relationship was further confirmed that university students with high creativity are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship in the future (Wach & Bilan, 2023). Additionally, Smith et al. showed that the younger generation of employees with high creativity tend to have stronger entrepreneurial intentions (Smith et al., 2016). Therefore, based on the comprehensive analysis above, we propose the following hypothesis:

H8: Creativity has a positive predictive effect on entrepreneurial intentions.

2.4.2.9 The relationships between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior

Many researchers explore the impact of different personality types on entrepreneurial intentions by Intention-based Model, such intentions motivate individuals to engage in entrepreneurial behavior, ultimately reflecting the level of their involvement in business development activities (Fuller et al., 2018; Muñoz-Bullón et al., 2015). Entrepreneurship is often seen as behavior with intentional (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015), entrepreneurial behavior is the result of intention (Fayolle et al., 2014; Kautonen et al., 2015). In the past, researchers have used intention-based models to understand the entrepreneurial phenomenon and provide insights into why individuals engage in entrepreneurial behavior (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). One of the most widely applied theories for predicting behavioral intentions is Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which is an extension of Ajzen & Fishbein's theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1980), this theory defines intention as "the readiness of an individual to engage in entrepreneurial behavior or commit to starting a new venture" (Bae et al., 2014; Krueger Jr et al., 2000) . This theory clearly indicates that intention has a significant positive impact on subsequent entrepreneurial behavior, as demonstrated by various studies conducted by Kautonen, Shinnar, and others (Kautonen et al., 2015; Shinnar et al., 2018). The stronger individuals' intention to engage in entrepreneurial behavior, the greater the likelihood of them actually initiating entrepreneurial behavior (Kautonen et al., 2015). Entrepreneurial intention is

considered a precursor to entrepreneurial behavior. In this context, we can mention examples such as entrepreneurial intention as a precursor to entrepreneurial behavior (O'Gorman, 2019). Numerous studies have shown that the stronger the entrepreneurial intention, the greater the likelihood of entrepreneurial behavior occurring (Kusumawijaya, 2020; Miralles et al., 2017).

Previous studies has indicated that the accuracy of intention models increases as the time gap between intention and actual behavior decreases. Gathungu and Mwangi (2014) proposed the existence of a series of antecedent events that eventually lead to the creation of a new venture. These activities are considered precursors to the creation of new ventures, and previous studies suggested that these activities signal enhanced entrepreneurial intention, as well as their proximity and likelihood to new venture creation (e.g., preparation planning, model development, securing funds for investment, assembling founding teams, and seeking facilities) (Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014). Studying entrepreneurial behavior from a longitudinal perspective holds particular value, as there may be subtler reasons between intention and actual entrepreneurship, leading to longer gestation periods. In fact, the realization of actual goals may be significantly delayed from the inception of respective intentions (Mazzei et al., 2017). The degree of intention formation (i.e., intention intensity: high-level versus low-level intentions) and the stability of emotional intelligence over time are considered key factors shaping the effectiveness of emotional intelligence cognitive models and the interest in predicting entrepreneurial behavior (Mubashiru & Ceyhan, 2021; Paramita et al., 2022). In fact, entrepreneurial intention enables us to predict early-stage entrepreneurial behavior as well as the eventual successful creation of new ventures over time (Burzyńska et al., 2018). Based on the above analysis, we propose the following hypothesis to further deepen our understanding of the complex relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behavior, providing valuable guidance for further research.

H9: Entrepreneurial Intention has a positive effect on entrepreneurial behavior.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provides an introduction to the research background and discipline, presenting the sub-disciplines. It then develops the theoretical model and hypotheses. This chapter serves as a literature review. It introduces the theory of planned behavior and outlines the definitions and connotations of perceived organizational support, creativity, proactive personality, entrepreneurial intention, and entrepreneurial behavior. Based on the foundation of the theory of planned behavior, this study proposes nine hypotheses. Finally, this chapter presents the research hypotheses and theoretical model.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the objectives and research questions proposed in Chapter 1, as well as the research paradigm and methodology employed to address these questions. The first objective is to explore the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, China. The second objective is to verify the relationship between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions. This chapter introduces the research paradigm and methodology in the study. The first section outlines the research paradigm, followed by a description of the research methods used. Qualitative methods are employed for the first objective, quantitative methods for the second objective, and practical recommendations and strategies are provided to university students in Guizhou province, China.

3.1 Overview and Justification of Research Paradigm

In the research domain, a paradigm is regarded as a research framework that builds upon successful prior practices and serves as a model for imitation. Choosing an appropriate paradigm determines the research topic, theories, tools, and methods scientists use to analyze complex problems. Paradigms provide standards and guidelines for research. A research paradigm refers to the theoretical viewpoints and methodological frameworks adopted in scientific research, which determine the direction, methods, and theoretical basis of the research. Research paradigms reflect researchers' understanding of the research subject, their choice of research methods, and their interpretation of research results. In the research paradigm, there are three aspects: Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology. Ontology pertains to views on the nature and existence of the research subject. Epistemology relates to the ways in which knowledge is generated and acquired. Methodology focuses on how scientific research is conducted and how research data are obtained.

Ontology is the fundamental concept or theory that explains what the world is made of and how it is organized. It determines "what can be known" and "how the world operates

or functions." Epistemology, on the other hand, deals with the attributes of knowledge, providing logical proofs and rationalizations of the world. It determines what can be known. Methodology is the approach or methodology people use to understand and change the world. It encompasses the set of ways and methods people use to perceive things and address issues. In social science research, Methodology is defined as a systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods used in research. It explains how researchers determine what they believe can be known. The methods used in research must be rationalized within the epistemological and ontological scope of the adopted paradigm. In broad terms, ontology explores 'what exists,' epistemology examines 'why we know,' and methodology focuses on 'how we investigate.' Together, these elements form a paradigm that directs research cohesively, defining the boundaries of legitimate inquiry.

3.1.1 Empiricism

Empiricism is a scientific method and philosophical viewpoint based on observation, experimentation, and empirical data. It holds that scientific research should be grounded in objective reality and observable facts, rather than subjective beliefs or assumptions. The goal of empiricism is to test theories or describe experiences through observation and measurement, in order to predict and control the forces in the surrounding environment (Ayeni et al., 2019). In this context, understanding natural phenomena must be supported by measurement and evidence (Ragab & Arisha, 2018). Furthermore, this paradigm helps researchers gain a clear understanding of objects through methods such as sampling, measurement, surveys, and other techniques (Ayeni et al., 2019). Insights provided by empirical researchers may possess quality standards of efficiency and reliability, and can be generalized to large populations (Ryan, 2018). Quantitative methods fall under the empiricist paradigm, aiming to conduct scientific research (Dźwigoł & Dźwigoł-Barosz, 2018). The primary objective of quantitative research is to measure causal relationships using unbiased frameworks, verification methods, or deductive approaches, and to validate theories and hypotheses by testing correlations between variables (Majeed et al., 2019). Quantitative methods offer precise quantitative findings, along with relatively rapid data collection and analysis (Žukauskas et al., 2018). However, theories and hypotheses tested in quantitative research may overlook some important variables, thereby failing to reflect local social understandings (Dźwigoł & Dźwigoł-Barosz, 2018; Žukauskas et al., 2018). In summary, empiricism emphasizes that scientific

research should be based on observation, experimentation, and empirical data, aiming for objectivity and variability to establish a reliable body of scientific knowledge. Quantitative research methods are generally classified under the empiricist paradigm, with the primary objective of employing objective frameworks, verification methods, and deductive logic to measure causal relationships, and to validate theories and hypotheses by examining correlations between variables (Majeed et al., 2019). Quantitative research can provide precise numerical results and offers the advantages of relatively efficient data collection and analysis (Žukauskas et al., 2018).

The second objective of this study is to verify the relationship between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions. The aim is to examine the relationships among variables in the study, and to validate hypotheses. Variables are manipulable and have measurement tools. Therefore, the positivist paradigm aligns with the second research objective of this study.

3.1.2 Constructivism

Constructivism is a theoretical viewpoint concerning knowledge and reality, emphasizing that individuals' understanding of the world is constructed through interaction and construction within social and cultural contexts. Constructivists argue that individuals construct their understanding of the world through interaction, experience, and social engagement, rather than merely receiving objective truths from the external world. The constructivist paradigm, also known as the post-positivist paradigm, critically examines social phenomena and provides rich and thoughtful explanations of the phenomena under study. In the constructivist paradigm, individuals believe that social reality depends on how they attribute meaning to phenomena in their surroundings (Tuli, 2010). Constructivists emphasize the importance of the interrelationships between the environment and actors, as well as other factors (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Researchers within the constructivist paradigm primarily focus on interpretive methodologies and specific relationships between aspects and the whole in investigations (Laverty, 2003). It is noteworthy that constructivist methodologies rely to a large extent on inductive reasoning. The purpose of constructivist research is to understand or reconstruct social reality rather than to make predictions, as constructivists believe that there are no universal laws governing social phenomena. In general the strength of constructivism lies in its ability to provide in-depth understanding and interpretation of social phenomena, as well

as its emphasis on diversity, context, process, and critical thinking. This makes it an effective tool for explaining and analyzing complex social issues.

The first objective of this study is to explore the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. This requires summarizing findings based on actual phenomena and interviews, observing and interpreting conclusions, and providing recommendations. Therefore, the constructivist paradigm indeed aligns with the first objectives of this study.

3.1.3 Critical Theory

Critical theory is a social science theory aimed at revealing and critiquing inequality, power structures, and social injustices within society. It originated from Marxism and was further developed and expanded upon by the Frankfurt School and postmodernist thinkers in the 20th century. Critical Theory emphasizes social change and liberation, seeking to eliminate oppression and injustice within society. The origins of critical theory can typically be traced back to the Institute for social research at the university of Frankfurt in the 1920s (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Critical theory emphasizes dialectical interaction and aims to achieve liberation (freedom from oppression) and establish a more equitable and democratic social order (Brydon-Miller & Tolman, 2001). Previous research suggests the need for a broad understanding of critical theory because there is no single critical theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). The pioneers of critical theory in the Frankfurt School include Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse. The critical theory paradigm primarily focuses on a research type known as action research. Critical theory has recognized realist perspectives, and critical realism also advocates for social science, criticizing the social world and attempting to describe and explain it (Ponterotto, 2005). The critical paradigm shares some similarities with constructivism in that both acknowledge that social reality is primarily constructed by the meanings attributed to it by social actors (Ponterotto, 2005). The goal of critical theory is to identify obstacles within existing structures and strive to improve the status quo. In summary, critical theory is a profound social analysis and interpretive framework aimed at revealing injustices and oppressions within society, and achieving liberation and equality through social change. Since this research is not concerned with addressing issues of peace or equality, critical theory is not applicable to this study.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods differ in their epistemological assumptions, theoretical frameworks, methodological procedures, and research approaches. Both methods have their own advantages and disadvantages in design and application. The choice between them depends on various factors such as the type of research question, the researcher's training or experience, and the audience (Yilmaz, 2013). Quantitative research methods are based on positivism or objective epistemology, relying on quantitative measurements to collect and analyze data, with the aim of prediction and generalization. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is associated with relativist ontology (accepting multiple realities), subjectivist epistemology (understanding is created through interaction between the knower and the unknown or the subject), and Naturalistic methodological procedures (studying subjects in their natural environment) (Annells, 1996; Sparkes, 1998). Qualitative research methods, grounded in constructivism, utilize naturalistic approaches for data collection and analysis, aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of people's experiences and their associated meanings. Qualitative research can offer strategies based on existing issues. In this study, the first Objective is to understand and determine the influence of Perceived Organizational Support, Creativity, Proactive Personality,and Entrepreneurial Intention on Entrepreneurial Behavior. The second objective is to explore and validate the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support, Proactive Personality, Creativity, and Entrepreneurial Intention. The first objectives of the study employ qualitative research methods, while the second objective adopts quantitative research methods. Quantitative research methods are based on existing theories to formulate hypotheses, and data is collected through questionnaire surveys to validate these hypotheses. Structural equation modeling is employed in this study to test its hypotheses.

3.2 Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative research design employed in this study aims to explore the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. The study seeks to summarize the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province through in-depth interviews, particularly addressing existing issues. This serves as foundational preparatory work for the latter two objectives of the study and is expected to address the first research question,

namely whether perceived organizational support, creativity, proactive personality, and entrepreneurial intention are the primary key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province.

3.2.1 Major Data Collection Method

This study utilizes the method of in-depth interviews, which is a qualitative research approach aimed at gaining a thorough understanding of respondents' viewpoints, experiences, attitudes, and emotions, and exploring their perspectives on specific topics or issues. In-depth interviews typically involve one-on-one interactions between the researcher and the respondent, using open-ended questions and dialogue to encourage detailed descriptions of their views and experiences. This method emphasizes building trust and rapport during the conversation, allowing respondents to freely share personal insights without external interference or pressure. In-depth interviews offer several significant advantages. Firstly, it provides in-depth and detailed information, enabling researchers to gain a deeper understanding of respondents' viewpoints, experiences, and emotions. Secondly, the method explores the diversity and complexity of the topic, revealing differences and commonalities among different respondents. Additionally, in-depth interviews foster trust and intimacy, encouraging respondents to share personal views and experiences more willingly, thereby providing richer and more authentic data. Finally, the method offers flexibility, allowing researchers to adjust questions and exploration direction as needed to better meet the research objectives and requirements. Overall, in-depth interviews are a powerful research method suitable for exploring and understanding the deep structures of individual experiences, viewpoints, and emotions.

3.2.2 Pilot Test

Pilot test in qualitative research is a crucial step to ensure the effectiveness of the research design and interview guide. During pilot testing, researchers first develop a preliminary interview guide or outline and then select several representative participants for face-to-face or remote interviews. Throughout the pilot test process, researchers engage in open-ended conversations with the participants to discover potential issues and areas for improvement. All interview content is recorded, and the participants' responses, reactions, and suggestions are carefully considered and analyzed. Based on the results of the pilot test, researchers may need to modify the interview guide by adjusting the sequence of questions, wording, or adding, removing specific questions. Through pilot

test, researchers can enhance the quality of research tools, strengthen the credibility and validity of the study, and ensure adequate preparation before the formal research commences.

In this study, four experts were invited to participate in pilot interviews to ensure the reliability and effectiveness of the qualitative research questions. Firstly, it was assessed whether the participants could comprehend the key variables mentioned during the interviews and whether explanations were needed for each key variable. Secondly, the participants' understanding of the questions posed was evaluated, and whether it was necessary to rephrase some questions was determined. Thirdly, the logical sequence of the questions and their coherence to the participants were examined. Fourthly, it was assessed whether the participants provided the responses desired by the researchers. Therefore, four experts were selected for pilot interviews before the formal interviews took place. During these pilot interviews, some semantic differences emerged. Subsequently, the questions to be posed during the interviews were modified and confirmed by experts and professors. The questionnaire underwent a rigorous translation process to ensure the accuracy and cultural appropriateness of the content in both languages. Initially, the translation from English to Chinese was carried out by a lecturer with a background in English, ensuring that any potential language differences between the two languages were addressed. To further enhance the validity of the translation, a back-translation procedure was employed. Specifically, the Chinese version of the questionnaire was translated back into English by a separate professional translator, a native English speaker, who was not involved in the initial translation. This step helped identify any discrepancies or nuances lost during the initial translation.

In order to guarantee the clarity and accuracy of the questions, additional consultation with professional native English speakers was sought. This step ensured that the English version of the questions accurately conveyed the intended meaning without cultural or linguistic biases.

To optimize the interview process and minimize participant fatigue, the research team made adjustments to the interview outline. This was done to streamline the questions, removing any redundancies and ensuring the overall flow of the interview was engaging and efficient. The revised interview outline was then thoroughly reviewed by experts and professors in the field, who provided valuable feedback to further refine the final version.

This meticulous process ensured that both the language and structure of the interview were both scientifically rigorous and participant-friendly.

The interview outline for this study consisted of 20 questions, which were revised and confirmed through expert discussion:

Table 3.1 Interview Outline

NO.	Question in English	Question in Chinese
1	What is your age?	您的年龄？
2	Which year of study are you in?	您的性别？
3	What is your major?	您的专业是什么？
4	Have you had any entrepreneurial experience?	您有过创业经历吗？
5	What support does your university provide in terms of entrepreneurial education and training?	您的大学在创业教育和培训方面提供哪些支持？
6	How do you perceive the support provided by the university?	您如何看待大学提供的支持？
7	How does the support provided by the university influence your entrepreneurial intentions and behavior?	大学提供的支持如何影响您的创业意愿和行为？
8	How would you describe your level of proactivity?	您如何描述自己的积极性？
9	How does your proactive personality affect your entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behavior?	您的积极性性格如何影响您的创业意愿和创业行为？
10	Have you actively participated in any initiatives or projects during your time at university?	您在大学期间是否积极参与过任何计划或项目？
11	How do you understand creativity?	您如何理解创造力？
12	What role do you think creativity plays in the entrepreneurial process?	您认为创造力在创业过程中扮演什么角色？
13	How do you use creativity to drive your entrepreneurial ideas and actions?	您如何利用创造力来驱动您的创业想法和行动？

Table 3.1 (continued)

NO.	Question in English	Question in Chinese
14	Can you share some experiences where you have applied creativity?	您能分享一些您应用创造力的经验吗？
15	Is current university education helpful in nurturing your creativity? In what ways?	现在的大学教育对培养您的创造力有帮助吗？有哪些影响？
16	Have you ever had any entrepreneurial ideas or plans? If yes, could you describe your entrepreneurial ideas or plans?	您曾经有过创业想法或计划吗？如果有，您能描述一下您的创业想法或计划吗？
17	Apart from university support, proactive personality, and creativity, what other factors do you think may influence university students' entrepreneurial intentions and behavior?	除了学校支持、积极性人格和创造力，您认为还有哪些因素影响你的创业意愿和行为？
18	How do these factors affect your entrepreneurial decisions and behavior?	这些因素如何影响您的创业决策和行为？
19	Based on your experiences and perspectives, how do you think university support, proactive personality, and creativity influence university students' entrepreneurial intentions and behavior? In your opinion and based on your experiences, how can universities better support student entrepreneurship? What areas can be improved?	根据您的经历和观点，您认为学校支持、积极性人格和创造力如何影响大学生的创业意愿和行为？根据您的经历，您认为大学如何更好地支持学生创业？哪些方面可以改进？
20	What suggestions do you have for future entrepreneurial education and support measures for university students?	您对未来大学生创业教育和支持措施有什么建议？

Prior to the formal interviews, appointments were scheduled via WeChat, and reminders were sent one day in advance. At the beginning of each session, the theme and purpose of the research were insure that participants clearly understood the background and significance of the study. During the interviews, the purpose and significance of the research were further explained to foster participants' understanding and cooperation. Participants were interviewed face-to-face, during which their consent was obtained for audio recording. Subsequently, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings and sent the transcripts back to the respective participants for verification to ensure accurate interpretation of their responses.

3.2.3 Target Population

Table 3.2 Number of University Students in Universities of Guizhou

NO.	Name of University	The number of students	website
1	Guizhou University	47,000	https://www.gzu.edu.cn/222/list.htm
2	Guizhou Normal University	40,000	https://www.gznu.edu.cn/xxgk/xxjj.htm
3	**Guizhou University of Finance and Economics**	**21,000**	**https://www.gufe.edu.cn/gcgk/xxjj.htm**
4	Guizhou Medical University	22,000	https://www.gmc.edu.cn/xxgk/xxjj.htm
5	Guizhou Minzu University	20,000	http://www.gzmu.edu.cn/xxjj/xxjj.htm
6	Zunyi Medical University	26,000	https://www.zmu.edu.cn/zygk/zyjj.htm
7	Guizhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine	19,000	https://www.gzy.edu.cn/xxgk2/xxjj.htm
8	**Guizhou Education University**	**14,000**	**https://www.gznc.edu.cn/xqgk/xxjj.htm**

Table 3.2 (continued)

NO.	Name of University	The number of students	website
9	**Guiyang University**	**15,000**	**http://www.gyu.edu.cn/xxgk/xxjj.htm**
10	Guizhou Institute of Technology	13,000	http://www.git.edu.cn/xxgk2/xxjj.htm
11	Zunyi Normal University	13,700	http://www.zync.edu.cn/xxgk/xxjj.htm
12	Tongren University	8,800	https://www.gztrc.edu.cn/xygk/xxjj.htm
13	Qiannan Normal University for Nationalities	13,000	https://www.sgmtu.edu.cn/
14	Kaili University	11,000	https://www.kluniv.edu.cn/xxgk2/xxjj.htm
15	Liupanshui Normal University	10,000	https://www.lpssy.edu.cn/7/list.htm
16	Minzu Normal University of Xingyi	12,000	http://www.xynun.edu.cn/v2/read.php/1316342217.html
17	Guizhou University of Commerce	10,000	http://www.gzcc.edu.cn/gzsxyrsc/contents/411/348.html
18	Anshun University	11,000	http://www.asu.edu.cn/xygk/xyjj.htm
19	Guizhou University of Engineering Science	12000	https://www.gues.edu.cn/xxgk/xxjj.htm
20	Moutai Institute	6,000	https://www.mtxy.edu.cn/
21	Guizhou Police College	5,000	http://www.gzpc.edu.cn/
	Total	349,500	-

Guizhou, as the research sample region, possesses rich content and a unique background. Firstly, located in western China, Guizhou exhibits significant differences in geographical position and economic development compared to the eastern coastal regions. Since 2004, Guizhou has implemented policies to expand higher education, leading to a continuous increase in the scale of enrollment in higher education institutions. This policy has resulted in a rapid growth in the number of graduates, from 49,000 in 2004 to 274,000 in 2023, with undergraduate graduates accounting for a significant proportion. This trend in educational development has profound implications for Guizhou's economy and social structure. Secondly, the emphasis placed by the Guizhou government on the employment and entrepreneurship of university students is another key factor in choosing this region for research. With the popularization of undergraduate education and the increasing number of graduates, facilitating effective employment and entrepreneurship for university students has become a pressing social issue that the Guizhou government urgently needs to address. Therefore, the Chinese State Council has also issued a series of policy documents outlining the development direction to support Guizhou's development in the new era of Western development, emphasizing the importance of comprehensively promoting employment and supporting entrepreneurship among university students. These policy backgrounds make Guizhou an ideal sample region for studying the factors influencing university students' entrepreneurial behavior. In summary, Guizhou, as the research sample region, possesses rich content in various aspects such as geography, education, and policy. These aspects will provide ample data support and rich background information for the research.

Guizhou has a total of 21 undergraduate universities, with over 340,000 students enrolled, and 13 of these universities are located in Guiyang. As the capital city of Guizhou Province, Guiyang proposed the "Strengthening the Capital" strategy in 2020, aiming to establish Guiyang as the core city of Guizhou Province. Being the capital and economic center, Guiyang enjoys favorable geographical conditions and policy support for entrepreneurship, making it the most active hub for entrepreneurial behavior. Additionally, as the educational center of Guizhou, Guiyang has a high concentration of universities, with the largest number of university student. Therefore, selecting Guizhou Education University, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, and Guiyang University as the research subjects allows for a comprehensive examination of entrepreneurial behavior

under economic and policy support. Furthermore, it provides access to representative and extensive sample data, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing university students' entrepreneurial behavior.

The main reason for selecting these three undergraduate universities in Guizhou Province for this study is that all three universities have representative entrepreneurial education programs. Since 2013, Guizhou Normal University has been at the forefront of providing Start Your Business (SYB) entrepreneurship training to students. In the following years, Guizhou Education University, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, and Guiyang University became the first batch of pilot universities in Guizhou Province to provide SYB entrepreneurship training to students. Over the past decade, the SYB entrepreneurship training programs in these schools have become very mature, and all students with entrepreneurial intentions can participate free of charge. Therefore, this study selected Guizhou Education University, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, and Guiyang University as the field of investigation and chose students participating in the SYB entrepreneurship training as the research subjects. The research analysis aims to reveal the factors influencing the entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors of university students in Guizhou, with the goal of increasing the proportion of university students engaged in entrepreneurship.

The decision to select university student from three universities in Guizhou Province as research subjects is based on several considerations. Firstly, Guizhou Province, located in southwest China, has a unique geographical position and level of economic development, leading to distinctive entrepreneurial environments and challenges for its student population. The economic structure, cultural traditions, and policy environment in Guizhou Province differ from other regions, exerting profound influences on the entrepreneurial behavior of university students. Therefore, in-depth research on the entrepreneurial behavior of university students in Guizhou Province can provide valuable insights into the current situation and characteristics of student entrepreneurship in the southwestern region. Secondly, the student population in Guizhou Province is highly representative and diverse. With numerous institutions of higher education covering various disciplines and backgrounds, Guizhou Province boasts a diverse student body. This diversity allows the research to encompass students from different academic fields, grades, and backgrounds, thereby facilitating a more

comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student entrepreneurship behavior. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial environment for university students in Guizhou Province is relatively new and still in the developmental stage, characterized by exploration and openness. Therefore, studying student entrepreneurship behavior in Guizhou Province can shed light on the emerging trends and characteristics of student entrepreneurship in developing regions, providing valuable insights for the formulation and implementation of relevant policies. In summary, purposively sampling university student from three universities in Guizhou Province for research purposes is reasonable. It allows researchers to gain insights into the factors influencing and the current status of student entrepreneurship behavior in Guizhou Province, thus providing scientific basis and practical guidance for promoting local economic development and student entrepreneurship. Introductions to these three undergraduate universities:

Introduction to Guizhou Education University

Guizhou Education University, situated in the Wudang District of Guiyang City, is a provincially-administered comprehensive undergraduate institution approved by the Ministry of Education. Its origins can be traced back to the establishment of Guizhou Education College in 1978. In 2009, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, the institution underwent a transformation to become a full-time regular undergraduate university. In 2013, it was granted the authority to confer bachelor's degrees. In 2015, it successfully passed the assessment for undergraduate teaching quality conducted by the Ministry of Education. In 2016, the university was designated as a project construction unit for master's degree conferment during the 13th Five-Year Plan period of Guizhou Province. In 2017, it was approved as a construction unit for the provincial-level "Double First-Class" initiative. The university has consistently adhered to the direction of socialist education with Chinese characteristics, effectively implemented the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, over the course of 45 years of development, cultivated the spirit of "for one's own improvement, striving ten times harder; clinging to one's goal and never giving up until it's achieved." It has formulated the motto " being a teacher and an exemplar for others," nurtured a school ethos of" seeking truth, being pragmatic, and striving for self-improvement," and established an educational style characterized by"cultivating virtue and character through education, setting an example through words and deeds,"and a learning style emphasizing" setting goals, studying diligently, and

integrating knowledge with practice." The university is the first "Green University" in Guizhou, one of the inaugural "Civilized Campuses of Higher Education," and a "Distinctive Cultural University." It was approved as the first national-level "Chinese Language Education Base" in Guizhou. The institution also hosts the Guizhou Provincial Training Center for Education Administrative Cadres, the national-level training base for primary and secondary school principals in western China accredited by the Ministry of Education, the national examination scoring base for educational assessments, the Guizhou examination organization for the Ministry of Education's calligraphy and painting grading examinations, as well as platforms such as the "Chinese Rural Society Research Center (Guizhou)" under the Ministry of Culture. The university actively serves Guizhou's teacher education and regional economic and social development. It has produced more than 28,700 full-time graduates for society and trained over 200,000 teaching staff, representing a third of primary and secondary school teachers in the province. It has cultivated and trained 80% of renowned school principals and 81% of heads of teacher studios, making remarkable contributions to Guizhou's economic and social development, especially in basic education. The university consists of 18 academic departments offering a total of 52 undergraduate majors, spanning 10 disciplinary categories including economics, law, education, literature, science, and engineering. With a full-time enrollment exceeding 13,700, it has developed a multi-tiered and multi-form talent cultivation system comprising undergraduate, graduate, international student education, and continuing education. Additionally, the university has an affiliated secondary school—Guizhou Provincial Experimental School. The institution employs 1,110 teaching staff, among which 70 individuals have been recognized with provincial and ministerial-level titles for excellence. The faculty includes 1 recipient of the State Council Special Allowance, 3 recipients of the Provincial Government Special Allowance, 3 provincial-level experts under direct management, 4 provincial-level academic leaders, 11 provincial-level teaching masters, and a total of 42 individuals recognized as leading talents within the province, including those in the "Hundred Talents Program," the "Thousand Talents Program," high-level innovative talents, and outstanding young scientific and technological talents. More than 100 external part-time mentors for master's and doctoral students contribute to the university's academic environment. The university is engaged in 2 national-level comprehensive reform pilot projects for specialized disciplines, hosts 5

national-level first-class undergraduate program construction sites, offers 2 national-level first-class undergraduate courses, and has 16 provincial-level first-class undergraduate program construction sites and 5 provincial-level comprehensive reform pilot projects for specialized disciplines. The university boasts 1 nationally recognized mass entrepreneurship and innovation space, 38 provincial and ministerial-level scientific research platforms including academicians' workstations, collaborative innovation centers, key laboratories, humanities and social sciences bases, and talent bases. It also operates 2 provincial-level University student entrepreneurship demonstration centers and 1 provincial-level experimental teaching demonstration center. Over the recent years, the university has been granted a total of 135 national-level projects,including 66 projects funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China and 67 projects funded by the National Social Science Fund. It has also been involved in 412 provincial and ministerial-level research projects, over 200 horizontal projects, and received nearly 60 awards for research achievements at or above the provincial and ministerial level. In the past three years, students have won over 400 awards at the provincial and ministerial levels in events such as the "Internet Plus" and "Innovate for China" competitions, establishing the university's standing at the forefront of innovation and entrepreneurship contests within Guizhou's higher education institutions.

Introduction to Guizhou University of Finance and Economics:

Established in 1958, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, formerly known as Guizhou Institute of Finance and Economics, was granted its current name in 2012 following approval by the Ministry of Education. It is a key construction project of the Guizhou Provincial Party Committee and Government, serving as a base for cultivating economic and management talents in Guizhou Province. Renowned economist and recipient of the "Sun Yefang Economics Award," Professor Hong Yinxing, the former Party Secretary of Nanjing University, serves as the Honorary President of Guizhou University of Finance and Economics.The university upholds the spirit of "hard work, rigorous pragmatism,bearing heavy responsibilities for distant goals," adhering to the motto of "virtue, erudition, diligence, and innovation." It maintains a service-oriented approach of "rooted in Guizhou, facing the Southwest, radiating across the nation," with a dedication to cultivating "scholarly and entrepreneurial talents with Confucian values." Over the years, the university has provided education and training for more than 100,000

outstanding individuals, making positive contributions to the economic and social development of the southwestern region, as well as the economic development of the "Pearl River Delta" and the "Yangtze River Delta," and the growth of China's securities industry. The university covers a total area of 5,498 acres. It hosts the College of Big Data Statistics, a joint initiative with the National Bureau of Statistics and the Guizhou Provincial Government. Additionally, there is the Sino-foreign cooperative institution approved by the Ministry of Education, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics Western Michigan University, as well as a postdoctoral research station in "Business Administration" approved by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, and a national-level continuing education base for professional and technical personnel. The university comprises 18 colleges. The current enrollment consists of 20,406 full-time students, including 85 doctoral students, 2,941 master's students, 17,322 university student, and 42 international students. The institution has 1400 teachers. Among the faculty, there are 785 senior title teachers, 667 with doctoral degrees, 61 doctoral supervisors, 2 experts enjoying special government allowances from the State Council, 6 experts receiving special allowances from the provincial government, 3 provincial-level experts (Class I), 9 provincial-level experts (Class II), 1 "Qiuling Scholar," 13 Guizhou Distinguished Teaching Masters, 5 provincial-level outstanding teachers, and 18 "Western Light" visiting scholars. Furthermore, the university boasts 4 high-level innovative "Hundred-Talent" individuals and 9 individuals with "Thousand-Talent" status in Guizhou Province. The university emphasizes the coordinated development of disciplines and majorsIt encompasses 3 doctoral degree-granting primary disciplines, 11 master's degree-granting primary disciplines, 15 categories of professional master's degree programs, 3 domestically first-class discipline clusters, 6 regionally first-class disciplines, 6 provincial distinctive key disciplines, and 10 provincial key disciplines. There are a total of 69 undergraduate majors, spanning 8 academic categories. Among these, there are 19 national-level first-class undergraduate program construction sites, 6 nationally distinctive programs,18 provincial-level first-class undergraduate program construction sites, 9 provincial demonstration programs, and 4 provincial distinctive programs. The university also features 1 national-level economics and management experimental teaching demonstration center, 1 national-level economics and management virtual simulation experimental teaching center, 1 national-level talent training mode innovation

experimental area, 3 provincial-level experimental teaching demonstration centers, 1 provincial-level university science and technology park, 1 makerspace under provincial-level mass entrepreneurship and innovation space management, 1 provincial-level course ideology and political education research demonstration center, 2 projects for provincial first-class platform construction, 4 projects for first-class major construction, 3 projects for first-class teaching team construction, 1 project for first-class teaching management team construction, and 3 projects for first-class course construction. The university boasts 14 provincial-level teaching teams, 10 nationally first-class undergraduate courses, 13 provincial-level excellent courses, and 62 provincial first-class courses. It has been approved as a demonstration university for deepening innovation and entrepreneurial education reform by the Ministry of Education. With its core discipline in economics and management, and supported by science, engineering, liberal arts, education, sociology, art, physical education, and journalism and communication disciplines, the university has developed into a multi-disciplinary financial and economic university with coordinated development. The university places great importance on scientific research and social service. It currently hosts 1 provincial-level high-end think tank, 6 provincial key laboratories, 7 provincial-level talent cultivation and training bases, 3 provincial-level collaborative innovation centers, 1 provincial-level engineering research center, 5 provincial-level research centers (institutes), and 10 provincial-level innovation teams. Additionally, there are 43 university-level research institutions. These efforts have led to the establishment of distinctive research areas such as green development, ecological economy, inland open economy, digital economy, big data application, and internet finance. The "Journal of Guizhou University of Finance and Economics" has been included in key Chinese core journal lists, including the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI), Chinese Core Academic Journals (A), Chinese Scientific and Technological Core Journals, and important sources for reprinted journals of the National People's Congress. The university is actively engaged in social service, aligning with national strategies and local development needs. It contributes to Guizhou's focus on the "Four News" (new industries, new formats, new models, and new modes) and the pursuit of "Four Modernizations." The university proactively collaborates with local governments and functional departments, taking on tasks such as the third-party assessment of poverty alleviation in designated counties by the State Council's Poverty Alleviation Office, third-

party evaluations of poverty alleviation effects, assessments of the business environment, comprehensive evaluations of industrial attraction, theoretical interpretations of Guizhou's developmental models, the construction of statistical indicators for characteristic forestry and under-forest economic industries, and more. Numerous advisory reports have garnered full recognition from provincial leaders and have received significant attention from local party committees and governments. The university's dedication to social service is aligned with both national strategies and local developmental goals. The university adheres to an open approach to education and consistently expands domestic and international exchanges and cooperation. It has established collaborative relationships with institutions such as Nanjing University and Central University of Finance and Economics for support. Strategic collaborations have been initiated with over ten high-level universities and research institutes including the Institute of Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Institute of Finance and Strategic Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Fudan University, University of Macau, Wuhan University of Technology, South China University of Technology, Guangxi University of Finance and Economics, and more. The Guizhou University of Finance and Economics Western Michigan University, a collaboration with Western Michigan University in the United States, is the first Sino-foreign cooperative institution at the undergraduate level in Guizhou Province. It offers three undergraduate programs. Collaborative undergraduate programs are also held with Heriot-Watt University in the United Kingdom and Marshall University in the United States. The university participates actively in the International Undergraduate Academic Course Recognition (ISEC) program in cooperation with the China Scholarship Council, offering four undergraduate programs. The university has been granted funding from the China Scholarship Council for the "Regional and Country Studies Talent Support Plan (Project-Based)." Currently, there are 5,146 students enrolled in cooperative undergraduate programs. The university is actively engaged in the promotion of Chinese culture and international promotion of the Chinese language. It has established a Confucius Institute in collaboration with the Eritrea Institute of Technology in Africa to facilitate cultural exchange and the spread of the Chinese language internationally. At this new historical juncture, the university will persist in the leadership of the Communist Party, uphold the socialist direction of education, and adhere to the principles of moral and intellectual education. Guided by the development strategy of "One Center, Two Major

Projects, and Three Synchronizations" proposed during the second Party congress, the university will focus on academic excellence, service enhancement, talent cultivation, and digital transformation. With the foundation of "Academic Excellence" and the core of "Service Advancement," the university will prioritize "Talent Empowerment" and be driven by "Digital Governance." It will strengthen the construction of both "Humanities at Guizhou Finance and Economics" and "Ecology at Guizhou Finance and Economics." Diligence, innovation, and continuous progress will be the driving forces. The university aims to continually enhance its capacity for nurturing talents, elevate its standards of scientific research, actively contribute to economic and social development, promote cultural inheritance and innovation, expand international exchanges and cooperation, and steadfastly transform Guizhou University of Finance and Economics into a distinctive and high-level institution of financial and economic education.

Introduction to Guiyang University:

In 1902, Mr. Li Duanfen, a proponent of Peking University, founded Guiyang Public Normal School, which later became Guiyang Normal School. In 1978, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, Guiyang Normal Junior College was established, and in 1985, it was renamed "Guiyang Normal College." In 1993, the name was changed to "Guiyang Normal Junior College." In 1984, Guiyang Municipal Government founded Jinchu University. In 2004, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, Guiyang Normal Junior College and Jinchu University merged to form Guiyang University, adopting a "provincial-city co-construction, city-oriented" educational system. In 2009, Guiyang Normal School was incorporated into Guiyang University, creating a teaching-oriented and application-oriented local university with coordinated development across multiple disciplines. In 2010, the university passed the Ministry of Education's assessment for undergraduate teaching quality. In 2017, it underwent a review and assessment by the Ministry of Education, and in 2018, it was approved to confer master's degrees. The university is located in the Guiyang Shuanglong Airport Economic Zone, with a campus area of 1,350 acres and a planned construction area of 564,500 square meters. It comprises 16 specialized colleges and a continuing education college, covering 11 academic disciplines including science, engineering, economics, management, and education. Currently, it has 2 provincial-level first-class discipline clusters, 2 provincial-level first-class disciplines, 1 provincial distinctive key discipline, and 8 provincial key disciplines.

There is 1 national-level first-class undergraduate program construction site, 12 provincial-level first-class undergraduate program construction sites, 1 national distinctive program, 2 provincial distinctive programsand 5 programs as part of the provincial Excellent Talents Education and Training Plan. The university offers 52 undergraduate majors, admitting students from 13 provinces. It also has 2 primary disciplines authorized for master's degree, 5 professional master's degree authorization points, and more than 20 enrollment and training directions for master's students across the nation. The university has established 5 national-level science and technology service platforms, 1 national and regional research center, 29 provincial-level science research or technology service platforms, and 12 provincial-level innovation talents and teams in science and technology. There are 4 experts receiving special government allowances from the State Council (including retired faculty), 2 recipients of the Ministry of Education's New Century Excellent Talents Award, 1 young talent in ideological and cultural fields recognized by the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, 8 provincial-level experts (including retired faculty), 2 individuals recognized as high-level innovative talents at the provincial level, and 7 outstanding young scientific and technological innovation talents in Guizhou Province. The university has more than 70 teaching and research personnel with various levels of expertise and titles, and has undertaken 48 projects funded by the National Social Science Fund, 51 projects funded by the National Art Fund, 51 projects funded by the National Natural Science Fund, 51 provincial and ministerial-level research achievement awards, and 108 departmental-level research achievement awards. It has established 108 internal and external internship and training bases, possesses teaching and research instruments and equipment worth 202 million yuan, a library collection of more than 1.03 million volumes of both Chinese and foreign paper books, over 2 million electronic books, and access to 60 databases. The university has a staff of more than 970, including 717 full-time teachers, of which more than 200 hold doctoral degrees. Among them,there are over 440 professors and associate professors. The university has nearly 12,000 full-time undergraduate and specialized students, as well as more than 300 master's students. The university has established educational exchange and cooperation agreements with more than 70 overseas universities, including Université du Québec à Montréal in Canada, Mahasarakham University in Thailand, Guelph University in Canada, National Changhua University of Education in Taiwan, and Chaoyang University of Technology in

Taiwan. It has developed an international talent cultivation system with three levels: exchange students, language students, and degree-seeking students. The university has attracted international students from over 20 countries across Asia, the Americas,Africa,and Europe. The overall educational objective of the university is to adhere to the guiding principles of "emphasizing practicality and serving the local community." It focuses on developing distinct and differentiated characteristics, catering to the needs of economic and social development in Guizhou Province and Guiyang-Guian area. The university aims to cultivate applied talents, carry out applied scientific and technological innovation research, promote local cultural inheritance and innovation, and establish Guiyang University as a regionally high-level applied university with clear characteristics and comparative advantages. The educational orientation is defined as applied education. The educational levels are primarily focused on undergraduate education, steadily expanding graduate education, moderately developing vocational education and continuing education, and constructing a multi-level education system. Disciplinary and professional positioning focuses on building distinctive and advantageous disciplinary clusters that serve the major strategic and key industries for the economic and social development of Guizhou Province and Guiyang-Guian area. The university strives to construct a multidisciplinary and coordinated disciplinary system with a main emphasis on digital technology, supported by engineering,natural sciences, social sciences (economics, law, education), arts, management, and humanities (philosophy, literature). The overall goal of talent cultivation is to fulfill the fundamental task of "building character and cultivating talents." It aims to cultivate high-quality specialized talents who have coordinated development of knowledge, abilities, and qualities, possess a sense of social responsibility, humanistic sentiments, and innovation and entrepreneurship spirit, and meet the needs of economic and social development. In terms of service orientation, the university is rooted in Guiyang-Guian area, serves Guizhou Province,radiates to the western regions and even the whole country, and provides talent resources and intellectual support for local economic and social development. In summary, these three universities, namely Guizhou Education University, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, and Guiyang University, are all designated as pilot institutions for the SYB (Start Your Business) program in Guizhou Province. Among these institutions, the proportion of students participating in SYB program training is the highest,

and the quality of the program training is also superior. Hence, these three universities have been selected as the research field.

3.2.4 Sampling Method

Purposive sampling is a sampling method employed in study with the aim of selecting research subjects based on specific research objectives and needs. In contrast to random sampling, purposive sampling emphasizes the selection of individuals who are representative or possess important characteristics, in order to better address research questions or achieve research objectives. This sampling method is commonly used in qualitative research or studies involving specific populations. Criteria for purposeful sampling may be determined based on the researcher's expertise, experience, or research objectives to ensure that the selected sample can provide insightful and rich data. The advantages of purposive sampling is allowing researchers to selectively choose samples that meet specific research objectives and needs. Compared to random sampling, purposive sampling can more effectively ensure the representativeness of the sample and richness of information, as researchers can select individuals with important features or rich information based on their professional knowledge and research objectives. This sampling method helps improve the efficiency and accuracy of research, making research findings more reliable and practical. Furthermore, purposive sampling can save time and resources, as researchers do not need to sample the entire population but can selectively choose individuals or groups that meet the research objectives. Therefore, this study adopts purposive sampling to select three universities in Guizhou Province as research objects.

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method suitable for studying hard-to-reach populations or specific subgroups within a population. One of its main advantages is the ability to rapidly increase sample size, particularly for groups with initially limited or difficult-to-reach samples. By leveraging recommendations or contact information provided by participants, researchers can progressively expand the sample size to recruit more participants. This method is particularly useful in social network research as it allows researchers to establish connections within the group and identify individuals who meet the research criteria. Additionally, snowball sampling can facilitate social interactions and collaboration during the research process, enhancing interaction among participants and providing richer and deeper data for the study. Participants come

from these three universities, majoring in disciplines such as humanities, sciences, arts, management, and education.

3.2.5 Sample Size

In qualitative research, the most crucial factor in identify sample size is saturation (Voutsina, 2018). Saturation refers to the point at which the information collected by the researcher becomes repetitive after which continuing to collect information yields little to no new insights (Lowe et al., 2018). Once saturation is achieved, collecting more data becomes redundant (Alam, 2021). Ritchie & Lewis suggest that for most qualitative research, the sample size for in-depth interviews should not exceed 50 participants (Lewis et al., 2003). This study determined a sample size of 20 participants, which falls within the accepted range of sample sizes for researchers (Marshall et al., 2013). These participants were students from various disciplines, including business administration, foreign languages, information technology, marketing, architecture, economics, finance, psychology, human resource management, and sports, among others. Based on the researchers' past experiences, a snowball sampling method was used to select a total of 20 university students from the three universities. The reason for selecting 20 university students from three universities in Guizhou Province as the subjects for in-depth interviews in this study is that these students represent diversity in terms of disciplines and backgrounds. This diversity allows for the acquisition of rich and comprehensive information regarding the factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students. Through these in-depth interviews, the aim is to gain deeper insights into the motivations, obstacles, and decision-making processes behind entrepreneurial behavior among university students. This approach is expected to provide the study with more depth and insight into the phenomenon under investigation.

3.2.6 Data Collection Method

During the data collection process, face-to-face in-depth interviews were employed as the primary research method. University students who were willing to participate were approached through university student resources and personal networks. Prior to the formal interviews, appointments were scheduled via WeChat, and reminders were sent one day in advance. At the beginning of each session, the theme and purpose of the research were insure that participants clearly understood the background and significance of the study. During the interviews, the purpose and significance of the research were further

explained to foster participants' understanding and cooperation. An interview guide was followed to structure the questions, while additional or follow-up questions were raised flexibly based on participants' responses in order to obtain deeper insights. The content of the interviews addressed a range of factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students, including personal background, family environment, learning experiences, entrepreneurial willingness, and perceived obstacles. To ensure data accuracy, detailed notes were taken, and with participants' consent, the interviews were audio- or video-recorded for subsequent analysis. Notes were also used to document participants' remarks and viewpoints for further organization and interpretation. Overall, active communication was maintained with participants to encourage their involvement and understanding. The in-depth interview method was applied flexibly to collect rich information and insights regarding the factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, China.

This study recruited 20 participants for in-depth interviews. During the interviews, the researchers assumed the role of interviewers and completed data recording with the participants' permission. All participants signed an "Interview Participation Consent Form" (please see the appendix) or confirmed their understanding of its contents. Data collection took place from March to April 2024, lasting nearly a month. The duration of each interview ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. During in-depth interviews, researchers should attentively listen to the participants, acknowledge and respect them, and create a comfortable and safe environment to encourage them to freely express themselves. When participants are speaking, it is essential to be particularly careful to avoid interrupting their narrative. Additionally, researchers should ask probing questions about specific viewpoints, concepts, words, events, and behaviors mentioned by the participants to explore more details. When participants mention interesting or novel content, or provide inconsistent responses, researchers should continuously probe until the issue is clarified and gradually transition to the next relevant question.

3.2.7 Data Analysis

After data collection, researchers organized, categorized, and summarized the data. They referred to systematic abstracts of the raw records obtained, and then compressed the data for analysis. The traditional data analysis process involves four steps. Firstly, reviewing the raw records and interview recordings, and summarizing the comprehensive

interview content into written descriptions. Secondly, categorizing the information into different categories for data coding, and using specific colors to mark valuable information. Thirdly, categorizing the data and integrating similar data through database coding to differentiate them. Lastly, analyzing the correlations between each category (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). Given the innovation in data processing software, the use of electronic technology for data coding is convenient and efficient, aiming to enhance data accuracy. NVIVO12.0 software package is a qualitative data analysis software used for managing coding processes, considered by scholars as the optimal choice (Mortelmans, 2019). Its advantages include rapid identification and classification of data into significant categories, themes, and demographics. It allows for data integration across categories and provides a research framework for specific themes (Alam, 2021). This study code interview content, obtaining relevant nodes through abstract theoretical coding by NVIVO 12.0 software package. Through word frequency analysis, cluster analysis, and hierarchical analysis, key themes related to entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province were determined, constructing a theoretical framework concerning the entrepreneurial behavior of university students in Guizhou Province, China.

3.3 Quantitative Research Design

Quantitative research primarily aims to verify the relationship between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions. The quantitative research design includes the main methods of data collection, operational definitions of variables, Pilot-test, target population, sampling methods, sample size, data collection methods, and data analysis.

3.3.1 Major Data Collection Method

The questionnaire survey method is a research approach used to collect a large amount of participants' opinions, viewpoints, and feedback. Researchers design questions and send them to respondents in the form of a questionnaire, which the respondents then answer. Questionnaires can be distributed through various means such as face-to-face interviews, or online platforms, and scales to gather data. This method is suitable for surveying large populations, quickly collecting data, and performing statistical analysis to

draw conclusions or make inferences about specific topics. In this study, the online platform "Questionnaire Star" was utilized for the questionnaire survey.

The study chooses the questionnaire survey method to gather information on the influencing factors of entrepreneurship intention among university students in Guizhou Province, primarily based on several considerations. Firstly, the questionnaire survey method is characterized by its efficiency and cost-effectiveness, allowing for the collection of a large volume of data within a relatively short period and at a relatively low cost, which is suitable for the study's need to obtain extensive data. Secondly, questionnaire surveys enable the implementation of a standardized data collection process, with survey questions and options predetermined, facilitating consistency and comparability of data. Additionally, questionnaire surveys ensure the anonymity of respondents, enabling them to express their views and opinions more freely, thereby enhancing the credibility and representativeness of the data. Lastly, questionnaire surveys can cover a broad spectrum of respondents, including university students of various ages, backgrounds, and educational levels, thereby yielding more comprehensive and diversified research outcomes. In summary, the questionnaire survey method is an effective data collection approach that meets the investigation requirements of this study, aiding researchers in gaining deeper insights into the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intention among university students in Guizhou Province.

3.3.2 Variables and their Definitions and Measurements

Operational definition refers to the process of transforming an abstract or vague concept into concrete behaviors or characteristics that are measurable and actionable. This type of definition is commonly used in research to ensure that researchers have a clear understanding of the variables under study and can accurately measure and observe them. Operational definitions typically involve refining abstract concepts into specific measurement indicators or variables, enabling practical observation, data collection, and analysis in research. The operational definitions of all variables in this study are summarized in the table below.

Table 3.3 Operational Definition

Variables	Operational Definition	References
Perceived Organizational Support	The subjective evaluation by individuals of the extent to which the organization cares for and supports them. This evaluation may be based on perceptions of the organization's care, support, and assistance to employees, as well as the extent to which the organization facilitates the achievement of individuals' personal and career goals. Operational definitions typically operationalize this abstract concept into measurable indicators, such as measuring the degree of Perceived Organizational Support through questions in a questionnaire survey, or assessing the actual level of support provided to employees by observing organizational policies, procedures, and behaviors.	(Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002)
Creativity	Operational definitions typically operationalize Creativity into measurable indicators,such as observing individuals' performance in creative tasks, evaluating the quantity and quality of innovative ideas they propose, or assessing individuals' self-evaluation of creative thinking and behavior through questions in a questionnaire survey.	(Brown, 1989)
Proactive Personality	Individuals exhibiting Proactive Personality display proactive, seeking new experiences and challenges, creative, and self-motivated personality traits. They tend to actively engage in various activities and are willing to embrace new opportunities and challenges to achieve personal and professional goals.	(Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009)

Table 3.3 (continued)

Variables	Operational Definition	References
Entrepreneurial Intention	Entrepreneurial Intention is the inclination or willingness of individuals to engage in Entrepreneurial Behavior, often manifested as a positive attitude, vision,and motivation towards entrepreneurship. It includes cognitive awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities, acceptance of entrepreneurial risks, and expectations of entrepreneurial success. Operationally, it can be measured through questionnaire items assessing individuals' interest in entrepreneurship, their timeframe for planning entrepreneurship, and their willingness to invest resources, among other aspects.	(Lee et al., 2012)
Entrepreneurial Behavior	Entrepreneurial Behavior refers to the actions or activities individuals undertake that are related to entrepreneurship, including but not limited to establishing new businesses, conducting commercial activities, seeking entrepreneurial opportunities, developing business plans, acquiring resources, collaborating with partners, and implementing marketing strategies. This behavior typically reflects individuals' ability to identify, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities,as well as their pursuit and effort towards entrepreneurial goals. Operationally, it may be measured through observation, recording, or personal statements to determine whether individuals have taken entrepreneurial actions, and additional information may be required to assess the extent and outcomes of their Entrepreneurial Behavior.	(Darmanto & Yuliari, 2018)

3.3.3 Measurement Scales of Variables

3.3.3.1 Perceived Organizational Support Scale

The Perceived organizational support scale used in this study is adapted from a validated scale suitable for use by university students (Trullas et al., 2018). The scale consists of 6 items, each rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It is unidimensional. The original scale demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.87. The original items are as follows:

Table 3.4 Perceived Organizational Support Scale

Variables	Original items	Revised items	Source
Perceived Organizational Support	The company values my contribution to its well-being.	1. The university values my contribution to its well-being.	(Cho et al., 2009)
	The company strongly considers my goals and values .	2. The university strongly considers my goals and values.	
	The company really cares about my well-being .	3. The university really cares about my well-being.	
	The company is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	4. The university is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	
	The company is willing to help me when I need a special favor.	5.The university is willing to help me when I need a special favor.	
	The company cares about my opinions .	6.The university cares about my opinions.	
	The company takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	7.The university takes pride in my accomplishments at study.	

Table 3.4 (continued)

Variables	Original items	Revised items	Source
	8.The company takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	8.The university tries to make my job as interesting as possible.	

3.3.3.2 Proactive Personality

The Proactive Personality Scale used in this study was adapted from the established original Entrepreneurial Creativity Scale (Trifiletti et al., 2009). To ensure equivalence between the two languages, we first adjusted the scale into English, translated it into Chinese, and then had it translated back into English by professional translators. The scale consists of 10 items, all rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It is unidimensional, and the original scale demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.82.The original items of the scale are as follows:

Table 3.5 Proactive Personality Scale

Variables	Original Items	Revised items	Source
Proactive Personality	1.I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.	1.I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.	(Trifiletti et al., 2009)
	2. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.	2. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.	
	3. Nothing is more exciting than seeing	3. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.	
	4. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.	4. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.	
	5. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.	5. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.	

Table 3.5 (continued)

Variables	Original Items	Revised items	Source
	6. love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.	6. love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.	
	7.I excel at identifying opportunities.	7.I excel at identifying opportunities.	
	8.I am always looking for better ways to do things.	8.I am always looking for better ways to do things.	
	9. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.	9. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.	
	10.I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.	10.I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.	

3.3.3.3 Creativity Scale

Based on the existing literature, the creativity scale used in this study was adapted from the established original Entrepreneurial Creativity Scale (Jiang et al., 2020). To ensure equivalence between the two languages, the scale was first adjusted in English, translated into Chinese, and then retranslated into English by professional translators. The scale consists of 12 items and is unidimensional. The original scale demonstrated a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.89, indicating good reliability. The original items are as follows:

Table 3.6 Creativity Scale

Variables	Original Items	Revised items	Source
Creativity	1. I can plan innovative entrepreneurial activities.	1. I can plan innovative entrepreneurial activities.	(Jiang et al., 2020)
	2. I can plan entrepreneurial activities with my characteristics.	2. I can plan entrepreneurial activities with my characteristics.	
	3. I can plan stimulating entrepreneurial activities.	3. I can plan stimulating entrepreneurial activities.	
	4.Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are ingenious.	4.Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are ingenious.	
	5. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are unique.	5. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are unique.	
	6. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are to guide the market.	6. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are to guide the market.	
	7. I understand customers' needs.	7. I understand customers' needs.	
	8. I adapt practices flexibly to the changes.	8. I adapt practices flexibly to the changes.	
	9. I consider preferences in the consumer market.	9. I consider preferences in the consumer market.	
	10. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are to meet customers' goals.	10. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are to meet customers' goals.	
	11. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan can be adapted to different situations.	11. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan can be adapted to different situations.	
	12. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are recognized in the consumer market.	12. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are recognized in the consumer market.	

3.3.3.4 Entrepreneurial Intentions Scale

This study utilized the Entrepreneurial Intentions Scale developed by Thompson, which is a unidimensional scale consisting of 10 items. The scale employs a five-point scoring system, with 1 indicating "completely disagree," 2 indicating "disagree," 3 indicating "neutral," 4 indicating "agree," and 5 indicating "completely agree." Three items (items 4, 7, and 9) were reverse-scored. The original scale demonstrated a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.89, indicating good reliability. Exploratory factor analysis revealed a single component with an eigenvalue greater than 1, explaining 63.90% of the variance, indicating good validity of the original scale (Thompson, 2009). The ten original items of the Entrepreneurial Intentions scale are as follows:

Table 3.7 Entrepreneurial Intentions Scale

Variables	Original Items	Revised items	Source
Entrepreneurial Intentions	1. Intend to set up a company in the future.	1. I intend to set up a company in the future.	(Thompson, 2009)
	2. Plan your future carefully.	2. I plan my future carefully.	
	3. Read business newspapers.	3. I read business newspapers.	
	4. Never search for business start-up opportunities. (R)	4. I regularly search for business start-up opportunities.	
	5. Read financial planning books.	5. I read financial planning books.	
	6. Are saving money to start a business.	6. I am saving money to start a business.	
	7. Do not read books on how to set up a firm. (R)	7. I read books on how to set up a firm.	
	8. Plan your finances carefully.	8. I plan my finances carefully.	

Table 3.7 (continued)

Variables	Original Items	Revised items	Source
	9. Have no plans to launch your own business. (R)	9. I have plans to launch my own business.	
	10. Spend time learning about starting a firm.	10. I spend time learning about starting a firm.	

3.3.3.5 Entrepreneurial Behavior Scale

This study employed a scale developed by Kautonen, Gelderen, and Fink (Kautonen et al., 2015). Which consists of 10 items measuring a single dimension. Each item on the five-point scale ranges from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The original scale demonstrated good internal consistency with a Cronbach's α of 0.937, indicating high reliability. The original items are as follows:

Table 3.8 Entrepreneurial Behavior Scale

Variables	Original Items	Revised items	Source
Entrepreneurial Behavior	1. I believe in taking a lot of time to think about starting a business.	1. I believe in taking a lot of time to think about starting a business.	(Abubakar et al., 2022)
	2. I prefer organizing a team to start up a business.	2. I prefer organizing a team to start up a business.	
	3. I believe in defining market opportunities.	3. I believe in defining market opportunities.	
	4. I believe in preparing business plans for any business idea.	4. I believe in preparing business plans for any business idea.	
	5. I prefer registering and creating a legal entity.	5. I prefer registering and creating a legal entity.	

Table 3.8 (continued)

Variables	Original Items	Revised items	Source
	6. I believe in saving money to invest in a business.	6. I believe in saving money to invest in a business.	
	7. I believe in receiving financial support.	7. I believe in receiving financial support.	
	8. I prefer purchasing or leasing major items, like equipment, facilities, or property.	8. I prefer purchasing or leasing major items, like equipment, facilities, or property.	
	9. I believe in developing models or procedures for a product or service.	9. I believe in developing models or procedures for a product or service.	

3.3.4 Pilot Test

In quantitative research, pilot testing is a crucial step aimed at evaluating and optimizing the design and effectiveness of research instruments. Pilot testing typically involves testing and modifying questionnaires,measurement tools, or experimental designs. Initially, researchers develop and design the research instrument, followed by testing it on a small scale to assess its clarity, feasibility, and effectiveness. Subsequently, feedback is collected from participants or experts to obtain suggestions and recommendations for improving the tool design. Based on the feedback received, modifications and optimizations are made to the research instrument, which may involve rewriting questions, adjusting scales, or modifying experimental designs. After completing the modifications, testing is conducted again to confirm the effectiveness of the improvements. Finally, the final version of the tool is confirmed, ensuring that it has passed necessary validation and confirmation steps to ensure reliability and effectiveness before formal implementation of the study.

About the pilot-test data, according to the principle of 3–5 times of the most sub-scale questions in the questionnaire (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021), because the most sub-

scale questions in this study are the creativity scale, a total of 12 items, therefore, pilot-test sample should not be less than 60. In the research, 120 volunteers were selected for a pilot test.

The primary purpose of pilot testing is to examine the reliability and validity of the scale. Firstly, after determining the measurement tool, a reliability test should be conducted to ensure that the measurement tool is reasonable and adequate, thereby ensuring the credibility of the assessment results. Cronbach's α coefficient is commonly used to test the reliability of the scale, reflecting the degree of consistency among the items on the scale. When the Cronbach's α coefficient approaches 1, the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire is higher. Generally, when the α coefficient reaches 0.7, the reliability of the scale is considered acceptable. Secondly, a validity test is conducted to ensure that the scale can adequately measure the intended construct. Factor analysis is the standard method for testing the construct validity of a scale, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is commonly used to examine the structure of the scale (Taber, 2018). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity are typically conducted using SPSS software to determine if the data is suitable for factor analysis. Generally, a KMO value greater than 0.6 and a significance level (Sig) of less than 0.01 for Bartlett's test of sphericity indicate that the scale is appropriate for factor analysis (Hoque et al., 2018).

3.3.5 Target Population

There are 342,500 university student in Guizhou Province, This study mainly selects three universities among them. This study selected three undergraduate universities in Guizhou Province, namely Guizhou Education University, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, and Guiyang University. Samples were chosen from these three universities as the study subjects. These universities are located in different regions of Guizhou Province and have different characteristics and academic programs, reflecting the diversity and richness of higher education in Guizhou Province.

Table 3.9 The Summary of Students Numbers for the Three Universities

Serial Number	University	Total Number of Students
1	Guizhou Education University	14000
2	Guizhou University of Finance and Economics	21000
3	Guiyang University	15000
	In Total	50000

Source: the compilation of the study

According to the sample size analysis, the minimum sample number determined for this study based on formula calculation is 490 students. Invalid questionnaires will be deleted. Therefore, this study will issue 500 questionnaires in the formal survey. Details are shown in Table 3.10 below. The detail is shown in Table 3.10 as followed.

Table 3.10 Questionnaire Allocation Table

University Name	Number of students	Sampling Proportion	Questionnaire copies
Guizhou Education University	14000	28%	140
Guizhou University of Finance and Economics	21000	42%	210
Guiyang University	15000	30%	150
Total	**50000**	**100%**	**500**

Source: the compilation of the study

3.3.6 Sampling Method

The study selected university students from three universities in Guizhou Province using purposive sampling, these three universities are model institutions for the Starting Your Business (SYB) training and education program in Guizhou Province. All students are required to take the SYB course, they hold a significant position in the field of entrepreneurial education management. Purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, refers to the researcher determining what needs to be understood and seeking individuals who can provide information, possessing knowledge or experience and willing to provide information (Russell, 2002). Subsequently, using quota sampling to select the

sample ratio of teachers in three universities. Then use convenience sampling to select participants. The advantage of this method lies in its simplicity and speed, suitable for quantitative research or preliminary surveys. Convenience sampling facilitates easy access to individuals for data collection, enabling researchers to quickly obtain the required data, saving time and costs. Additionally, it helps researchers conduct preliminary exploration with limited resources, determining the direction and focus of the study, providing a reference and foundation for subsequent research. Convenience sampling is common in entrepreneurial education research (Nowiński et al., 2019), In this regard, Coviello & Jones argued that despite the inherent limitations of non-probability sampling, this method can still yield high-quality data when the response rate and participation level of the sample are high (Coviello & Jones, 2004).

3.3.7 Sample Size

According to DeVellis (2021), it is recommended that the number of pretest participants should be 3-5 times the number of items in the "sub-scale" with the most items in the questionnaire (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). In this study, the sub-scale with the most items is the creativity scale, which consists of 12 items. Therefore, the planned distribution of questionnaires should be no less than 60. This study finally obtained 200 pilot questionnaires for data analysis, The pilot data showed good reliability and validity. For the formal survey phase, it is advised in multivariate research that the sample size should be at least ten times the number of items (Memon et al., 2018). This study involves 5 scales, totaling 49 items. Hence, the anticipated sample size is 490. This study finally collected 600 formal questionnaires. After eliminating invalid questionnaires, a total of 456 valid questionnaires were used as the formal data of this study. Based on the researcher's sample size, 456 completed questionnaires in this study were deemed sufficient to meet the research requirements (Krejcie, 1970).

3.3.8 Data Collection Method

Firstly, contact the relevant entrepreneurial education management personnel at the three undergraduate universities in Guizhou Province to explain the purpose, significance, content, and methods of the research. Ensure good communication and cooperation with the relevant departments of the schools. Secondly, submit the research plan to the relevant departments of the schools and obtain their consent and support. Explain key information such as the purpose of the questionnaire survey, the survey targets, and the survey timing,

and address any questions and concerns from the schools as much as possible. Next, arrange for designated individuals to distribute the questionnaires within the schools. You can enlist the help of counselors or other responsible personnel at the schools to assist in distributing the questionnaires, ensuring that the questionnaires are smoothly distributed to the target respondents. The sampling process can be facilitated by sending the questionnaire's QR code through the Wenjuanxing platform and enlisting the assistance of two counselors from the schools to distribute the test questionnaires. Finally, regularly communicate with the relevant departments of the schools to understand the progress of questionnaire distribution and adjust the distribution strategy as needed to ensure that the questionnaires are distributed within the specified time frame.

Before conducting the questionnaire survey, teachers explained the purpose and importance of the survey to the students and addressed related precautions, such as voluntary withdrawal, confidentiality of identity, and anonymous data submission. To ensure the quality of the questionnaire, the study utilized the “Wenjuanxing” online platform and set a time limit for answering. During the data cleaning process, questionnaires that were left unanswered for more than 5 minutes, those with patterned responses, or those completed in less than 5 minutes were excluded. Additionally, to ensure the participation of participants and the validity of the test results, a series of measures were implemented. Firstly, students from the first, second, third, and fourth years were selected as subjects to comprehensively reflect the viewpoints and opinions of students from different grades. Secondly, to reduce participants' defensiveness, they were not required to provide their real names, and the purpose and intent of the study were clearly stated in the questionnaire to enhance participants' willingness to participate and trust. Through these measures, the researchers successfully completed the questionnaire survey and obtained valid research data. By following these steps, the study successfully completed the questionnaire distribution at the three undergraduate universities in Guizhou Province and achieved satisfactory distribution results. The pilot questionnaire was distributed in early June 2024, and a total of 200 valid questionnaires were collected, resulting in a response rate of 100%. The formal questionnaire was distributed at the end of August 2024. During the data processing stage, questionnaires with irregular responses were removed, expected recovery resulting in a total of 456 valid questionnaires. This

sample size is deemed sufficient to meet the research requirements and has been used as the research sample.

This study used sampling techniques as follows: purposive sampling is used to select three universities in Guizhou Province. Using quota sampling to select the sample ratio of students in three universities. First, we calculated the number of students in each of the three universities and across the four grade levels (freshman to senior) and used this information to determine the sampling quotas. Using university (University A, B, and C) and grade level (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) as stratification variables, we planned an effective sample size of 500 questionnaires. The total sample was first allocated to the three universities according to their proportions in the overall student population (approximately 28%, 42%, and 30%, respectively), and was then further allocated within each university to the four grade levels based on the proportion of students at each grade, thereby determining the target sample size for each quota cell. Finally, convenience sampling was used to select university students as participants.

3.3.9 Data Analysis

This study employed descriptive statistical analysis, reliability and validity testing, confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling in the data processing phase.

Descriptive statistics is a statistical analysis method used to summarize and describe the basic characteristics and trends of the data, without involving inference or hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistics reveal the central tendency, dispersion, shape, and possible outliers of the data through various statistical measures and charts. Common descriptive statistics include measures such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, percentiles, etc. The primary purpose of descriptive statistics is to help researchers gain a better understanding of the data and provide a foundation for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

Reliability analysis refers to a statistical method used to assess whether a measurement tool (such as a questionnaire or scale) can consistently measure the same concept or phenomenon across different situations. In research, reliability analysis is employed to determine the consistency and stability of measurement tools, whether they reliably measure the characteristics or attributes of the research subjects. Common reliability statistics include Cronbach's α coefficient, split-half coefficient, test-retest

reliability, etc. The results of reliability analysis help researchers evaluate the internal consistency of measurement tools and determine whether they are sufficiently reliable, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

In the pilot phase, exploratory factor analysis was employed to examine the validity of the scales. Given that all scales utilized in this study are established, confirmatory analysis was conducted in the formal questionnaire phase to assess their reliability and validity. Initially, following the recommendation of Shen and Chen, composite reliability and Cronbach's α coefficients were calculated to gauge the internal consistency of scale items, thereby evaluating scale reliability (Shen et al., 2019). The primary indicators of questionnaire validity are convergent validity and discriminant validity. According to Peng & Lai, 2012, for scales with good validity, the average extracted variance must be greater than 0.5, and the square root of the average extracted variance must be greater than the correlations with other latent variables (Peng & Lai, 2012).

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables. Typically, correlation analysis is used to determine whether variables are linearly related and whether the relationship between them is positive or negative. The results of this analysis are typically represented by correlation coefficients, which range from -1 to 1. A value of 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, and 0 indicates no linear relationship. Correlation analysis helps researchers understand the relationship between variables, enabling them to better interpret data and develop further research plans.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), is a statistical analysis method used to evaluate and validate complex causal relationship models. SEM combines techniques from factor analysis and path analysis, allowing for the simultaneous consideration of both direct and indirect effects among observed variables, as well as measurement errors between variables. SEM can be used to validate theoretical models, test hypotheses, explore relationships between variables, and predict interactions among variables.

3.3.10 Pilot Test

About the pretest data, according to the principle of 3–5 times of the most sub-scale questions in the questionnaire (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021), because the most sub-scale questions in this study are the proactive personality scale, a total of 12 items,

therefore, the pretest sample should not be less than 60. In the study, 200 valid questionnaires were obtained for pilot testing.

Table 3.11 Reliability Analysis of Pilot Test

Variables	Cronbach's α
Proactive personality	0.939
Perceived organizational support	0.955
Creativity	0.957
Entrepreneurial Intentions	0.917
Entrepreneurial Behavior	0.927

The validity of the pilot test was assessed using factor analysis, with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test serving as key indicators. A KMO value exceeding 0.7, coupled with a significant Bartlett's test ($p < 0.05$), generally indicates that the questionnaire items are suitable for exploratory factor analysis (Shrestha, 2021). According to Kaiser and Rice (1974), a KMO value above 0.7 and a Bartlett's test significance level below 0.05 suggest a substantial correlation among the data (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). For the exploratory factor analysis, varimax rotation was employed, and factor loadings greater than 0.4 were used as a criterion for stability (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988). The analysis revealed that all variables had factor loadings exceeding 0.4 and explained more than 50% of the total variance.

Table 3.12 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Pilot Test

Variables	KMO	Bartlett's test	Factor loadings	Cumulative total explained variance
Proactive personality	0.943	$p < .001$	0.724 - 0.845	64.831%
Perceived organizational support	0.924	$p < .001$	0.807 - 0.905	76.225%
Creativity	0.943	$p < .001$	0.738 - 0.864	68.075%
Entrepreneurial Intentions	0.891	$p < .001$	0.569 - 0.838	57.451%
Entrepreneurial Behavior	0.918	$p < .001$	0.607 – 0.846	63.763%

3.4 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, we strictly adhered to ethical principles and considered the importance of ethics. Firstly, we ensured informed consent of the research participants. All individuals participating in this study were informed about the purpose, content, and expected outcomes of the research, and they provided written consent before participating. Secondly, we respected the privacy and confidentiality of the research participants. Measures were taken to protect the personal information of the research subjects during data collection and processing, ensuring that it was not disclosed or misused. Additionally, we respected the rights of research participants, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse consequences. Furthermore, we respected the academic achievements and intellectual property of others. When citing the research findings and data of others, we always followed the principles of academic integrity, avoiding plagiarism and infringement. Finally, we considered the potential social impacts and risks of the research and took measures to minimize these risks. We ensured the accuracy and objectivity of the research results and made every effort to avoid undue influence or harm to any individual or group. In summary, we strictly adhered to ethical principles in this study and strived to ensure the legality, fairness, and respectfulness of the research.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter first discusses the research paradigm, followed by exploring different methods required to address various issues. The chapter provides a detailed introduction to the research methods employed in the study, including qualitative research method design and quantitative research method design. Finally, ethical considerations used in this study will be introduced. The next chapter will further discuss the results of measurement model evaluation and present the results of structural model testing.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings to answer two research objectives. The first objective is to identify the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. The second objective is to verify the relationships between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions.

4.1 Objective One: The Results of Qualitative Research

The objective of this study was to explore the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, China. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 full-time students from three universities in Guizhou Province, and the data were analyzed using NVivo12.0 software. The study then identified and categorized the factors affecting entrepreneurial behavior specifically among students in Guizhou's universities.

4.1.1 Descriptive Information

The Table 4.1 titled "Descriptive Information" provides a summary of the demographic data for the interview participants, detailing their gender, age, grade level, and majors, along with the corresponding frequencies and percentages. A total of twenty participants were interviewed. In terms of gender, 55% identified as male (11 individuals), while 45% identified as female (9 individuals). The age distribution indicates that 10% are 20 years old (2 individuals), 25% are 21 years old (5 individuals), 25% are 22 years old (5 individuals), 25% are 23 years old (5 individuals), and 15% are 24 years old (3 individuals). Regarding grade levels, there were no freshmen among the participants, while 25% were sophomores (5 individuals), 35% were juniors (7 individuals), and 40% were seniors (8 individuals). In terms of academic majors, 40% of participants (8 individuals) were enrolled in science majors, whereas 60% (12 individuals) were pursuing liberal arts

majors. This demographic breakdown offers a clear overview of the interviewees' composition, providing valuable insights into key attributes relevant to the research.

Table 4.1 Demographic Statistics of Participants

Attribute	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	11	55%
	Female	9	45%
Age	20 years old	2	10%
	21years old	5	25%
	22years old	5	25%
	23years old	5	25%
	24years old	3	15%
Grade	Freshman year	0	0
	Sophomore year	5	25%
	Junior year	7	35%
	Senior year	8	40%
Majors	Science majors	8	40%
	Liberal arts majors	12	60%

Source: Derived from this research.

4.1.2 Theme 1: Perceived Organizational Support as a Key Influencing Factor of Entrepreneurial Behavior

In this study, key factors extracted through semi-structured interviews revealed that perceived organizational support plays a critical role in shaping the entrepreneurial behavior of university students. The interview results consistently showed that when students feel supported by their universities, they are more inclined to engage in entrepreneurial activities, as such support creates favorable conditions for innovation and risk-taking. Perceived organizational support not only boosts students' confidence but also provides them with the right direction and the necessary resources and assistance to help them successfully advance their entrepreneurial endeavors.

The following are some students' interview statements to further support this viewpoint:

Respondent No.3 said:

"I'd like to share my experience of receiving organizational support at my university. I attended several entrepreneurship lectures, including one where the chairman of Xibainian came to the university to share his entrepreneurial journey. I also had the opportunity to discuss team operation models with him. This lecture gave me great confidence and motivation, and the successful role model provided me with strength and courage. After my first attempt at founding an educational institution failed, I launched a new media project, which later led me to participate in the university's innovation and entrepreneurship competition. During the competition, the university not only provided guidance from instructors but also offered some financial support for my venture. In my junior year, I also participated in SYB (Start Your Business) training. The university's support, including courses and expert lectures, had a significant impact on my entrepreneurial behavior. These helped me lay a solid theoretical foundation and stimulated my thinking. For example, through the SYB courses, I learned fundamental concepts like cash flow management, customer acquisition, and collaboration and competition with peers. The university's support actively facilitated my entrepreneurial actions."

Respondent No.14 said:

"During my time at university, I received tremendous support, especially in my entrepreneurial journey. I participated in many entrepreneurship competitions, where the teachers in my team and the innovation space provided a lot of encouragement and assistance. The innovation space also invited several entrepreneurial lecturers for training, which was very helpful to me. Additionally, the university offered significant financial support. For instance, during my first participation in the "Internet+ Entrepreneurship" competition, the university directly sponsored me when I lacked funds. Currently, I am running a 24-hour self-service billiards club, and I have successfully turned a profit. I believe that the support provided by the university is outstanding, offering us many opportunities to choose. Through the innovation space, I learned a great deal about entrepreneurship and gained valuable insights into the market. My participation in these competitions helped clarify my entrepreneurial intentions, and the business plan I developed during one of the competitions became the foundation for my later venture. Furthermore, I joined the student union, which significantly improved my communication

and management skills. This experience has given me a clearer vision for my future development and planning. Overall, the university's support has not only facilitated my entrepreneurial endeavors but has also provided substantial motivation for my personal growth and skill enhancement."

Respondent No.20 said:

"In terms of the impact of perceived organizational support on my entrepreneurial behavior, the university's policy briefings provided clarity on the direction of my venture. Initially, I planned to start a safety evaluation company, offering services such as safety evaluation, consulting, and training, but these activities require specific certifications, which are difficult to obtain. Through the university's entrepreneurship policy seminars, I was inspired to shift my focus. I partnered with my entrepreneurship instructor, and together we founded a labor company that supplies technical personnel to safety evaluation firms. This policy support helped me adjust my entrepreneurial approach, and the university's support played a key role in driving my entrepreneurial actions."

This study conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 university students from three entrepreneurial representative universities in Guizhou Province and found that perceived organizational support significantly enhances entrepreneurial behavior among students. The interview results consistently indicated that resource support from the university, professional guidance from entrepreneurial mentors, and emotional encouragement not only bolstered students' confidence in entrepreneurship but also actively promoted their actual entrepreneurial actions. These findings highlight the importance of effectively leveraging organizational support within the university environment to stimulate students' entrepreneurial intentions, providing practical guidance and assistance for the development of entrepreneurial behavior among university students.

4.1.3 Theme 2: Proactive Personality as a Key Influencing Factor of Entrepreneurial Behavior

In this study, key factors extracted through semi-structured interviews revealed the impact of proactive personality traits on the entrepreneurial behavior of university students in Guizhou Province. The interview results indicated that students with proactive personalities exhibited higher levels of enthusiasm and creativity during the entrepreneurial process, which, to some extent, motivated their entrepreneurial intentions and actions. This study aims to thoroughly identify how these students' proactive

personalities influence their entrepreneurial behavior, providing a basis for understanding the influencing factors of entrepreneurial behavior among university students.

The following are some students' interview statements to further support this viewpoint:

Respondent No.2 said:

"I have a proactive personality, which drives me to actively learn about innovation and entrepreneurship. I am highly curious about new things; when faced with challenges, I maintain a positive attitude and persist in finding solutions without easily giving up. My strong psychological resilience allows me to take risks, and my proactive nature enhances my execution ability and boosts my confidence. I believe I can effectively manage my company! Currently, I am running a business. When facing challenges, I carefully analyze the reasons behind poor performance, identify problems, and work on solutions. I proactively expand my customer base, particularly by targeting local residents. I also aim to develop a client group for those visiting patients in hospitals, as they may need flowers to express their sympathy. Additionally, I seek collaboration with major platforms in China, such as Meituan. My proactive personality helps me build a broader network of contacts, which will benefit my entrepreneurial endeavors."

Respondent No.16 said:

"Proactive personality traits have a significant impact on entrepreneurial behavior. I have always been a highly motivated person. When participating in project teams, I work hard, embrace challenges, and am not afraid of hardship or fatigue. My growth—from a group member to a core member and now leading a team in competitions—can be closely linked to my proactive personality. My enthusiasm drives me to implement my entrepreneurial plans. After clarifying my entrepreneurial ideas, I developed a detailed business plan based on the entrepreneurship courses I took, which provided strong motivation for my entrepreneurial journey. When I confirmed that entrepreneurship aligned with my passions and actively took action, my intrinsic motivation followed suit. This motivation has made me more determined in my entrepreneurial endeavors, and I firmly believe that the combination of my conviction and creativity significantly increases my chances of success. Currently, as a sophomore, I am engaged in entrepreneurship and have received positive feedback. I will continue to be

proactive, hoping to achieve even greater success in my entrepreneurial pursuits in the future."

Respondent No.19 said:

"I am an optimistic and enthusiastic learner. During my time at university, in addition to participating in the training courses offered by the school, I also actively engaged in various external training programs to continuously enhance my entrepreneurial skills. My proactive personality drives me to keep learning about entrepreneurship, enabling me to promptly identify my shortcomings. To better address these deficiencies, I am willing to practice and achieve results, constantly pushing myself to break through and satisfy my thirst for knowledge. My proactive nature makes me clear about my desire to succeed in entrepreneurship and to become a female entrepreneur. I actively think about how to take my current company to the global stage, which is one of the key factors that keeps me engaged in my entrepreneurial journey."

The proactive personality of university students significantly benefits their entrepreneurial behavior. Students with a proactive personality demonstrate a strong curiosity and positive attitude, enabling them to actively learn about innovation and entrepreneurship and to persist in the face of challenges. These personality traits make them more resilient in problem-solving, thereby enhancing their execution ability and self-confidence. In the entrepreneurial process, they are not only able to identify their shortcomings and actively seek solutions but also take the initiative to expand customer sources and market opportunities. This positive mindset and proactive action not only boost their entrepreneurial intentions but also lay a solid foundation for their entrepreneurial success. Therefore, the proactive personality of university students is considered a key factor in driving entrepreneurial behavior.

4.1.4 Theme Three: Creativity as a Key Factor Influencing Entrepreneurial Behaviour

This study, based on semi-structured interviews with 20 students from three entrepreneurship-oriented universities in Guizhou Province, reveals that creativity plays a pivotal role in shaping students' entrepreneurial behaviour. The findings indicate that creativity not only directly stimulates entrepreneurial intentions but also serves as a continuous driving force in the entrepreneurial process, facilitating the transformation of ideas into action.

The following are some students' interview statements to further support this viewpoint:

Respondent No.13 said:

"The cultivation of creative thinking at university has been greatly beneficial to me. The behavioral laboratory courses go beyond textbooks and place greater emphasis on self-awareness—identifying problems first and solving them through action. These courses value individuality over conformity, and the open discussions and brainstorming sessions consistently spark new ideas. For instance, while shopping in Chengdu, I pay close attention to well-designed shop windows and the distinctive layouts of cultural and creative stores, and then reflect on how these insights might apply to my own products. Upon returning to campus, I adapt my product displays and storytelling—such as layout flow, materials, and colour combinations—accordingly. This 'observe–compare–restructure–apply' cycle allows me to rapidly transform inspiration into actionable strategies, which I then test on a small scale. In this way, creativity enhances my ability to identify opportunities and iterate quickly, directly facilitating both the initiation and ongoing optimization of my entrepreneurial activities."

Respondent No.18 said:

"Once I developed an entrepreneurial intention, I immediately began sourcing resources. Without start-up capital, I treated creativity as my primary currency. Take, for example, the piano school I founded while still at university: rent and piano equipment required significant investment. Instead, I launched a pilot operation to generate rolling capital. After my third year ended—when many peers were taking internships—I returned to my hometown and launched the business with no capital: I negotiated a 'free operation for one month, followed by formal transfer' deal with the landlord, who also agreed to a one-week trial period. Once I had enrolled enough students, I signed the contract officially. Within the first week, tuition from over ten students covered the rent and transfer fee; by the second week, I had enough for a second branch. In my view, business does not necessarily require upfront investment; the key lies in using creativity to restructure deal conditions, design low-risk trial runs, and quickly validate and replicate the model. It is precisely this capacity to creatively mobilize resources that turned my entrepreneurial intention into scalable entrepreneurial action."

Respondent No.20 said:

"My major is Safety Engineering, closely related to construction sites. On one occasion, I observed severe dust during drilling operations. I applied creative thinking to redesign a conventional drill by adding a detachable sealed cover with an exhaust interface. This effectively reduced dust dispersion without altering workers' operational habits. After several rounds of testing and optimization, the design was granted a national utility model patent. This experience helped me understand the transmission mechanism from creativity to entrepreneurial behaviour: creativity enables the reframing of common problems into solvable business pain points. It supported me in developing a low-cost prototype, testing it on-site, and enhancing my market entry and negotiation capabilities through patent acquisition—eventually leading to cooperation and monetization with equipment manufacturers and construction firms. In short, creativity functioned as an accelerator, connecting the chain from 'problem – solution – patent – market', and allowing technical ideas to materialize into viable business ventures, thus continuously fueling my entrepreneurial engagement."

In summary, the findings suggest that students who frequently generate and test new ideas demonstrate stronger opportunity recognition, clearer value differentiation, and a more efficient process of turning ideas into reality. Creativity not only strengthens their capacity to identify market needs and refine products or services but also accelerates the iterative process from concept to execution. These results underscore the importance of cultivating creativity through interdisciplinary projects, innovation and entrepreneurship education, and design thinking practices, thereby offering feasible pathways and sustained momentum for the development of entrepreneurial behaviour among university students.

4.1.5 Theme 4: Entrepreneurial Intention as a Key Factor in Entrepreneurial Behavior

This study identifies key factors through semi-structured interviews, revealing that entrepreneurial intention is a crucial influencing factor for entrepreneurial behavior among university students. The interview results consistently indicate that students with entrepreneurial intentions are more likely to actively engage in entrepreneurial activities. This finding underscores the significance of entrepreneurial intention in driving entrepreneurial behavior among university students.

The following are some students' interview statements to further support this viewpoint:

Respondent No.7 said:

"As a senior student, I believe that entrepreneurial intention has a direct impact on my entrepreneurial behavior. First, having a clear entrepreneurial intention gives me the motivation to plan and execute my business projects, providing a clear direction and goal. With a strong entrepreneurial intention, I am more proactive in seeking resources, learning relevant knowledge, and participating in entrepreneurial activities such as competitions or internships, which have helped me gain valuable experience.

Entrepreneurial intention also makes me more determined when facing challenges and difficulties, and less likely to give up. I know what I want, so even when encountering setbacks, I adjust my approach and keep moving forward with my business plans. Overall, entrepreneurial intention is the core driving force that keeps me committed to my entrepreneurial journey and helps me step by step toward achieving my goals."

Respondent No.11 said:

"As a junior student, I firmly believe that my entrepreneurial intentions play a pivotal role in shaping my entrepreneurial behavior and overall journey. Having a clear sense of purpose not only fuels my passion for entrepreneurship but also drives me to actively seek out opportunities, resources, and knowledge relevant to this field. This proactive mindset compels me to engage in business planning, conduct thorough market research, and build a network of like-minded individuals who share my entrepreneurial aspirations. Moreover, my desire to bring my entrepreneurial ideas to fruition encourages me to embrace calculated risks and make informed strategic decisions. I recognize that stepping into the world of entrepreneurship requires a certain level of risk-taking, and my intentions empower me to face challenges head-on rather than shy away from them. This mindset helps me cultivate resilience, as I understand that setbacks are often stepping stones to success. Additionally, my entrepreneurial intentions motivate me to continuously enhance my skill set. I actively seek out workshops, seminars, and mentorship opportunities that deepen my understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape. This commitment to learning allows me to refine my business acumen and stay updated on industry trends, which is crucial in a rapidly changing market.

Overall, my entrepreneurial intentions serve as the foundation for my actions and decisions in the business field, significantly increasing the likelihood of my pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. With a clear vision and a determined spirit, I am excited to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape and transform my aspirations into reality."

Respondent No.12 said:

"As a male student in a science-related field, I believe that my entrepreneurial intention is a key influencing factor in my entrepreneurial behavior, and this is reflected in several aspects. Firstly, having a clear entrepreneurial intention makes me more sensitive to business opportunities. Whether in class or extracurricular activities, I actively seek out projects and resources related to entrepreneurship. This proactive attitude drives me to participate in entrepreneurial competitions and innovation activities, which enhances my practical skills. Secondly, my entrepreneurial intention motivates me to conduct in-depth research on market needs and technological trends. As a science student, I am skilled at analyzing data and solving problems, which allows me to understand business models and market potential from a scientific perspective. When formulating business plans, I combine my expertise to explore how to apply technological innovations to real-world businesses, thereby enhancing my competitive advantage.

Furthermore, my entrepreneurial intention encourages me to be more willing to take risks. I understand that the entrepreneurial path is not easy, so I actively seek guidance and feedback from professional mentors. This not only helps me avoid potential issues but also improves the scientific basis of my decision-making. Finally, a strong entrepreneurial intention makes me eager to connect with like-minded individuals. I actively participate in various entrepreneurial communities and networking events, exchanging ideas and experiences with people from different backgrounds. This interaction not only expands my network but also provides valuable feedback and support for my entrepreneurial ideas."

In summary, my entrepreneurial intention provides the motivation for every step I take in my entrepreneurial behavior, allowing me to pursue my entrepreneurial dreams with greater determination. Entrepreneurial intention is a key factor driving entrepreneurial behavior. It not only reflects university students' interest and enthusiasm for entrepreneurship but also directly influences the actions and decisions they take throughout the entrepreneurial process. A clear entrepreneurial intention encourages

students to actively seek opportunities, acquire relevant resources and knowledge, and facilitates the formulation of business plans and market research. Moreover, a strong entrepreneurial intention motivates students to take necessary risks and enhances their resilience and decision-making abilities when facing challenges. Therefore, entrepreneurial intention is widely regarded as a key factor influencing university students' entrepreneurial behavior and is essential for achieving entrepreneurial goals."

In summary, this study reveals that perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and entrepreneurial intention are key factors influencing the entrepreneurial behavior of university students in Guizhou Province. Perceived organizational support provides students with necessary resources and an environment that enhances their enthusiasm for participating in entrepreneurial activities. Proactive personality encourages students to demonstrate greater resilience and decision-making abilities when facing challenges, thereby driving them to explore entrepreneurial opportunities more actively. Meanwhile, entrepreneurial intention directly affects students' actions and decisions during the entrepreneurial process, helping them formulate practical business plans. The interplay of these three factors not only increases students' entrepreneurial enthusiasm but also provides strong support for their entrepreneurial success. Therefore, gaining a deeper understanding of these key factors is of significant importance for promoting the entrepreneurial behavior of university students in Guizhou Province.

4.2 Objective Two: The Results of Quantitative Research

The objective two is to verify the relationship between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intentions. This research used the questionnaire survey method and utilized SPSS version 27 and AMOS version 26 for data analysis. The obtained data were processed with these software tools to derive the research results.

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

This study collected a total of 941 samples, of which 456 participants had entrepreneurial behavior and 480 participants did not have entrepreneurial behavior. The basic situation of the respondents was described and analyzed. Among the participants with entrepreneurial behavior, 266 (45.8%) were male and 315 (54.2%) were female. 252 (43.4%) were married, 329 (56.6%) were unmarried, 51 (8.8%) had a bachelor's degree,

and 495 (85.2%) had a master's degree. Among them, 35 (6%) had a doctorate, 513 (88.3%) had an academic position, and 68 (11.7%) had a non-academic position; 27 (4.6%) had a management position, and 554 (95.4%) had a non-management position. Please see Table 4.2 for details.

Table 4.2 Basic Information

Attribute	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	190	41.7%
	Female	266	58.3%
Grade	Freshman	93	20.4%
	Sophomore	98	21.5%
	Junior	169	31.7%
	Senior	96	21.1%
Major	Liberal Arts	268	58.8%
	Science	188	41.2%

Source: Derived from this research

4.2.2 Variable Description Statistical Analysis

The statistical results of this study show that the median scores for perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, entrepreneurial intention, and entrepreneurial behavior are all above 3. This study used a five-point Likert scale, indicating that college students in Guizhou Province demonstrate relatively high levels in perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, entrepreneurial intention, and entrepreneurial behavior. Please see Table 4.3 for details.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Variable	Samples	Mean	S.D.
Perceived organizational support	456	3.486	0.981
Proactive personality	456	3.568	0.962
Creativity	456	3.455	0.915
Entrepreneurial intention	456	3.359	0.967
Entrepreneurial behavior	456	3.545	0.956

Note: S.D: Standard deviation

4.2.3 Reliability Analysis

This study used Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to test the consistency of the research variables across the measurement items in the questionnaire. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 is considered to indicate good reliability (DeVellis, 1991). The study includes five variables, categorized as follows: perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, entrepreneurial intention, and entrepreneurial behavior. A reliability analysis was conducted for each variable in the formal questionnaire, and the results show good reliability. Please see Table 4.4 for details.

Table 4.4 Reliability Analysis of Each Variables in the Formal Questionnaire

Variables	Cronbach's α
Proactive personality	0.932
Perceived organizational support	0.942
Creativity	0.948
Entrepreneurial Intentions	0.920
Entrepreneurial Behavior	0.933

4.2.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a validation technique used to examine the goodness-of-fit between a pre-specified factor model and the observed data. CFA provides evidence for the validity of the theoretical model by determining whether the hypothesized model fits the data well (Kline, 2015). In the model fit assessment, the goodness-of-fit is determined by indices such as CMIN/DF, RMSEA, GFI, NFI, IFI, TLI, and CFI, with reference to their respective standard value ranges.

4.2.4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Perceived Organizational Support

In this study, perceived organizational support consists of a total of 8 items. Through confirmatory factor analysis, Please see Figure 4.1 and Table 4.5 were.

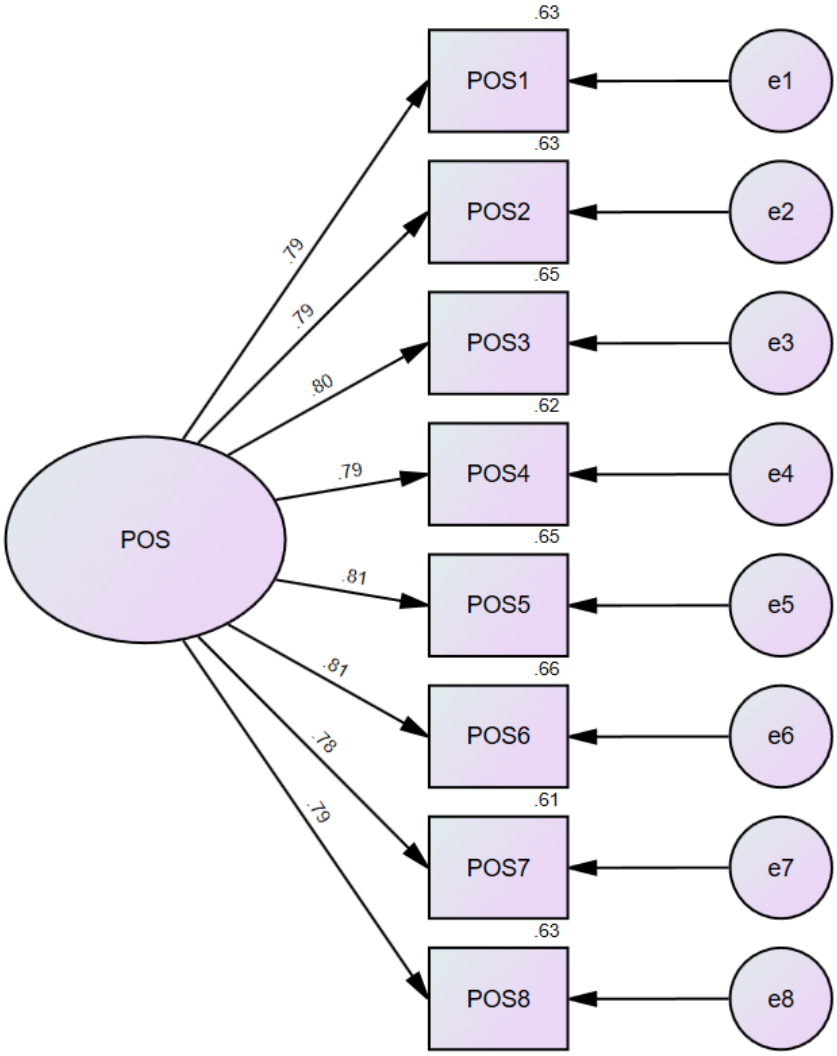


Figure 4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of perceived organizational support

Table 4.5 Model Fit Index of Personality Traits

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
CMIN	——	37.981	——
DF	——	20	——
CMIN/DF	<3	1.899	Good
RMR	<0.08	0.19	Good
GFI	>0.9	0.979	Good
AGFI	>0.9	0.961	Good
NFI	>0.9	0.985	Good

Table 4.5 (continued)

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
IFI	>0.9	0.993	Good
TLI	>0.9	0.990	Good
CFI	>0.9	0.993	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.044	Good
SRMR	<0.08	0.018	Good

Table 4.5 showed that CMIN/DF is 1.899, which is less than 3, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) all reach the standard of 0.9, root mean square residual (RMR) is 0.19, which is less than 0.08, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.044, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.018, which is less than 0.08. Each fitting index conforms to the general research standards, so it can be considered that the model has a good fit.

Table 4.6 Convergent Validity Analysis of Perceived Organizational Support

Variables	Items	factor loading	CR	AVE
Perceived organizational support	Pos1	0.79	0.932	0.632
	Pos2	0.79		
	Pos3	0.80		
	Pos4	0.79		
	Pos5	0.81		
	Pos6	0.81		
	Pos7	0.78		
	Pos8	0.79		

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.6 shows that the standardized factor loadings of each item are greater than 0.6, the combined reliability (CR) is greater than 0.7, and the average variation extraction (AVE) is greater than 0.5, indicating that perceived organizational support has good convergent validity.

4.2.4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Proactive Personality

Proactive personality has 10 measurement items. After confirmatory factor analysis, Figure 4.2 and Table 4.7 were obtained.

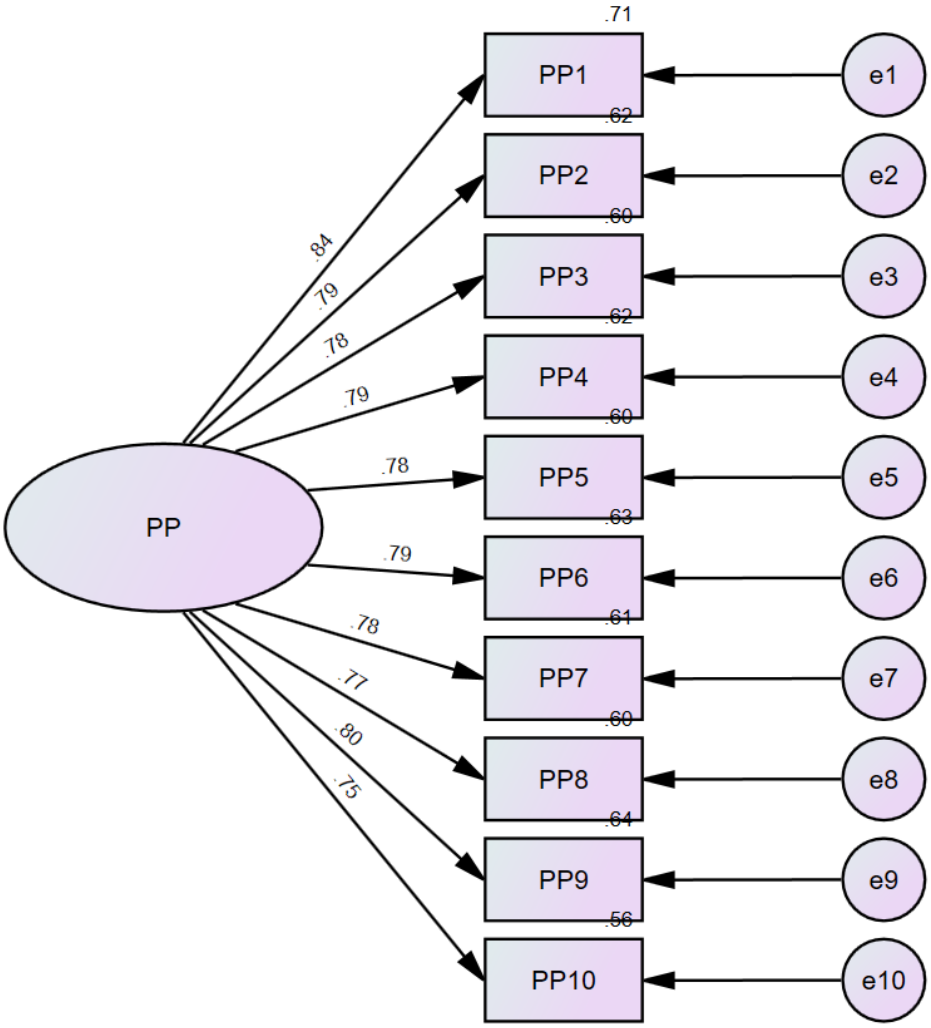


Figure 4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Job Satisfaction

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.7 Model Fit Index of Proactive Personality

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
CMIN	——	74.194	——
DF	——	35	——
CMIN/DF	<3	2.120	Good
RMR	<0.08	0.022	Good

Table 4.7 (continued)

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
GFI	>0.9	0.969	Good
AGFI	>0.9	0.951	Good
NFI	>0.9	0.977	Good
IFI	>0.9	0.988	Good
TLI	>0.9	0.984	Good
CFI	>0.9	0.988	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.050	Good
SRMR	<0.08	0.021	Good

Table 4.7 showed that CMIN/DF is 2.120, which is less than 3, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) all reach the standard of 0.9, root mean square residual (RMR) is 0.022, which is less than 0.08, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.050, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.021, which is less than 0.08. Each fitting index conforms to the general research standards, so it can be considered that the model has a good fit.

Table 4.8 Convergent Validity Analysis of Job Satisfaction

Variables	Items	factor loading	CR	AVE
Proactive personality	pp1	0.84	0.942	0.612
	Pp2	0.79		
	pp3	0.78		
	Pp4	0.79		
	Pp5	0.78		
	Pp6	0.79		
	Pp7	0.78		
	Pp8	0.77		
	Pp9	0.80		
	Pp10	0.75		

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.8 shows that the standardized factor loadings of each item are greater than 0.6, the combined reliability (CR) is greater than 0.7, and the average variation extraction (AVE) is 0.500, indicating that the variable convergent validity is acceptable. The average variation extraction (AVE) is greater than 0.5 is acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4.2.4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Creativity

The creativity has 12 measurement items. After confirmatory factor analysis, Figure 4.3 and Table 4.9 were obtained.

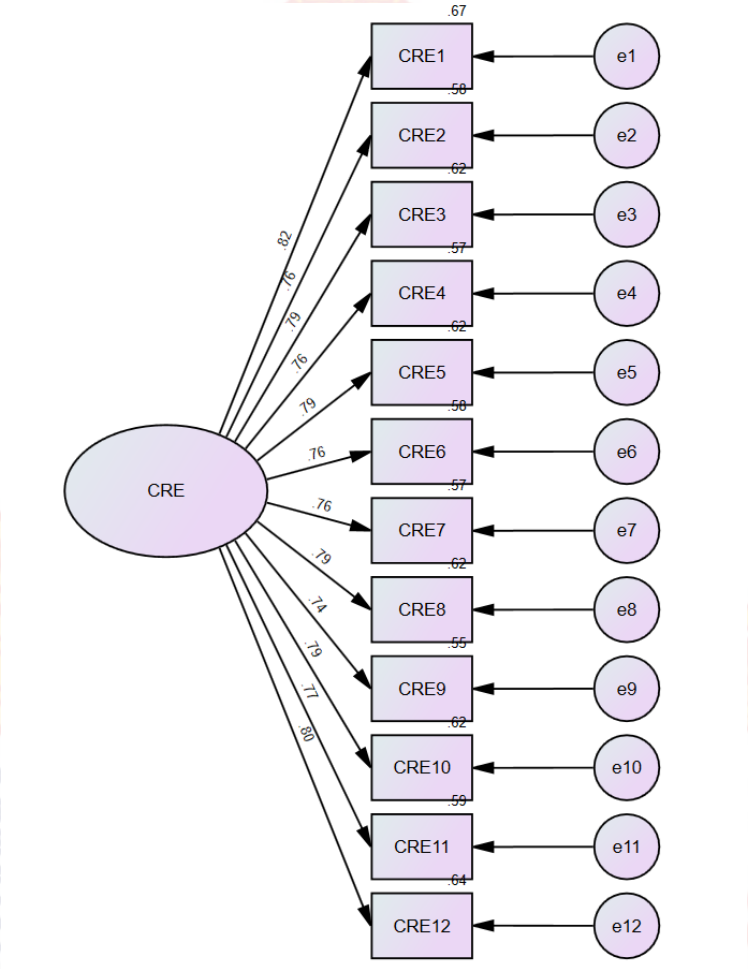


Figure 4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Creativity

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.9 Model Fit Index of Creativity

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
CMIN	——	189.245	——
DF	——	54	——
CMIN/DF	<5	3.505	Acceptable
RMR	<0.08	0.029	Good
GFI	>0.9	0.931	Good
AGFI	>0.9	0.900	Good
NFI	>0.9	0.951	Good
IFI	>0.9	0.965	Good
TLI	>0.9	0.957	Good
CFI	>0.9	0.965	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.074	Good
SRMR	<0.08	0.030	Good

Table 4.9 showed that CMIN/DF is 3.505, which is less than 5, in large sample conditions, even if the model fits well, the chi-square value can become large, leading to a χ^2/df value exceeding 3. Bollen and Wheaton et al. noted that a χ^2/df value below 5 can still be considered acceptable for model fit (Bollen, 1989; Wheaton, 1977). Therefore, the chi-square divided by degrees of freedom in this study is 3.505, which falls within the acceptable range. Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) all reach the standard of 0.9, root mean square residual (RMR) is 0.029, which is less than 0.08, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.074, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.030, which is less than 0.08. Each fitting index conforms to the general research standards, so it can be considered that the model has a good fit.

Table 4.10 Convergent Validity Analysis of Creativity

Variables	Items	factor loading	CR	AVE
Creativity	CRE1	0.82	0.948	0.605
	CRE2	0.76		
	CRE3	0.79		
	CRE4	0.76		
	CRE5	0.79		
	CRE6	0.76		
	CRE7	0.76		
	CRE8	0.79		
	CRE9	0.74		
	CRE10	0.79		
	CRE11	0.77		
	CRE12	0.80		

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.10 shows that the standardized factor loadings of each item are greater than 0.6, the combined reliability (CR) is greater than 0.7, and the average variation extraction (AVE) is 0.500, indicating that the variable convergent validity is acceptable. The average variation extraction (AVE) is greater than 0.36 is acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4.2.4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Entrepreneurial Intentions

Entrepreneurial Intentions has 10 measurement items. After confirmatory factor analysis, Figure 4.4 and Table 4.21 were obtained.

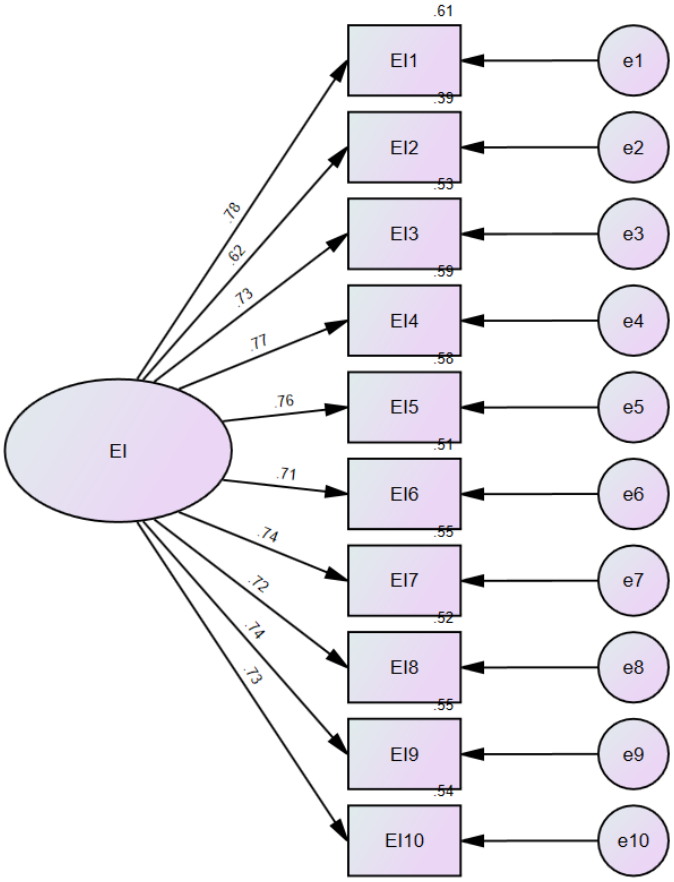


Figure 4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Entrepreneurial Intentions

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.11 Model Fit Index of Entrepreneurial Intentions

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
CMIN	——	126.186	——
DF	——	35	——
CMIN/DF	<5	3.605	Acceptable
RMR	<0.08	0.034	Good
GFI	>0.9	0.944	Good
AGFI	>0.9	0.911	Good
NFI	>0.9	0.949	Good
IFI	>0.9	0.963	Good
TLI	>0.9	0.952	Good
CFI	>0.9	0.963	Good

Table 4.11 (continued)

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
RMSEA	<0.08	0.076	Good
SRMR	<0.08	0.035	Good

Table 4.11 showed that CMIN/DF is 3.605, which is less than 5, in large sample conditions, even if the model fits well, the chi-square value can become large, leading to a χ^2/df value exceeding 3. Bollen and Wheaton et al. noted that a χ^2/df value below 5 can still be considered acceptable for model fit (Bollen, 1989; Wheaton, 1977). Therefore, the chi-square divided by degrees of freedom in this study is 3.605, which falls within the acceptable range. Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) all reach the standard of 0.9, root mean square residual (RMR) is 0.034, which is less than 0.08, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.076, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.035, which is less than 0.08. Each fitting index conforms to the general research standards, so it can be considered that the model has a good fit.

Table 4.12 Convergent Validity Analysis of Entrepreneurial Intentions

Variables	Items	factor loading	CR	AVE
Entrepreneurial Intentions	EI1	0.78	0.920	0.525
	EI2	0.62		
	EI3	0.73		
	EI4	0.77		
	EI5	0.76		
	EI6	0.71		
	EI7	0.74		
	EI8	0.72		
	EI9	0.74		
	EI10	0.73		

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.12 shows that the standardized factor loadings of each item are greater than 0.6, the combined reliability (CR) is greater than 0.7, and the average variation extraction (AVE) is 0.500, indicating that the variable convergent validity is acceptable. The average variation extraction (AVE) is greater than 0.36 is acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4.2.4.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Entrepreneurial Behavior

Entrepreneurial Behavior has 9 measurement items. After confirmatory factor analysis, Figure 4.4 and Table 4.21 were obtained.

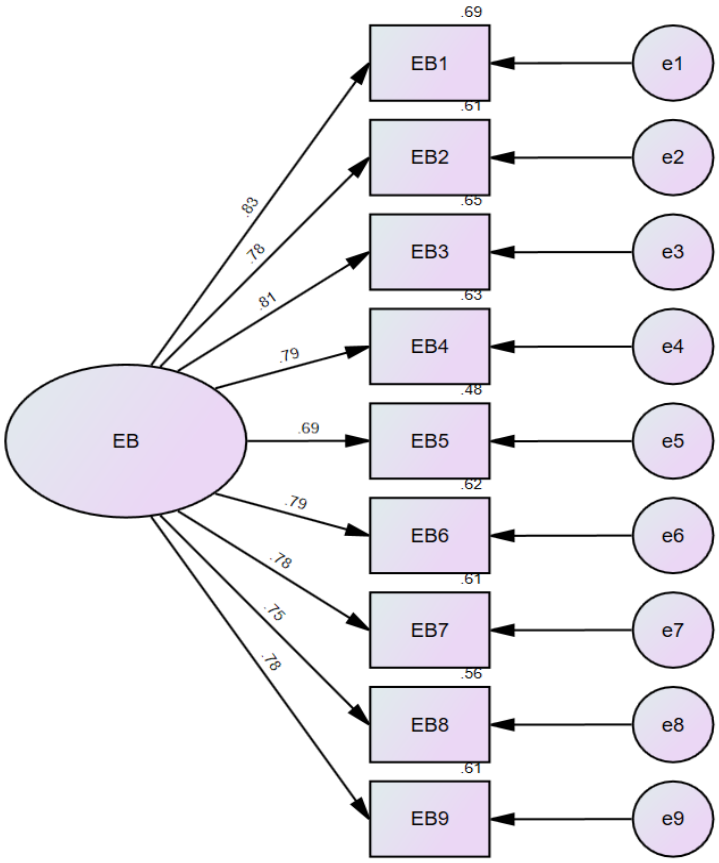


Figure 4.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Entrepreneurial Behavior

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.13 Model Fit Index of Entrepreneurial Behavior

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
CMIN	——	73.432	——
DF	——	27	——
CMIN/DF	<3	2.720	Good
RMR	<0.08	0.024	Good
GFI	>0.9	0.964	Good
AGFI	>0.9	0.940	Good
NFI	>0.9	0.973	Good
IFI	>0.9	0.983	Good
TLI	>0.9	0.977	Good
CFI	>0.9	0.983	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.076	Good
SRMR	<0.08	0.061	Good

Table 4.13 showed that CMIN/DF is 2.720, which is less than 3, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) all reach the standard of 0.9, root mean square residual (RMR) is 0.024, which is less than 0.08, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.076, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.061, which is less than 0.08. Each fitting index conforms to the general research standards, so it can be considered that the model has a good fit.

Table 4.14 Convergent Validity Analysis of Entrepreneurial Behavior

Variables	Items	factor loading	CR	AVE
Entrepreneurial Behavior	EI1	0.83	0.933	0.606
	EI2	0.78		
	EI3	0.81		
	EI4	0.79		
	EI5	0.69		
	EI6	0.79		

Table 4.14 (continued)

Variables	Items	factor loading	CR	AVE
	EI7	0.78		
	EI8	0.75		
	EI9	0.78		

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.14 shows that the standardized factor loadings of each item are greater than 0.6, the combined reliability (CR) is greater than 0.7, and the average variation extraction (AVE) is 0.500, indicating that the variable convergent validity is acceptable. The average variation extraction (AVE) is greater than 0.5 is acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4.2.5 Correlation Analysis and Discrimination Validity

On the basis of Pearson correlation analysis indicates the existence of a significant correlation among the variable. The correlation coefficients in this study showed that there was a significant low to medium correlation between the variables. Please see table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Correlation Analysis

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1.Proactive personality	1				
2.Perceived organizational support	0.420***	1			
3.Creativity	0.399***	0.458***	1		
4.Entrepreneurial Intentions	0.338***	0.346***	.414***	1	
5.Entrepreneurial Behavior	0.480***	.479***	0.509***	.425***	1

Note. $p < 0.001$ ***

4.2.6 Structural Equation Model

Table 4.16 shows the fitting indicators of the structural equation model. Table 4.26 showed that CMIN/DF is 1.994, which is less than 3, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) all reach the standard of 0.9, while those above 0.80 can be acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2015). Root mean

square residual (RMR) is 0.052, which is less than 0.08, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.047, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.051, which is less than 0.08. Each fitting index conforms to the general research standards, so the model fit is good.

Table 4.16 Model Fit Index of This Research

Fit index	Standard	Value	Fitting situation
CMIN	——	2228.902	——
DF	——	1118	——
CMIN/DF	<3	1.994	Good
RMR	<0.08	0.052	Good
GFI	>0.9	0.826	Acceptable
AGFI	>0.9	0.810	Acceptable
NFI	>0.9	0.874	Acceptable
IFI	>0.9	0.933	Good
TLI	>0.9	0.929	Good
CFI	>0.9	0.932	Good
RMSEA	<0.08	0.047	Good
SRMR	<0.08	0.051	Good

Source: Elaborated by this research.

Table 4.17 summarizes the results obtained from the path coefficient analysis. Perceived organizational support significantly affects creativity (β= 0.269, $p < 0.001$), so hypothesis 1 is supported. Proactive personality has a significant positive effect on creativity (β= 0.473, $p < 0.001$), so hypothesis 2 is supported. Perceived organizational support has a significant positive effect on proactive personality (β= 0.658, $p < 0.001$), so hypothesis 3 is supported. Perceived organizational support has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions (β= 0.160, $p < 0.01$), so hypothesis 4 is supported. Perceived organizational support has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial behavior (β= 0.218, $p < 0.001$), so hypothesis 5 is supported. Proactive personality has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions (β= 0.059, $p > 0.05$), so hypothesis 6 is not supported. Proactive personality has no significant effect on entrepreneurial behavior (β= 0.387, $p < 0.001$), so hypothesis 7 is supported. Creativity has a significant positive effect

on entrepreneurial intentions (β= 0.062, p < 0.001), so hypothesis 8 is supported. Entrepreneurial intentions has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial behavior (β= 0.047, p < 0.01), so hypothesis 9 is supported.

Table 4.17 Path Coefficient of the Research Model

Hypothesis	Path hypothesis			Path coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Test results
H1	CRE	<--	POS	0.269	0.049	5.465	***	Supported
H2	CRE	<--	PP	0.473	0.051	9.353	***	Supported
H3	PP	<--	POS	0.658	0.052	12.705	***	Supported
H4	EI	<--	POS	0.160	0.052	3.082	**	Supported
H5	EB	<--	POS	0.218	0.047	4.640	***	Supported
H6	EI	<--	PP	0.059	0.055	1.083	0.279	Not Supported
H7	EB	<--	PP	0.387	0.048	8.126	***	Supported
H8	EI	<--	CRE	0.540	0.062	8.658	***	Supported
H9	EB	<--	EI	0.354	0.047	7.527	**	Supported

Note.**: p < 0.01; ***: p < 0.001

POS: Perceived Organizational Support; CRE: Creativity; PP: Proactive Personality; EI: Entrepreneurial Intentions; EB: Entrepreneurial Behavior.

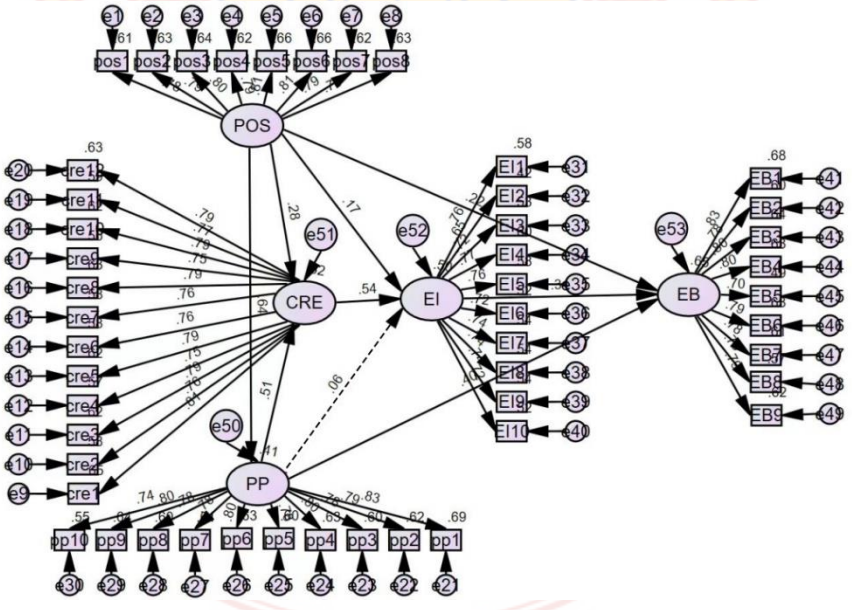


Figure 4.6 Structural Equation Model – SEM

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 outlines two key research questions and their objectives, followed by analysis of findings in comparison with existing literature, highlighting both consistencies and new insights. The chapter also explores the theoretical and practical implications, contributing to the improvement of existing models and offering actionable recommendations for professionals. A critical assessment of the study's limitations is provided, suggesting areas for further research or additional data. Finally, directions for future research are proposed to address unresolved issues and extend the study’s contributions.

The first key finding of this study indicates that perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention are critical factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. Each factor plays a distinct role in shaping entrepreneurial behavior, but together they provide substantial support for students' entrepreneurial motivation, capabilities, and confidence, facilitating the realization of entrepreneurial actions.

Firstly, the importance of perceived organizational support lies not only in providing university policies and financial aid but also in fostering a sense of psychological safety and belonging among students. Eisenberger et al. suggest that organizational support enhances individuals' trust in external environments, boosting their entrepreneurial confidence and making them more willing to take risks and step outside their comfort zone (Eisenberger et al., 2002). In Guizhou Province, many university students face challenges such as limited resources and a complex market environment. Perceiving support from universities, governments, or society equips them with more information, funding, and networking opportunities, giving them the courage to pursue entrepreneurial activities. This support helps entrepreneurs overcome obstacles like financial constraints and market uncertainties, bolstering their confidence and motivating them to take action. The role of perceived organizational support in entrepreneurial

behavior has been further validated by international studies. The results of this study are consistent with previous findings, which, through surveys of university entrepreneurs in multiple countries, revealed that support from universities, society, and governments not only provides essential entrepreneurial resources but also enhances students' psychological safety and creativity, encouraging them to engage more actively in entrepreneurship (Wang & Chebo, 2021). This aligns with the research of Park et al., who found that the stronger the more positive the entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors of university students (Park et al., 2020).

Secondly, the influence of proactive personality on entrepreneurial behavior stems from the fact that proactive individuals are more capable of identifying opportunities and solving problems. This study's results are consistent with earlier research, as Crant pointed out that proactive individuals can actively recognize market needs and create opportunities rather than waiting for environmental changes (Zhenyuan Wang, 2021). They tend to quickly adapt to change and take innovative measures to address various challenges in entrepreneurship. For university students in Guizhou, especially in a highly competitive entrepreneurial environment, a proactive personality enables them to seize opportunities quickly and experiment with new models and approaches, thereby increasing their chances of entrepreneurial success. Additionally, a proactive personality helps them maintain confidence and perseverance in the face of failure or setbacks, enabling them to find suitable entrepreneurial paths through repeated trial and error. The impact of a proactive personality has also been widely recognized across different cultural contexts. Bajaba et al. found that proactive individuals are more likely to engage in innovative thinking and action, making them better equipped to handle challenges in entrepreneurship (Bajaba et al., 2021). Gielnik et al. further highlighted a direct relationship between proactive personality and entrepreneurial success, with highly proactive individuals better able to identify market opportunities and make swift decisions, especially under resource constraints (Gielnik et al., 2020b).

Creativity is also a key driver of entrepreneurial behavior, as entrepreneurship is inherently an innovative process requiring individuals to identify problems and propose novel solutions. Amabile emphasized that creativity is not only the source of product or service innovation but also a core capability for solving complex problems in the entrepreneurial process (Amabile, 1983). In a region like Guizhou, where resources are

relatively scarce, university entrepreneurs need to rely on innovation to compensate for resource limitations. Creativity enables them to design unique business models, products, or services, breaking through market constraints and standing out in a competitive environment. Furthermore, creativity drives entrepreneurs to continuously refine their plans, ensuring the feasibility and innovation of their business strategies, ultimately leading to entrepreneurial success. This study's findings are in line with previous research, and recent studies have also stressed the critical role of creativity in entrepreneurship. Zhao and Wang (2022) found that creativity significantly contributes to entrepreneurial innovation among university students, especially in resource-constrained contexts, helping them develop unique business models and increase market competitiveness (Zhao & Wang, 2022). Additionally, Liu et al. demonstrated that creativity helps students effectively address uncertainties and solve practical challenges during the entrepreneurial process, thereby increasing the likelihood of success (Liu et al., 2021).

Finally, entrepreneurial intention is a direct driving force behind actual entrepreneurial behavior. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, intention is the strongest predictor of individual behavior. Entrepreneurial intention among university students reflects not only their desire to start a business but also their commitment to entrepreneurial goals and their determination to achieve them. Students in Guizhou with strong entrepreneurial intentions are more likely to prepare for future entrepreneurial actions by accessing organizational resources, learning relevant skills, and building social networks. Furthermore, entrepreneurial intention drives them to persist in their entrepreneurial aspirations even when faced with external pressures or uncertainties, ultimately translating intention into action. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research, which has been widely discussed in international literature. Schlaegel and Koenig's (2019) meta-analysis confirmed that the positive relationship between entrepreneurial intention and behavior has been validated across different cultural contexts, with individuals possessing stronger intentions being more likely to take actual entrepreneurial actions (Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014). Shirokova et al. (2020) further pointed out in a cross-national study that entrepreneurial intention is influenced not only by proactive personality but also by external environmental and social support, which aligns with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (Shirokova et al., 2020).

These factors are critical to university students' entrepreneurial behavior because they collectively provide a comprehensive support system through different pathways. Perceived organizational support enhances students' ability to access external resources and boosts their confidence, proactive personality improves their ability to identify opportunities and tackle challenges, creativity helps them find innovative solutions, and entrepreneurial intention drives the translation of ideas into action. These four factors work together to form an integrated system, helping university students in Guizhou navigate the complex entrepreneurial environment and achieve entrepreneurial success. These findings not only enrich existing theories on entrepreneurial behavior but also offer empirical evidence and guidance for how governments, universities, and educational institutions can better support student entrepreneurship.

The findings of this study's second research objective indicate that perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. Based on the results, the relationships among perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention were validated, with most hypotheses being supported, thus reinforcing the theoretical models in existing literature. However, some hypotheses were not confirmed, and these unexpected results provide valuable opportunities for further academic discussion.

First, H1 (perceived organizational support has a significant positive impact on creativity) and H2 (proactive personality has a significant positive impact on creativity) were both supported. The results indicate that perceived organizational support not only provides material resources but also creates an environment conducive to creativity, enhancing individuals' innovative capabilities. This is consistent with Eisenberger et al., who demonstrated that individuals perceiving organizational support are more likely to exhibit high levels of creativity (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Moreover, individuals with proactive personalities tend to explore new opportunities, propose novel solutions, and generate innovative ideas, as also verified by Bajaba et al., who highlighted that proactive personality fosters creativity. These findings align with previous studies, further affirming the positive role of perceived organizational support and proactive personality in enhancing creativity during entrepreneurial processes (Bajaba et al., 2021). University students who perceive organizational support not only access essential resources and

information but also experience encouragement and recognition, stimulating their creative potential. Additionally, students with proactive personalities actively explore opportunities and propose innovative ideas, which enhances their ability to tackle challenges and solve problems during entrepreneurship.

This study not only validates the predictive roles of perceived organizational support and proactive personality as outlined in the Theory of Planned Behavior but also underscores their significance for student creativity within China's cultural and social context. The findings offer valuable insights for universities, entrepreneurial support organizations, and policymakers, suggesting that efforts to foster student entrepreneurship should focus not only on cultivating individual proactivity and creativity but also on strengthening external support systems to create a more favorable entrepreneurial environment.

Second, hypothesis 3 (H3:perceived organizational support has a significant positive impact on proactive personality) was also validated. Perceived organizational support enhances individuals' confidence and sense of belonging, prompting them to respond proactively to challenges and seize opportunities, aligning with (Crant, 1996) theory. This study confirms that in entrepreneurial contexts, organizational support can motivate individuals to act more proactively. Specifically, perceiving organizationally provided resources, support, and recognition increases students' willingness to confront challenges during entrepreneurship, encouraging them to act decisively and seize entrepreneurial opportunities.

This emphasizes the critical role of organizational support systems in fostering proactive personality traits among students, demonstrating that providing adequate support in entrepreneurial education and practice effectively promotes proactive behavior, thereby energizing the entrepreneurial process. This finding provides practical guidance for universities and entrepreneurial support organizations in designing entrepreneurial projects and cultivating entrepreneurial spirit.

Hypotheses 4 (H4 perceived organizational support has a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention) and H5 (perceived organizational support has a positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior) were also supported. The findings indicate that organizational support enhances students' self-efficacy and resource acquisition, directly facilitating the development of entrepreneurial intention and the implementation of entrepreneurial

behavior. This aligns with the work of Kim and Park, further validating perceived organizational support as a key factor driving university students' entrepreneurial activities (Park & Kim, 2020).

Perceived organizational support is widely recognized in educational management research as a critical factor influencing individual behavior. When individuals perceive organizational support, they often demonstrate higher motivation and stronger behavioral performance. Recent studies also show that perceived organizational support significantly enhances both work performance and entrepreneurial intention and behavior (Zhao et al., 2020). For university students, perceiving resources and encouragement from schools or entrepreneurial support organizations effectively boosts their entrepreneurial confidence, driving entrepreneurial actions.

Li et al. (2022) found that university students who perceive entrepreneurial support and policy incentives from schools are more likely to translate entrepreneurial intentions into actual behavior, consistent with this study's findings. However, hypothesis H6 (proactive personality has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention) was not supported. This finding contradicts numerous existing studies (Bateman & Crant, 1999; Crant & Bateman, 2000), which generally consider proactive personality a critical predictor of entrepreneurial intention. The core trait of proactive personality—actively seeking opportunities and taking action—is usually regarded as a key driver of entrepreneurial intention. However, the lack of support for this hypothesis warrants further discussion.

One possible explanation is the influence of cultural background. In China, particularly in relatively underdeveloped regions like Guizhou, students' entrepreneurial intentions may be more strongly shaped by external environmental factors, such as policy support, social networks, and entrepreneurial resources, rather than by individual proactive personality traits. This contrasts with Western cultures, which emphasize individual independence and proactivity, whereas Chinese students may rely more on social support and government resources during entrepreneurship (Si et al., 2022).

Therefore, the insignificant relationship between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention in this study may reflect the greater importance of organizational support systems in shaping entrepreneurial intention under specific cultural and socioeconomic conditions.

Although hypothesis H6 was not supported, the study still found that hypothesis H7 (perceived organizational support has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention) holds true, emphasizing the critical role of external environmental factors in entrepreneurial behavior. Factors related to perceived organizational support, such as entrepreneurial education platforms, mentorship, and financial support, may play a more pivotal role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among Chinese students.

Thus, while this study did not confirm the impact of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention, it underscores the significance of external support in fostering entrepreneurial intention and behavior among students under specific cultural and social contexts. This finding provides key insights for policymakers and entrepreneurial support organizations, suggesting that efforts to promote student entrepreneurship should focus on building robust external support systems rather than relying solely on intrinsic individual traits. The lack of a significant effect of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention among university students in Guizhou can be attributed to several factors. The region's underdeveloped entrepreneurial ecosystem limits opportunities and resources for proactive students. Socio-cultural norms favor stable employment over risk-taking, undermining the motivational impact of proactive traits. Additionally, a lack of critical resources, such as funding and mentorship, further limits entrepreneurial engagement. The practical shortcomings of local entrepreneurship education hinder students in applying their proactive traits. Cultural factors, such as collectivism and risk aversion, may also suppress proactive behavior. Lastly, the strong influence of external support systems may overshadow the impact of individual personality, reducing the significance of proactive traits in shaping entrepreneurial intentions.

This result does not imply that proactive personality is universally unimportant but rather highlights the interplay between individual traits and external environmental factors in shaping entrepreneurial intention under different cultural and social contexts. Future research could explore how cultural differences, social support systems, and other contextual factors jointly influence entrepreneurial intention and behavior, particularly in rapidly developing regions like China.

Hypothesis 8 (H8: creativity has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention) was supported, demonstrating the critical role of creativity in shaping entrepreneurial intention. Creativity enables individuals to design novel business models

and inspires entrepreneurial motivation. This aligns with Zhao and Wang's findings, which emphasize the importance of creativity in entrepreneurship, particularly in problem-solving and product or service innovation(Zhao & Wang, 2022). Recent studies further confirm that students' creativity not only fosters entrepreneurial intention but also enhances their ability to tackle complex problems(Shen et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 9 (H9: entrepreneurial intention has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior) was also validated, further confirming Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991), which posits intention as the primary predictor of behavior. Students with strong entrepreneurial intentions are more likely to take concrete actions and implement entrepreneurial plans.

In conclusion, this study confirmed most hypotheses, aligning with existing research, particularly regarding the impacts of perceived organizational support, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention on entrepreneurial behavior. However, the lack of support for the influence of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention suggests cultural and environmental factors may play a more prominent role in shaping intentions under specific contexts.

5.1 Implication Theories

This study, through an empirical analysis of entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, validates and extends the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in this field. First, the results show that perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention are key factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior. Second, perceived organizational support, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention have a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. These findings not only support the predictive role of entrepreneurial intention on entrepreneurial behavior within the TPB framework but also extend the traditional TPB model by incorporating perceived organizational support as an external environmental variable. This addition highlights the critical role of organizational support in stimulating entrepreneurial intention and behavior among university students. Similar studies have also indicated that external support systems (e.g., business incubators, educational resources) can significantly enhance individuals' entrepreneurial confidence and increase the likelihood

of behavior implementation (Yi et al., 2021). Therefore, this study enriches the TPB model and suggests that research on entrepreneurial behavior should consider the interaction between individual characteristics (proactive personality) and external environments (perceived organizational support), providing a more comprehensive theoretical framework for academic research.

In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of individual characteristics, such as proactive personality and creativity, in the formation of entrepreneurial intention. Recent studies (Crant & Bateman, 2000; Gielnik et al., 2020a) have confirmed that proactive personality and creativity are key traits for entrepreneurial success, effectively enabling individuals to identify entrepreneurial opportunities and take action. The findings of this study further validate this theory, showing that university students with strong proactive personality traits are more likely to transform entrepreneurial intentions into actual entrepreneurial behavior. The study also found a significant positive correlation between creativity and entrepreneurial intention, highlighting the importance of innovative thinking in the entrepreneurial process. This is consistent with the findings of Shane and Yang & Zhang (Shane, 2000; Yang et al., 2021). Therefore, this study not only theoretically validates the psychological basis of entrepreneurial intention but also emphasizes the roles of external organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention in driving entrepreneurial behavior. By integrating these factors, this study provides a more comprehensive perspective on understanding the formation of entrepreneurial behavior among university students.

This study provides meaningful theoretical implications by extending the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) within the context of university student entrepreneurship, while also offering important insights for educational management. TPB traditionally emphasizes that entrepreneurial behavior is guided by intention, which in turn is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). However, the findings of this research suggest that the TPB framework can be effectively enriched by incorporating university organizational and personality-based variables—providing a more comprehensive model particularly relevant for education managers and policymakers. First, the integration of perceived university support into the TPB framework highlights the critical role of the university as an enabling organization. The findings reveal that when students perceive strong support from university organizations—

such as access to entrepreneurship programs, resources, mentor-ship, and a positive innovation culture—they are more likely to form entrepreneurial intentions and act on them. For educational managers, this emphasizes the strategic importance of developing university organizational structures that promote entrepreneurship, such as business incubators, interdisciplinary innovation hubs, and targeted funding schemes. Thus, perceived university support functions not only as an external environmental factor but also as a lever for educational policy and campus-wide strategic planning. Second, the incorporation of proactive personality and creativity into the extended TPB model reflects the importance of nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets through curriculum and extracurricular programming. As personal traits significantly influence entrepreneurial intention and behavior, university educational managers should consider embedding opportunities for creative thinking, initiative-taking, and problem-solving across various disciplines—not only within business schools. The study's results suggest that entrepreneurial traits can be identified and supported through education, further reinforcing the role of education management in shaping student development. Third, this study underscores the interaction between individual traits and university organizational environments, implying that entrepreneurial behavior arises not in isolation, but through the alignment of student dispositions and support mechanisms provided by university organizations. For educational managers, this points to the need for a more systemic, holistic approach in entrepreneurship education—one that combines individual-level development (e.g., soft skills training) with structural support (e.g., accessible entrepreneurship resources and inclusive innovation policies).

This study effectively extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by incorporating creativity and proactive personality. While TPB traditionally emphasizes attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, the study finds that proactive personality and creativity, as intrinsic traits, directly drive the formation of entrepreneurial intention and behavior. Thus, the inclusion of proactive personality and creativity enriches the TPB model, highlighting the role of individual traits in entrepreneurial behavior. Additionally, perceived organizational support, as an external environmental factor, significantly influences entrepreneurial intention, further expanding the TPB framework and revealing the key role of external support systems in promoting entrepreneurial behavior. In conclusion, this study provides a more comprehensive perspective for TPB,

emphasizing the interaction between individual traits and external support, offering a new theoretical foundation for future research on entrepreneurial behavior.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), this study further deepens the understanding of entrepreneurial behavior. SCT emphasizes that individual behavior is influenced not only by personal cognitive and emotional factors but also by the external environment. In this study, proactive personality and creativity, as individual factors, and perceived organizational support, as an environmental factor, provide external incentives and resources, enhancing students' self-confidence and intention to act. By incorporating SCT into the study of entrepreneurial behavior, this research highlights the interactive relationship between individual factors and environmental factors, particularly in the context of university students, where intrinsic characteristics and external support systems jointly facilitate the formation of entrepreneurial behavior. This extension provides a more comprehensive theoretical framework for entrepreneurial behavior research, further validating the dynamic interplay between individual, environmental, and behavioral factors.

In summary, by extending TPB and SCT through the lens of educational management, this study offers a theoretically grounded and practically relevant framework for understanding and promoting entrepreneurship among university students. It encourages educational leaders to recognize the interdependent roles of personal traits and university organizational support, and to design educational environments that actively foster both. This integrated approach can inform evidence-based decision-making in entrepreneurship education management, contributing to more effective strategies for cultivating future entrepreneurs in higher education.

The study initially employed qualitative research methods, using interviews to explore factors influencing entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. The qualitative research provides a unique perspective on how perceived organizational support, individual creativity, and proactive personality influence entrepreneurial behavior in specific contexts. This level of in-depth analysis is difficult to capture through quantitative research alone. By combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study not only provides empirical support based on large-scale data but also examines the internal mechanisms of entrepreneurial behavior from the perspective of individual experiences. This mixed-methods approach effectively addresses

the limitations of single-method research, offering a more comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding entrepreneurial behavior and providing multidimensional insights for future research in this field.

In the quantitative research phase, structured questionnaires were used to collect a large sample of data, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to validate the relationships among perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention. This further explored the predictive effects of these factors on entrepreneurial behavior. The quantitative analysis not only provides robust statistical support, verifying the applicability of the TPB to entrepreneurial behavior among university students, but also offers empirical evidence for understanding the factors related to entrepreneurial intention. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, this study deepens the understanding of entrepreneurial behavior and its psychological mechanisms among university students and provides new perspectives for future research directions.

5.2 Implication Practitioners

The findings of this study provide actionable insights to enhance entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province, with a particular focus on perceived organizational support, creativity, proactive personality, and entrepreneurial intention. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed for university administrators, policymakers, entrepreneurial support platforms, and other relevant stakeholders to foster a more supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem:

First, enhancing perceived organizational support among university students is critical, as it has been shown to significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior. To achieve this, education administrators and policymakers should prioritize the creation of a robust, resource-rich entrepreneurial ecosystem. Specific strategies include: strengthening entrepreneurial education and resource support by designing diverse entrepreneurial curricula that go beyond theoretical knowledge to emphasize practical skills and innovative thinking. Universities should provide ample resources, such as funding, shared work-spaces, and advanced technological tools, to support students at every stage of their entrepreneurial journey, from idea conception to project execution. Additionally, establishing a structured mentor-ship system that involves experienced entrepreneurial

mentors can provide personalized guidance, help students clarify entrepreneurial goals, and address practical challenges. Mentors not only serve as technical advisors but also as motivators, fostering students' resilience and proactiveness in navigating complex entrepreneurial processes. Furthermore, universities should collaborate with local governments, businesses, and entrepreneurial incubators to create a diversified network of support. This collaboration enables students to access tangible societal resources and encouragement, improving the feasibility and success rates of their ventures. Lastly, policymakers should enhance the promotion and implementation of entrepreneurial policies, particularly those offering funding, tax incentives, and financial aid. Effective policy communication raises awareness among students and reduces the psychological and financial pressures associated with starting a business.

Second, fostering creativity among university students is essential, given its pivotal role in entrepreneurial intention and behavior. Educators and policymakers should emphasize developing students' innovative capabilities through various approaches: creating an innovation-driven campus environment by establishing innovation labs, entrepreneurship workshops, and creative competitions. These initiatives encourage active student participation in practical innovation activities, enhancing their problem-solving and innovative thinking skills. Hosting regular innovation salons and lectures can further expose students to cutting-edge entrepreneurial ideas and emerging technologies. Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration is another effective strategy, as it allows students from diverse academic backgrounds to pool expertise and address innovative challenges. Interdisciplinary engagement broadens perspectives, enhances creativity, and fosters critical thinking. Finally, integrating training in critical thinking and problem-solving into educational curricula can empower students to analyze problems from multiple perspectives and develop innovative solutions. Methods such as case studies, brainstorming, and design-thinking exercises are particularly effective in cultivating these skills.

Third, shaping proactive personality traits among university students is crucial for fostering entrepreneurial behavior, even though the direct link between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention was not confirmed in this study. Proactive personality still positively influences entrepreneurial outcomes, and relevant institutions should adopt targeted strategies to develop these traits: encouraging self-driven learning

and action through extracurricular activities, social practice, and volunteer work to cultivate students' intrinsic motivation and problem-solving skills. Teamwork and leadership training further equip students to proactively tackle challenges. Providing authentic entrepreneurial practice opportunities, such as internships, innovation projects, and business incubators, enables students to experience real-world entrepreneurial successes and failures, fostering their ability to identify and address challenges independently. Moreover, strengthening psychological resilience and confidence through counseling services and stress management workshops can help students overcome entrepreneurial anxiety and uncertainties, fostering persistence and determination.

Finally, stimulating entrepreneurial intention is imperative, as it directly precedes entrepreneurial behavior. This study identifies factors such as perceived organizational support and creativity as significant drivers of entrepreneurial intention. Educators and policymakers can adopt the following strategies to enhance entrepreneurial intention: designing entrepreneurial education programs that are not only theoretically robust but also practically oriented, enabling students to gain hands-on experience through simulations, competitions, and direct involvement in entrepreneurial projects. Encouraging innovation and risk-taking through classroom discussions of successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurial case studies helps students develop a balanced perspective on risks and opportunities, fostering an enterprising mindset. Additionally, raising students' awareness of entrepreneurship through seminars, workshops, and promotional activities can improve their understanding of entrepreneurial processes, resources, and opportunities. Universities and governments should facilitate access to entrepreneurial competitions and platforms where students can showcase their potential and learn from real-world success stories, thus igniting their entrepreneurial passion.

In conclusion, this study offers practical and effective strategies to enhance entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou Province by focusing on key factors such as perceived organizational support, creativity, proactive personality, and entrepreneurial intention. These recommendations aim to create a comprehensive and supportive framework for student entrepreneurship through optimized educational systems, strengthened policy support, and the integration of societal resources. Collaboration among university administrators, policymakers, and entrepreneurial support platforms is essential for improving the entrepreneurial ecosystem for university students.

The proposed strategies not only promote entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Guizhou but also provide valuable insights for other regions, especially those with underdeveloped economies. By fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, building an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, and reducing barriers, these measures can cultivate a new generation of innovative and capable entrepreneurs. This, in turn, will foster a dynamic and inclusive entrepreneurial culture, contributing fresh momentum to regional and national economic development.

5.3 Limitations of Study and Implication of Future Research

Despite providing valuable insights into the entrepreneurial behavior of university students in Guizhou Province, this study has certain limitations that may affect the generalizability and interpretability of its findings. First, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. While this approach offers a more comprehensive perspective, qualitative interviews may be influenced by the personal experiences and perceptions of respondents, as well as the subjective judgments of interviewers, potentially limiting the generalizability and interpretability of the data. Second, the sample was limited to university students from certain higher education institutions in Guizhou Province, which may restrict the external validity of the findings. Differences in economic development levels and entrepreneurial support policies between Guizhou and other regions could affect the applicability of the results. Future research should consider expanding the sample to include more regions and diverse types of universities to validate the findings across different socioeconomic contexts.

Additionally, this study focused on the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention and behavior without deeply exploring specific challenges and barriers in the entrepreneurial process, such as fundraising, market entry, and relationship management. Investigating these aspects would help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of university students' entrepreneurial activities, particularly during the practical implementation phase. Furthermore, the use of cross-sectional data in this study limits its ability to reveal the dynamic evolution of causal relationships, especially the interactions among perceived organizational support, creativity, proactive personality, and entrepreneurial intention. Longitudinal studies are recommended to track the development

of students' entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors, thereby verifying the causal relationships and their dynamic changes over time.

Moreover, this study relied heavily on self-reported data from university students, which may be subject to social desirability and recall biases, potentially affecting the objectivity and accuracy of the data. Future research could integrate behavioral data or physiological indicators to enhance the reliability of findings. Since entrepreneurial behavior is a complex, multi-layered concept involving factors such as innovation, opportunity recognition, and resource integration, future studies should adopt a broader perspective to explore these dimensions, particularly those directly influencing entrepreneurial actions.

Future research could explore the impact of other variables on entrepreneurial behavior among university students, particularly in the context of the current era of artificial intelligence (AI). As AI continues to transform industries and create new business opportunities, it is crucial to investigate how technological advancements, such as AI, influence students' entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors. Exploring factors like digital literacy, AI-driven innovation, and the role of AI in shaping entrepreneurial opportunities could provide valuable insights into how future entrepreneurs adapt to and leverage these technologies. Furthermore, examining the intersection of AI and entrepreneurship could offer new perspectives on the skills and resources students need to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven business environment.

Finally, the study did not differentiate students based on their academic disciplines, although entrepreneurial intentions, behaviors, and challenges may vary significantly across disciplines. For instance, students in STEM fields may focus more on technological innovation, while those in humanities may emphasize social enterprises or cultural industries, and students in arts may lean toward media-related entrepreneurship. Future research could examine entrepreneurial behaviors from the perspective of academic disciplines, comparing how different academic backgrounds influence entrepreneurial intentions, decision-making processes, and access to resources.

In conclusion, while this study has certain limitations, it also provides opportunities for future research to refine and extend its findings. By optimizing research design, expanding sample diversity, and exploring additional factors influencing entrepreneurial

behavior, subsequent studies can offer more comprehensive theoretical insights and practical guidance to advance university student entrepreneurship.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire (English Version)

Appendix A. Questionnaire (English Version)



Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship

Of Rajamangala University of Technology, Rattanakosin

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1. Basic personal information

Your gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

Your field of study:

☐ Humanities

☐ Science

Your educational_background:

☐ First Year ☐ Second Year

☐ Third Year ☐ Fourth Year

What is your duration of entrepreneurial experience?

☐ Less than one year

☐ 1-2 years

☐ More than 2 years but less than 3 years

☐ More than 3 years but less than 4 years

2. Scale items

Please tick the corresponding boxes, 1 means totally disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means neutral, 4 means agree, and 5 means totally agree.

Variables	Items	1	2	3	4	5
Perceived organizational support	1. My university values my contribution to its well-being.					
	2. My university strongly considers my goals and values.					
	3. My university really cares about my well-being.					
	4. My university is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my studies to the best of my ability.					
	5. My university is willing to help me when I need a special favor.					
	6. My university cares about my opinions.					
	7. My university takes pride in my accomplishments in my studies.					
	8. My university tries to make my studies as interesting as possible.					
Proactive Personality	1. I am always looking for new ways to improve my life.					
	2. Wherever I go, I am a powerful force for constructive change.					
	3. There is nothing more exciting than seeing my ideas become a reality.					
	4. If I see something I don't like, I will fix it.					
	5. No matter how unlikely, if I believe in something, I will make it happen.					
	6. I enjoy being an advocate for my ideas, even if it means going against others' opinions.					
	7. I am good at spotting opportunities.					

Variables	Items	1	2	3	4	5
	8. I am always looking for better ways to do things.					
	9. If I believe in an idea, nothing will stop me from making it happen.					
	10. I can spot good opportunities before others do.					
Creativity	1. I can plan innovative entrepreneurial activities.					
	2. I can plan entrepreneurial activities with my characteristics.					
	3. I can plan stimulating entrepreneurial activities.					
	4. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are ingenious.					
	5. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are unique.					
	6. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are to guide the market.					
	7. I understand customers' needs.					
	8. I adapt practices flexibly to the changes.					
	9. I consider preferences in the consumer market.					
	10. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are to meet customers' goals.					
	11. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan can be adapted to different situations.					
	12. Entrepreneurial activities that I plan are recognized in the consumer market.					
Entrepreneurial Intentions	1. I intend to start your own company in the future.					
	2. I carefully plan your future.					
	3. I read business newspapers.					
	4. I am seeking entrepreneurial opportunities.					
	5. I read financial planning books.					
	6. Isave money to start a business.					

Variables	Items	1	2	3	4	5
	7. I do read books on how to start a company.					
	8. I carefully plan your financial situation.					
	9. I have plans to start your own business.					
	10. I spend time learning how to start a company.					
Entrepreneurial Behavior	1. I believe in taking a lot of time to think about starting a business.					
	2. I prefer organizing a team to startup a business.					
	3. I believe in defining market opportunities.					
	4. I believe in preparing business plans for any business idea.					
	5. I prefer registering and creating a legal entity.					
	6. I believe in saving money to invest in a business.					
	7. I believe in receiving financial support.					
	8. I prefer purchasing or leasing major items, like equipment, facilities or property.					
	9. I believe in developing models or procedures for a product or service.					

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire (Chinese Version)

Appendix B. Questionnaire (Chinese Version)



拉达那哥欣国际创意创业学院

拉加曼加拉理工大学拉达那科欣

一、基本个人信息

您的性别：

☐ 男

☐ 女

您的专业：

☐ 文科

☐ 理科

您的教育背景：

☐ 大一　　☐ 大二

☐ 大三　　☐ 大四

您的创业年限：

☐ 1 年以内　　☐ 1-2 年

☐ 2 年以上 3 年以内　　☐ 3 年以上 4 年以内

二、量表题项

请在相应的方框里打勾，1 表示完全不同意，2 表示不同意，3 表示中立，4 表示同意，5 表示完全同意。

变量	题项	1	2	3	4	5
感知组织支持	1. 我的大学重视我对其幸福感的贡献。					
	2. 我的大学非常关注我的个人目标和价值观。					
	3. 我的大学真正关心我的幸福感。					
	4. 我的大学愿意尽量帮我发挥最佳学习能力。					
	5. 我的大学在我需要特殊帮助时愿意提供支持。					
	6. 我的大学关心我的意见。					
	7. 我的大学以我在学习中的成就感到自豪。					
	8. 我的大学努力使我的学习尽可能有趣。					
主动性人格	1. 我总是在寻找改善生活的新方法。					
	2. 无论在哪我都有积极推动建设性变革的力量。					
	3. 没什么比看到我的想法变成现实更令我兴奋。					
	4. 如果我遇到不喜欢的事，我会调整它。					
	5. 无论可能性如何，只要我相信某件事，我都会让它成为现实。					
	6. 我喜欢为自己的想法而战，即使遭到他人反对。					
	7. 我善于发现机会。					
	8. 我一直在寻找更好的做事方式。					
	9. 如果我相信一个想法，那就没有任何事情能阻止我使它实现。					
	10. 我能比其他人更早地发现好的机会。					

变量	题项	1	2	3	4	5
创造力	1. 我能策划创新的创业活动。					
	2. 我能策划具有特色的创业活动。					
	3. 我能策划刺激的创业活动。					
	4. 我策划的创业活动非常巧妙。					
	5. 我策划的创业活动非常独特。					
	6. 我策划的创业活动是为了引导市场。					
	7. 我理解客户的需求。					
	8. 我能灵活应对变化。					
	9. 我能考虑消费者市场的偏好。					
	10. 我策划的创业活动是为了满足客户的目标。					
	11. 我策划的创业活动能适应不同的情况。					
	12. 我策划的创业活动在消费者市场得到认可。					
创业意向	1 .我打算将来自己创办公司。					
	1. 我仔细规划自己的未来。					
	2. 我会读商业报纸。					
	3. 我正在寻找创业机会。					
	4. 我会读理财规划书籍。					
	5. 我在存钱创业。					
	6. 我读过关于如何创办公司的文章。					
	7. 我仔细规划自己的财务状况。					
	8. 我有创办自己公司的计划。					
	9. 我花时间学习如何创办公司。					

变量	题项	1	2	3	4	5
创业行为	1. 我认为在开始一个业务之前花大量时间思考是有必要的。					
	2. 我更喜欢组建一个团队来创办业务。					
	3. 我认为定义市场机会是重要的。					
	4. 我认为为任何业务理念准备商业计划有必要。					
	5. 我更喜欢注册并创建一个法人实体。					
	6. 我认为节省资金以投资业务是必要的。					
	7. 我认为接受财务支持是重要的。					
	8. 我更喜欢购买或租赁重要物品，如设备、设施或房产。					
	9. 我认为为产品或服务开发模型或程序是必要。					

APPENDIX C

Publication of Journal during Ph.D. Study

APPENDIX C. Publication of Journal during Ph.D. Study

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Full Length Research Paper

Born or made? The role of organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity in shaping entrepreneurial intentions

Wang Fang and Jirawan Deeprasert*

Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosi, Salaya, Nakhon Pathom, 73170, Thailand.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity in shaping university students' entrepreneurial intentions. Through a questionnaire survey conducted with 456 undergraduate students from three universities in Guizhou Province, we collected data on students' entrepreneurial intentions and analyzed the impact of perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity on their entrepreneurial intentions. The findings reveal that perceived organizational support has a significant positive effect on students' creativity, and proactive personality also significantly enhances creativity. Furthermore, perceived organizational support positively influences both proactive personality and entrepreneurial intentions, while creativity has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Through data analysis of the relationships between these variables, this study provides valuable insights for educational administrators, emphasizing the importance of creating a supportive environment and fostering creative thinking in cultivating entrepreneurial awareness and intentions. The findings offer theoretical foundations and practical recommendations for future entrepreneurial education and support policies in the field of education.

Keywords: Creativity, entrepreneurial intentions, perceived organizational support, proactive personality, university students.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: jirawan.dee@rmutr.ac.th.

INTRODUCTION

With the continuous increase in the number of university graduates in China, the issue of student employment has become increasingly pressing. In 2022, the number of university graduates reached 10.76 million, setting a historic high and intensifying employment pressures. In this context, entrepreneurship is regarded as an effective means to alleviate these employment challenges. Entrepreneurship not only drives economic growth and innovation but also facilitates structural economic adjustments, reduces regional wealth disparities, and addresses issues related to employment and poverty (Stoica et al., 2020; Zainea et al., 2020). To encourage more students to engage in entrepreneurial activities, fostering entrepreneurial intention is of paramount importance. Entrepreneurial intention is a stable predictor of entrepreneurial behaviour (Abbasianchavari and Moritz, 2021; Nakara et al., 2020) and serves as a key driving force behind entrepreneurial action (Gieure et al., 2020). Thus, enhancing the entrepreneurial intention of university students is essential for promoting entrepreneurial activity

(Adu et al., 2020). Based on previous research findings, perceived organizational support has been shown to significantly enhance university students' entrepreneurial intentions (Saeed et al., 2018). Moreover, perceived organizational support has been found to positively influence proactive personality traits (Kanten and Ulker, 2012). Proactive personality is defined as a disposition's tendency to take initiative, persist in efforts, and actively influence one's behaviour and environment when facing various situations in learning, life, and career development (Kim et al., 2009; Seibert et al., 1999). Moreover, previous studies have identified the influence of perceived organizational support and proactive personality on entrepreneurial behaviour, few studies have demonstrated that perceived organizational support significantly predicts proactive personality (Kanten and Ulker, 2012). Recent research suggests that perceived organizational support and proactive personality both affect creativity; however, the direct relationship between perceived organizational support and proactive personality remains underexplored (Hidayat et al., 2023). This study aims to address this gap in the literature. Students who perceive organizational support believe that their institution is willing to offer assistance when needed in both work and life, and they feel respected, cared for, and recognised by the organisation. Such supportive environments foster self-direction and self-management, thereby enhancing proactivity (Hashemi et al., 2012).

There is substantial empirical evidence indicating that individuals with proactive personality traits are more likely to possess a stronger sense of autonomy in their work and career (Seibert et al., 1999). This trait manifests in various proactive behaviours, such as actively seeking opportunities and taking initiative. For example, having a proactive personality has been shown to strengthen entrepreneurial intentions (Fuller et al., 2018; Lestari et al., 2022; Luo et al., 2022). Additionally, creativity is often regarded as a key variable influencing entrepreneurial intentions (Li et al., 2022; Shi et al., 2020). From the perspective of the theory of planned behaviour, this study investigates the impact of perceived organizational support on proactive personality. Individuals who perceive organizational support believe that their institution is willing to provide assistance when needed, which makes them feel respected, cared for, and recognised. This support not only enhances their self-direction and self-management abilities, thereby increasing their proactivity, but also fosters a greater sense of perceived behavioural control and positive attitudes, which further promote the formation of entrepreneurial intentions (Hashemi et al., 2012).

Based on these findings, this study aims to explore the relationships between perceived organizational support, creativity, and proactive personality in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. The research delves into how these factors interact to influence individuals' entrepreneurial intentions, revealing the mechanisms through which both internal and external factors contribute to the development of entrepreneurial intentions.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Theory of planned behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) builds on the Theory of Reasoned Action and multi-attribute attitude theory. Initially proposed by Fishbein in 1963, the multi-attribute theory posits that anticipated outcomes influence attitudes, which in turn shape behavioral intentions. Ajzen and Fishbein expanded this concept in 1975, asserting that behavioral intentions are crucial for predicting actions. However, Ajzen later identified limitations, noting that intentions alone do not encompass all factors influencing actual behaviour. To address this, he introduced perceived behavioral control in 1991, forming the TPB, which includes five components: entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention, and behaviour. The model operates in three stages: intentions determine actions; subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived control shape intentions; and beliefs influence the latter three. This study applies TPB to investigate entrepreneurial behaviour among university students in Guizhou Province, linking proactive personality to attitude, creativity to subjective norms, and perceived organizational support to perceived behavioral control. Ultimately, it aims to enhance educational management and entrepreneurial education by examining the relationships among these factors.

Hypotheses development

Relationship between perceived organizational support and creativity

Previous studies have shown that perceived organizational support (POS) has a significant positive impact on creativity (Yang and Zhou, 2022). POS refers to individuals' subjective perceptions of the resources, care, and recognition provided by their organization. In higher education, this support stems not only from teachers and peers but also from the resources and development opportunities offered by the institution. When students perceive high levels of organizational support, their sense of psychological safety and belonging increases, which fosters the emergence of creative thinking (Newton, 2013). Moreover, students who perceive greater support for creativity from their university exhibit stronger creative abilities (Yang and Zhou, 2022). Additionally, POS enhances students' intrinsic motivation, encouraging them to take risks and explore new ideas, which is crucial for the

development of creativity (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). Research further suggests that POS stimulates students' creative potential by providing practical opportunities, such as innovation projects and competitions. Previous studies noted that abundant resources and supportive feedback play a key role in fostering creativity (Huang et al., 2022; Ma and Deeprasert, 2024). Particularly in the face of challenges, organizational support helps students effectively cope with pressure, reducing the fear of failure that may hinder innovation (Shin and Zhou, 2003). Therefore, enhancing students' perceived organizational support is critical to fostering their creativity. This not only contributes to their personal growth but also provides essential guidance for higher education institutions in cultivating future innovators. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis is proposed:

H_1: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on creativity.

Relationship between proactive personality and creativity

In the field of educational management, research has shown that the relationship between proactive personality and creativity is particularly significant, as the proactive traits of educators and administrators can directly influence educational innovation and the improvement of educational quality. Studies focused on creativity have identified proactive personality as a strong predictor of creativity (Alikaj et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2015). Given the complexity of creativity and the influence of social factors on individual creativity (Perry-Smith, 2020), this study explores the relationship between proactive personality and individual creativity within the context of China. Individuals with a proactive personality typically exhibit a strong sense of initiative, which may lead to creative outcomes in the future (Kim et al., 2010). Proactive personality encompasses traits such as self-starting, change-oriented, and visionary characteristics, which contribute to the development of creative thinking and actions during the task completion process (Parker et al., 2010). The collaborative work atmosphere promoted by proactive employees' aids in enhancing both individual and collective creative performances (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2013). In other words, proactive employees enhance cooperation at both individual and team levels by facilitating interpersonal information exchange, sharing ideas, and establishing trust-based relationships with organizational members, all of which are key sources for creative performance. Recent studies have indicated a positive and significant impact of proactive personality on creativity (Alikaj et al., 2021; Chae and Park, 2022). A proactive personality not only stimulates creative teaching in the classroom but also fosters innovation and change at the organizational level within educational institutions. Therefore, based on the aforementioned literature analysis, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_2: Proactive personality has a positive effect on creativity.

Relationship between perceived organizational support and proactive personality

Individuals who perceive organizational support believe that the organisation is willing to extend help not only in work but also in life, fostering a sense of respect, care, and recognition within the organisation. Effective organizational support not only encourages self-direction and self-management but also cultivates a positive mindset, enhancing positivity in both work and life (Hashemi et al., 2012). In educational management, organizational support encompasses not only academic assistance but also care for students' overall development. This support motivates students to explore entrepreneurial opportunities or make autonomous career choices (Hidayat et al., 2023). For educators, perceived organizational support helps strengthen their proactive personality, stimulates innovative thinking, drives educational reform, and improves teaching quality (Kanten and Ulker, 2012). However, although research has demonstrated a relationship between perceived organizational support and proactive personality, there remains limited direct research on this relationship within the field of educational management (Hidayat et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to explore how perceived organizational support influences students' proactive personality in the context of educational management.

H_3: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on proactive personality.

Relationship between perceived organizational support and entrepreneurial intentions

In the field of educational management, the impact of perceived organizational support on students' entrepreneurial intentions is of significant importance. Universities, as sources of innovation and entrepreneurship, can notably enhance students' entrepreneurial awareness and confidence by providing a range of supportive measures, including educational training, entrepreneurial courses, practical opportunities, and mentorship (Hussain and Imran Malik, 2018). Research indicates that university support not only aids students in identifying entrepreneurial opportunities but also stimulates their interest in transforming creative ideas into concrete business plans, especially in the early stages of the entrepreneurial process (Saeed et al., 2018). Perceived organizational support, particularly through the university's investment in entrepreneurial education and

practical opportunities, provides students with a platform for growth and development, thus enhancing their enthusiasm for entrepreneurship (Nasiru et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2022). Additionally, entrepreneurial activities and internship opportunities offered by universities not only improve students' entrepreneurial skills and self-efficacy but also allow them to refine their entrepreneurial abilities in real-world business environments, thereby fostering a clearer entrepreneurial intention (Bergmann et al., 2016; Guerrero et al., 2020). Consequently, a supportive university environment is considered a key driver in the formation of students' entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, this study further proposes the following hypothesis:

H_4: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions.

Relationship between creativity and entrepreneurial intention

In the field of entrepreneurship research, creativity is widely considered one of the key antecedents of entrepreneurial intention. Studies have shown that creativity not only helps individuals identify opportunities and generate innovative business ideas but also significantly facilitates entrepreneurial behaviour (Ferreira et al., 2017; Locke and Baum, 2014). Individuals with higher creativity are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Tantawy et al., 2021), and creativity significantly enhances their entrepreneurial intentions (Bergmann et al., 2016; Zampetakis and Moustakis, 2006). Among university students, creativity is seen as a crucial factor in the formation of entrepreneurial intention, as it enhances their entrepreneurial self-efficacy and fosters a more positive attitude towards entrepreneurship (Anjum et al., 2020; Entrialgo and Iglesias, 2020). Furthermore, the supportive environment of universities, including entrepreneurial education, practical opportunities, and peer encouragement, plays a significant role in facilitating the relationship between creativity and entrepreneurial intention (Saptono et al., 2019). Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_5: Creativity has a positive predictive effect on entrepreneurial intentions.

Relationship between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention

In the field of entrepreneurship research, studies have found that a proactive personality increases entrepreneurial ideas (Osiri et al., 2019; Dellyana, 2024). Specifically, a proactive personality refers to the characteristic of individuals who possess strong internal motivation and a tendency to take proactive actions to achieve their goals. This trait makes individuals with a proactive personality more likely to identify entrepreneurial opportunities, drive innovation, and have stronger entrepreneurial motivation (Li et al., 2020; Presbitero, 2015). Studies have shown that a proactive personality significantly enhances an individual's entrepreneurial intention, prompting them to actively explore entrepreneurial opportunities and take action (Biswas and Verma, 2021; Kumar and Shukla, 2022). Recent studies have further corroborated this viewpoint, showing that proactive personality has a significantly positive impact on entrepreneurial intention (Biswas and Verma, 2021; Luc, 2022; Phong et al., 2020). Proactive personality is regarded as a key factor influencing entrepreneurial intention (Hidalgo, 2020; Kumar and Shukla, 2022). Individuals with a proactive personality are more likely to scan the environment (Prabhu et al., 2012), proactively seek and process information (Brandstätter, 2011), and demonstrate a stronger ability to identify entrepreneurial opportunities (Luca et al., 2013; Mustafa et al., 2016). Therefore, a proactive personality plays a crucial role in the formation of entrepreneurial intention. Based on the above findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_6: Proactive personality has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.

RESEARCH METHOD

Participants

This study was conducted between August and October 2024 through a questionnaire survey administered to undergraduate students at three universities in Guizhou Province. Quota sampling was employed, with questionnaires distributed to students from each university based on proportional representation. The researchers coordinated with university departments to clarify the study's objectives and methodology. Prior to distribution, faculty members explained the voluntary, anonymous, and confidential nature of the survey to encourage participation. The questionnaire was administered via the online platform "Questionnaire Star (Wenjuanxing)," with counselors assisting in the distribution process. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed, resulting in 456 valid responses after data cleaning, yielding a response rate of 76%.

Instruments

The Perceived Organizational Support (POS) scale used in this study was adapted from a validated version

developed for university students (Trullas et al., 2018). The scale consists of six items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It is unidimensional, assessing a single underlying construct. In the present study, the scale exhibited excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.942, reflecting strong reliability. The collected data were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results revealed that RMR = 0.019, GFI = 0.979, AGFI = 0.961, NFI = 0.985, IFI = 0.993, CFI = 0.993, and RMSEA = 0.044, suggesting a good fit of the measurement model. The Composite Reliability (CR) for creativity was 0.932, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for creativity was 0.632, indicating good convergent validity.

The Proactive Personality Scale used in this study was adapted from the established Entrepreneurial Creativity Scale (Trifiletti et al., 2009). To ensure linguistic equivalence, the scale was initially translated into English, then translated into Chinese, and subsequently retranslated into English by professional translators. The scale comprises 10 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It is unidimensional, measuring a single construct. In the present study, the scale exhibited excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.932, indicating good reliability. The collected data were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results revealed that RMR = 0.022, GFI = 0.969, AGFI = 0.951, NFI = 0.977, IFI = 0.988, CFI = 0.988, and RMSEA = 0.050, suggesting a good fit of the measurement model. The Composite Reliability (CR) for creativity was 0.942, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for creativity was 0.612, indicating good convergent validity.

The Creativity Scale used in this research was adapted from the established Entrepreneurial Creativity Scale (Jiang et al., 2020). To ensure linguistic equivalence, the scale was initially developed in English, translated into Chinese, and then retranslated back into English by professional translators. The scale comprises 12 items and is unidimensional, measuring a single construct. In the present study, the scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.948, indicating strong reliability. The collected data were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results revealed that RMR = 0.029, GFI = 0.931, AGFI = 0.900, NFI = 0.951, IFI = 0.965, CFI = 0.965, and RMSEA = 0.074, suggesting a good fit of the measurement model. The Composite Reliability (CR) for creativity was 0.948, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for creativity was 0.605, indicating good convergent validity.

This study employed the Individual Entrepreneurial Intention Scale (Thompson, 2009), which consists of 10 items. The scale uses a five-point Likert scale, with reverse scoring applied to negatively worded items. In the present study, the scale exhibited excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.92, indicating strong reliability. The collected data were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis. The results showed that RMR = 0.034, GFI = 0.944, AGFI = 0.911, NFI = 0.949, IFI = 0.963, CFI = 0.963, and RMSEA = 0.076, indicating good fit of the measurement model. The CR (Composite Reliability) for entrepreneurial intentions was 0.920, and the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) for entrepreneurial intentions was 0.525, indicating good convergent validity.

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS and AMOS. The analytical procedures included descriptive statistics, reliability assessment (Cronbach's α), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to evaluate construct validity and identify the underlying factor structure, correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

The demographic characteristics of the participants are as follows: 190 participants (41.7%) were male, and 266 participants (58.3%) were female. Among the participants, 268 (58.8%) were students in the humanities, while 188 (41.2%) were students in the sciences. In terms of academic year, 93 participants (20.4%) were first-year students, 98 participants (21.5%) were second-year students, 169 participants (37.1%) were third-year students, and 96 participants (21.1%) were fourth-year students. Regarding entrepreneurial experience, 227 participants (49.8%) had less than one year of entrepreneurial experience, 55 participants (12.1%) had 1-2 years of entrepreneurial experience, 83 participants (18.2%) had 2-3 years of entrepreneurial experience, and 91 participants (20%) had 3-4 years of entrepreneurial experience.

Correlation analysis

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, the relationships between the variables in the study were found to be significant ($p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that perceived organizational support is positively correlated with creativity ($r = 0.420$), proactive personality ($r = 0.399$), and entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.338$). Additionally, creativity and proactive personality are significantly correlated ($r = 0.458$), as well as creativity and entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.346$), and proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.414$).

These results suggest that there are significant positive

relationships between perceived organizational support, creativity, proactive personality, and entrepreneurial intention.

Table 1. Pearson correlation analysis.

Variables	1	2	3	4
Perceived organizational support	1			
Creativity	0.420***	1		
Proactive personality	0.399***	0.458***	1	
Entrepreneurial intention	0.338***	0.346***	0.414***	1

Note: ***$p < 0.001$.

Structural equation modeling test

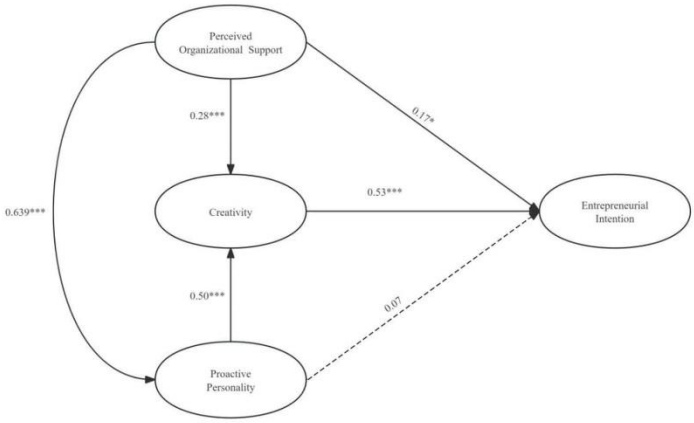


Figure 1. Results of the SEM model. *Note:* ***$p < 0.001$; *$p < 0.05$.

Table 2. Hypothesis testing.

Hypotheses	Pathway relationships	β	Results
H1	Perceived organizational support → Creativity	0.28***	Supported
H2	Proactive personality → Creativity	0.50***	Supported
H3	Perceived organizational support → Proactive personality	0.639***	Supported
H4	Perceived organizational support → Entrepreneurial intention	0.17*	Supported
H5	Creativity → Entrepreneurial intention	0.53***	Supported
H6	Proactive personality → Entrepreneurial intention	0.07	Not Supported

Note: ***$p < 0.001$; *$p < 0.05$.

Path analysis and hypothesis testing

In this study, Hypothesis 1 tested the positive and significant impact of perceived organizational support on creativity among university students in Guizhou Province ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$); Hypothesis 2 examined the positive

and significant influence of proactive personality on creativity (β = 0.50, p < 0.001); Hypothesis 3 explored the positive and significant effect of perceived organizational support on proactive personality (β = 0.639, p < 0.001); Hypothesis 4 assessed the positive and significant impact of perceived organizational support on entrepreneurial intention (β = 0.17, p < 0.05); Hypothesis 5 investigated the positive and significant relationship between creativity and entrepreneurial intention (β = 0.53, p < 0.001); and Hypothesis 6 found no significant effect of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention (β = 0.07, p > 0.05). The results of the hypotheses are shown in Table 2.

DISCUSSION

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, the findings indicate that perceived organizational support significantly enhances creativity (β = 0.28, p < 0.001), aligning with prior studies showing its role in stimulating creative performance (Chang et al., 2016). In a university context, institutional support equips students with better resources and an environment that fosters creativity. Hypothesis 2 is supported by a strong positive association between proactive personality and creativity (β = 0.50, p < 0.001). This finding is in line with recent research by Deng et al. (2022) and Zhang and Chi (2025), who emphasized the link between proactive personality traits and creativity. Individuals with proactive personalities tend to engage in problem-solving and exhibit creative thinking and behavior when facing challenges. Supporting Hypothesis 3, the analysis reveals a significant positive effect of perceived organizational support on proactive personality (β = 0.639, p < 0.001). While relatively few studies have examined this relationship, Yuspahruddin et al. (2024) noted that supportive organizations can promote proactive behaviors by offering encouragement, resources, and incentives. Thus, perceived organizational support may nurture proactivity through the cultivation of self-directed and self-managed behavior. In line with Hypothesis 4, perceived organizational support is positively associated with entrepreneurial intention (β = 0.17, p < 0.05). Although the effect size is modest, it nonetheless suggests that a supportive environment can stimulate students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship. Previous studies have reached similar conclusions, though the strength of this effect may vary due to differences in individual entrepreneurial resources and external conditions (Morris et al., 2018). Hypothesis 5 is confirmed by a strong and significant impact of creativity on entrepreneurial intention (β = 0.53, p < 0.001). This finding is consistent with a substantial body of research emphasizing creativity's essential role in the entrepreneurial process. Creative individuals are better equipped to identify opportunities, solve problems, and develop innovative ideas, thereby enhancing entrepreneurial intention (Tantawy et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022).

Interestingly, Hypothesis 6 was not supported, as the effect of proactive personality on entrepreneurial intention was not statistically significant (β = 0.07, p > 0.05). This contrasts with prior studies (Kumar and Shukla, 2022), which identified proactive personality as a strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention. A possible explanation lies in the characteristics of the sample. Among university students in Guizhou Province, limited access to external entrepreneurial resources and relatively low awareness of entrepreneurship may hinder the transformation of proactivity into entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, entrepreneurial intention is a complex construct influenced by multiple factors, including cultural background, social support, and individual experiences.

In conclusion, the results of this study align with recent research in most hypotheses, particularly in terms of the impact of perceived organizational support on creativity, the effect of proactive personality on creativity, and the influence of creativity on entrepreneurial intention. However, the finding that proactive personality does not significantly affect entrepreneurial intention suggests that the formation of entrepreneurial intention is a multifaceted process. Future research should further explore other potential moderating or mediating variables, as well as the role of cultural and contextual factors across different settings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study offers significant insights into the relationships between perceived organizational support, proactive personality, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention among university students in Guizhou Province. The findings demonstrate that perceived organizational support positively influences creativity, which, in turn, significantly affects entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, a proactive personality was found to have a significant positive effect on creativity, and perceived organizational support was shown to foster a proactive personality. However, contrary to expectations, a proactive personality did not exhibit a direct significant impact on entrepreneurial intention. These results contribute to the growing body of literature on the psychological and contextual factors influencing entrepreneurial behaviours in higher education settings.

Based on these findings, several practical recommendations can be made. First, universities should focus on creating a supportive environment that actively encourages and nurtures students' creativity. By providing adequate resources, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities, institutions can significantly enhance students' creative potential, which, as this study suggests, plays a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurial intention. Second, fostering proactive personality traits in students should also be a priority, as these traits contribute to

creative thinking and problem-solving. Universities could design programmes that promote initiative-taking, self-directed learning, and active problem-solving to cultivate these traits among students. Third, while a proactive personality did not directly influence entrepreneurial intention in this study, future research should examine additional variables that might mediate or moderate this relationship, such as access to entrepreneurial resources or the level of entrepreneurial knowledge among students.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of both a supportive organizational environment and a proactive personality in enhancing creativity, which, in turn, can stimulate entrepreneurial intention. Universities and policymakers should consider these factors when designing initiatives aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mindsets among students. Future research should explore the complex interplay of individual and contextual factors that influence entrepreneurial behaviours, particularly across different cultural and environmental contexts.

LIMITATIONS

Although this study provides valuable empirical insights into the effects of perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity on university students' entrepreneurial intentions, there are some limitations. First, the research was conducted solely with undergraduate students from three universities in Guizhou Province, resulting in a limited sample. This may not fully represent students from other regions or various types of universities, thus affecting the generalizability and external validity of the findings. Second, the study utilized cross-sectional data, which does not allow for the determination of causal relationships. Future studies could implement longitudinal designs or experimental approaches to more effectively establish causality among the variables. Third, the reliance on self-reported questionnaires in this study may introduce biases such as social desirability or self-presentation bias, potentially compromising the accuracy of the data. Lastly, while this research focused on perceived organizational support, proactive personality, and creativity, it did not account for other potential mediating or moderating factors that could influence entrepreneurial intentions, such as family background, cultural differences, or gender.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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VITAE

Name - Surname	Miss Fang Wang
Date of Birth	June 8, 1992
Place of Birth	China
Address	No.103 Jianglongdong Road, Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, China
Workplace	

Education Background

2020-present	Doctor Degree in Philosophy in Management Rajamanagala University of Technology Rattanakosin, Thailand
2013-2016	Comparative Literature and World Literature, Guizhou University
2009-2013	Chinese Language and Literature, Shenzhen University

Work Experience

2017-present	Guiyang University, Lecturer

Publication of Journals during Ph.D. Study

Wang, F. and Deeprasert, J. (2025). Born or Made? The Role of Organizational Support, Proactive Personality, and Creativity in Shaping Entrepreneurial Intentions. *African Educational Research Journal*, 13(2), pp. 191-200. DOI no: https://doi.org/10.30918/AERJ.132.25.019.