



Literature Review on Entrepreneurship Practice in Agriculture, Rural and Farmers under the Background of Rural Revitalization

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Abstract

The practice of entrepreneurship in agriculture, rural areas and farmers is becoming more and more active, and the academic research around the entrepreneurship of agriculture, rural areas and farmers is gradually increasing in different countries. Based on the existing research results of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship, this study combs the concepts of rural entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship and farmer entrepreneurship, and summarizes the differences and connections between agricultural rural entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship and farmer entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurship emphasizes the entrepreneurial environment; agricultural entrepreneurship emphasizes the agricultural industries; farmer entrepreneurship emphasizes the features of the farmer entrepreneurs. However, the discussion of issues such as the identification of entrepreneurial opportunities or entrepreneurial resources in the three types of entrepreneurship cannot be strictly distinguished. Therefore, this study summarizes the future research directors of agriculture, rural and farmer entrepreneurship. We explore the entrepreneurial opportunities of agriculture, rural areas and rural areas, on the basis of understanding the rural value and rural problems which distinguish from industrial entrepreneurship logic.

Subject Areas

Entrepreneurship Management

Keywords

Rural Revitalization, Rural Entrepreneurship, Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Farmer Entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

According to the GEM (2019-2020), there are so many countries that concentrate on entrepreneurship activities in rural areas, and the development of rural areas is an important issue that cannot be ignored¹. According to statistics, in the OECD countries, rural areas cover 75% of the land area and the rural population accounts for 25% (OECD, 2006). In the EU, rural areas cover 57% of the territory and the rural population accounts for 24% (European Commission, 2012)². In China, these two figures are even more impressive. Rural areas account for more than 94% of the country's land area, and the rural population accounts for 40.42%. Different countries concentrate on entrepreneurial research in the field of agriculture, rural areas and farmers³. In China, rural development is a major issue, and it is also a challenging problem. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China put forward a RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY. Entrepreneurship of agriculture, rural areas and farmers is one of the ways to realize the strategy.

By 2020, the number of entrepreneurial and innovative personnel returning to rural areas was 10.1 million, an increase of more than 1.6 million over the previous year, exceeding 10 million for the first time, driving more than 10 million new jobs in rural areas. In addition, "Tian Xiucui" and "Local Experts" and other entrepreneurial and innovative personnel in the rural areas reached 31.5 million. More than 60% of the returning home entrepreneurship projects have innovative factors, more than 85% belong to the type of integration of the first, second and third industries, and 55% use new models such as "Internet+" to promote the rapid development of live direct sales and other formats⁴. The field of entrepreneurial innovation has changed from the initial breeding industry to the primary processing of agricultural products and rural e-commerce. It can be seen that the practice of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship has a strong diversity. In the research of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship, the fields involved are also quite wide. Such as green agriculture, entrepreneurship, and regional ecosystems. However, the research on agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship lags behind the practice of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship, so the research framework is not mature (Zhang & Feng, 2019) [1]. Due to the immaturity of the research framework, many studies do not strictly distinguish the differences and links between rural entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship and farmer entrepreneurship. Therefore, this paper combs the concept of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship and the main research content. On this basis, four suggestions are put forward for the future research direction of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship.

¹Source: <https://www.gemconsortium.org/file/open?fileId=50443>

²Source: http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201902/t20190228_1651265.html

³Source: http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/sjjd/202105/t20210513_1817394.html

⁴Source: http://www.moa.gov.cn/govpublic/XZQYJ/202107/t20210715_6371962.htm

2. The Concept of Agriculture, Rural Areas and Farmer Entrepreneurship

In China, there are many policies for agriculture, rural and farmer entrepreneurship, academic research on the practice of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship is also closely followed. Policies are shown in **Table 1**. However, most of the existing research does not strictly define the definition of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship, and the framework of agriculture, rural areas and farmers research is not clear. In fact, rural entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship, and farmer entrepreneurship are complex situations (Zhang and Feng, 2019) [1].

Although there is a crossover in the theoretical research of agriculture, rural areas and farmers, there are still different entrepreneurial logic. There is a great diversity in the situation of agriculture, rural areas and farmers, and the entrepreneurial logic behind diversity is not necessarily the same. For example, urban entrepreneurs go to the countryside to carry out green agricultural entrepreneurship and farmer entrepreneurs to carry out rural tourism construction. The entrepreneurial motivation, opportunity identification process, and entrepreneurial process of them may be completely different. Therefore, it is necessary to

Table 1. The policies for agriculture, rural and farmer entrepreneurship.

Year	Policies
2015	Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on supporting migrant workers and other personnel to return to their hometowns to start businesses.
2016	Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Supporting Entrepreneurs and Innovating returnees to the Countryside to Promote the Integrated Development of Rural Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Industries.
2017	Report of the 19th Party Congress: Support and encourage farmers to find employment and start businesses, and broaden the channels for increasing income.
2018	Circular of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs on vigorously implementing the action of promoting rural employment and entrepreneurship.
2019	Guiding Opinions of the State Council on Promoting the Revitalization of Rural Industries.
2020	Nine Ministries and Commissions of the State on the in-depth implementation of the action of cultivating rural innovation and entrepreneurship leaders.
2021	The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has guided the guidance on expanding the multiple functions of agriculture and promoting the high-quality development of rural industries.
2022	The State Council issued a notice on the “14th Five-Year Plan” to promote the modernization of agriculture and rural areas.

sort out the concept of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship in order to explore special regulations.

2.1. Rural Entrepreneurship

2.1.1. The Concept of Rural Entrepreneurship

Scholars use the entrepreneurial environment as a standard to divide entrepreneurial activities into urban entrepreneurship and rural entrepreneurship. The rural entrepreneurship create new organizations, introduce new products or services, create new markets, or the use of new technologies in the rural environment. In other words, the creation of enterprises and the development of small businesses in rural areas fall within the scope of rural entrepreneurship (Pato & Teixeira, 2016) [2]. Therefore, rural entrepreneurship emphasizes the entrepreneurial activities in the rural environment.

However, the entrepreneurial activities that occur in rural areas belong to the category of rural entrepreneurship seems to be unable to capture the essence of rural entrepreneurship. This concept emphasizes the interaction between rural entrepreneurial environment and entrepreneurial activities. Even if some entrepreneurship occurs in rural areas, but if it is only located in rural areas, does not employ local farmers, and does not use local resources, the role of local development is very limited, and the economic significance of entrepreneurial activities for local development cannot be highlighted. This type of entrepreneurship can only become “entrepreneurship in the rural”. Enterprises that start businesses in rural areas only use the rural space environment as a place for their entrepreneurial activities, using profit-oriented and spatial logic characterized by liquidity. The local embedding of entrepreneurial activities lacking communication with local individuals, organizations and the environment. Therefore, this type of entrepreneurship is high likely to move out of the rural area based solely on economic logic. For example, when companies find the costs are lower in other regions, they may move out of rural areas.

Alsos *et al.* (2011) [3] believes that rural entrepreneurship is a means to bring new economic development to rural areas. Effective definition of rural entrepreneurship requires identifying entrepreneurial activities that employ rural natives, use and provide local services, and generate income for rural locals. Rural entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial activity that interacts with the rural space situation. Entrepreneurs are embedded in the local space situation through the use of local rural resources and new combinations. Rural entrepreneurship creates value not only for entrepreneurs but also for rural areas. Due to the close interaction between such entrepreneurship and the rural area, it does not easily move out to other regions (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015) [4].

2.1.2. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Regional Research

Rural entrepreneurship emphasizes the role of the environment in entrepreneurial activities. The entrepreneurial ecosystem emphasizes the entrepreneurial environment that support entrepreneurial activities, and also involves interac-

tion between multiple entrepreneurial entities and interaction between entities and entrepreneurial environment (Cai *et al.*, 2016) [5]. Therefore, scholars have introduced the concept of regional entrepreneurial ecosystem into the study of agriculture, rural areas and farmers (Wu *et al.*, 2021) [6]. Wu *et al.* (2021) [6] believe that there are a large number of entrepreneurial opportunities in a high-quality ecosystem, and a high-quality regional entrepreneurial ecosystem can help rural areas increase entrepreneurial opportunities and increase entrepreneurial diversity, thereby improving entrepreneurial performance.

China has a vast territory and uneven development between the east and the west. There are also great differences in rural areas. Therefore, research on rural entrepreneurship is also quite rich. There are significant differences in the impact of farmers' entrepreneurial activity on farmers' income among regions. Except for the western region, farmers' entrepreneurial activity in the eastern and central regions has a significant effect on farmers' per capita income (Gu & Xie, 2012) [7].

2.2. Agricultural Entrepreneurship

2.2.1. The Concept of Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Lans *et al.* (2020) [8] pointed out that the primary definition of agricultural entrepreneurship is the interpretation of entrepreneurial opportunities, and the core of agricultural entrepreneurship is to identify and pursue opportunities [8]. Agricultural entrepreneurship focuses on the choice and investment of entrepreneurial industries (Zhang & Feng, 2019) [1]. Agricultural entrepreneurship mainly has the following types of research: first, attention and entrepreneurial direction of choice. The second is to study the particularity of the agricultural industry and the failure of agricultural entrepreneurship.

Most of the research focuses on the particularity of the agricultural industry, such as the high risk and vulnerability of the agricultural industry. Because of the high risk and vulnerability of the industry, the failure rate of agricultural entrepreneurship is also high, so scholars' attention to entrepreneurial failure has also been invested in the agricultural field.

2.2.2. Development Direction of Agricultural Entrepreneurship

First of all, green agricultural entrepreneurship is a major development direction. As the quality of life improved, more and more green products are need. The organic combination of agricultural enterprises and green entrepreneurship is an inevitable requirement of the development of the times. Green entrepreneurship emphasizes the identification and utilization of opportunities with the aim of achieving coordinated environmental, social and economic development, not limited to environmental protection, but also social and economic dimensions (Belz & Binder, 2017) [9]. Green entrepreneurship of agricultural enterprises, that is, the development of sustainable agriculture, refers to the rational use and maintenance of natural resources, and the improvement of technology and mechanisms for traditional agriculture (Zhang *et al.*, 2021) [10]. Farmers'

prior knowledge of environmental sustainability is better developed than their social and economic sustainability.

Secondly, under the specific geographical environment and unique resource conditions, agriculture can form special agricultural types with characteristic product quality and specific consumer markets. Therefore, characteristic agriculture is a direction for future development. Integrated agriculture is also a direction for the development of agricultural entrepreneurship. Traditional production, processing and sales, rural handicrafts, agricultural ecology, agricultural life, agricultural leisure, agricultural exclusive, agricultural education and agricultural tourism are all important ways to integrate agricultural development (Zhu, 2018) [11]. Zhang (2018) [12] believes that ecological organic agriculture, rural tourism, rural handicraft industry, rural agricultural and sideline products production and processing industry will become emerging industries in rural development.

2.2.3. Failure of Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Particularity of Agriculture

Entrepreneurial failure is a common phenomenon in the field of entrepreneurship, and agricultural entrepreneurship is no exception. Some scholars use farmer entrepreneurs as a special group to discuss entrepreneurial failure as well as re-entrepreneurship (Wei *et al.*, 2021 [13]; Chen *et al.*, 2020 [14]). Some scholars combine the characteristics of the agricultural industry to introduce vulnerability into the field of agricultural entrepreneurship in order to clarify the root causes of agricultural entrepreneurship failure (Yu and Kong, 2021) [15]. The vulnerability of farmers' agricultural entrepreneurship refers to the weakness of agriculture and the lag of rural development. When entrepreneurs in the field of farmer entrepreneurship are exposed to multiple risk shocks, the degree of risk loss is high, the ability to cope with risks is insufficient, and the ability to recover losses is weak. The final manifestation is the possibility or probability that farmers' agricultural entrepreneurship will face failure (Yu & Kong, 2021) [15].

The impact of the natural environment is considered an important factor in the failure of agricultural entrepreneurship (Chen *et al.*, 2020 [14]; Yu & Kong, 2021 [15]). The agricultural sector is vulnerable to natural risks such as meteorological disasters, crop animal diseases and so on. For example, the outbreak of African swine fever has caused entrepreneurs who are about to break even to lose money. Market risk is also an important factor in the failure of agricultural entrepreneurship (Yu & Kong, 2021) [15]. The agricultural production cycle is long and the shelf life is relatively short, so the sales and supply chain of agricultural products have higher requirements, which invisibly increases the cost of agricultural entrepreneurship. The uncertainty of new agricultural technology makes the field of agricultural entrepreneurship have higher technical risks.

Due to the superposition of natural risk, market risk and technical risk, the loss of agricultural entrepreneurship is high, and the weak access to credit resources for farmer entrepreneurship, farmers' ability to recover from agricultural

entrepreneurship losses is relatively low (Yu & Kong, 2021) [15]. Therefore, the failure of agricultural entrepreneurship often brings a huge blow to farmer entrepreneurs.

2.3. Farmer Entrepreneurship

2.3.1. The Concept of Farmer Entrepreneurship, Driving Factors and Entrepreneurial Model Selection of Farmers

Farmer entrepreneurship focuses on farmers' creating an enterprises which emphasizes the identity of farmer entrepreneurs.

Compared with urban entrepreneurs, Chinese farmer entrepreneurs have a low level of education and generally have the characteristics of insufficient knowledge stock, limited resources and experience, weak risk-taking ability, and management experience (Sun *et al.*, 2010) [16]. Previous work experience is the main source of human capital (Zhao, 2016) [17]. Therefore, farmer entrepreneurs to imitate entrepreneurial activities-based, the establishment of high-tech base enterprises less. There are many types of entrepreneurial models for farmers. According to entrepreneurial motives, they can be divided into survival-oriented entrepreneurial models and opportunity-based entrepreneurial models (Zhang, 2014) [18]. From the perspective of farmers' entrepreneurial background, it comes down to four modes: basic survival type, industry-driven type under policy guidance, job transformation and "capable person" + "returning home entrepreneurship mutual aid group" (Fu Chun *et al.*, 2009) [19]. According to the industry, the entrepreneurial model of migrant workers mainly includes three modes: breeding industry, manufacturing model and resident service (Yang, 2013) [20]. From the entrepreneurial resources, the entrepreneurial model can be divided into entrepreneurial models, which can be divided into four modes: resource pooling, human capital accumulation, characteristic resource development and external resource penetration (Wei, 2012) [21]. Gender and traditional culture have an important influence on the choice of entrepreneurial models. rural female entrepreneurs prefer industries such as farming, aquaculture and domestic services because they are often at a disadvantage in business activities (Weber, 2007) [22]. Agriculture-related tourism entrepreneurship is usually related to the education level of entrepreneurs and the gender of key family members (Haugen *et al.*, 2008) [23]. Domestic researchers believe that the agricultural industrialization model, the rural tourism model, the consumer service industry model, the traditional cottage industry evolution model and the modern industrial enterprise model (Lu, 2016) [24].

2.3.2. Social Network, Entrepreneurial Opportunity Identification and Entrepreneurial Resources of Farmer Entrepreneurs

Rural areas have a unique social environment. China's rural areas have a strong collectivist culture. In this acquaintance society, the daily activities of farmers are more natural or mandatory, and the common values and social norms generated by interaction form a unique community cultural atmosphere. Therefore, the

entrepreneurial activities of farmer entrepreneurs embedded in the social environment with local characteristics, affected by the cultural atmosphere in rural areas. In addition, farmer entrepreneurs rely more on social networks such as families and communities to obtain information and resources than urban entrepreneurs.

The rural area has a complete set of complex operating systems, and it is this complex system that provides farmers with the initial resources, capital elements and social relations of entrepreneurship. These entrepreneurial resources gradually accumulate to form the resource endowment of entrepreneurs. Resource endowment also has a major impact on entrepreneurship by affecting the accumulation of venture capital, entrepreneurial opportunity perception and entrepreneurial decision-making process of farmer entrepreneurs, which can specifically reflect the key links of entrepreneurship such as raising funds, raw material acquisition, trading, and cost control. In large and small villages, social relationship network plays an important role in farmers' economic activities, social activities and emotional exchanges. More realistic entrepreneurial practice reference, more credible entrepreneurial information, and more convincing emotional support, more realistic observation and communication have brought more entrepreneurial resources to farmers, reduced the cost of entrepreneurial implementation, and improved farmers. Entrepreneurial confidence also allows farmers to learn and participate more directly in the entrepreneurial process (Zhang & Feng, 2019) [1].

2.4. Summary

The difference between rural entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship and farmer entrepreneurship emphasizes different subjects. Rural entrepreneurship emphasizes the location of entrepreneurship occurs in rural areas and entrepreneurial activities should interact with local farmers and local resources which can promote the development of local economy. Agricultural entrepreneurship emphasizes the choice of industries to start a business, as well as the characteristics of the agricultural industry and the failure of agricultural entrepreneurship. Farmer entrepreneurship emphasizes the farmer entrepreneurs, focusing on the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial motivation, entrepreneurial opportunity identification, entrepreneurial resources and entrepreneurial model selection and so on.

The connection among rural entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship and farmer entrepreneurship is entrepreneurship activities contain at least two elements in practice. For example, migrant workers use new technologies to return rural develop green industries. It is a typical farmer entrepreneur who conducts agricultural entrepreneurship in rural areas. The establishment of "Taobao Village" is a non-agricultural entrepreneurial activity carried out by farmers in rural areas under the context of the rapid development of the Internet and high-speed rail. With the quality of life improved, many urban entrepreneurs grasp the entrepreneurial opportunities. After many investigations, such

urban entrepreneurs have chosen to conduct agricultural entrepreneurship in certain rural areas. Therefore, there are intersections in the discussion of issues such as entrepreneurial opportunity identification and entrepreneurial resources. For example, there are a large number of opportunities in the regional entrepreneurial ecological environment, and the previous experience of farmer entrepreneurs is how to identify entrepreneurial opportunities. This involves not only the exploration of the entrepreneurial environment in rural entrepreneurship, but also the study of farmer entrepreneurs. When we sort out the concept of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship, and then discuss the specific situation in agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship, it will be more directional and targeted. (Figure 1)

3. The Future Research Direction of Agriculture, Rural Areas and Farmers

3.1. Distinguish the Logic of Industrial Entrepreneurship from That of Agriculture, Rural and Farmers

Rural as the carrier of agricultural production, takes life as the object, takes nature and local culture as the capital, and meets the needs of human survival as the goal of agricultural production. It is a unique mode of production different from industry. Different from the logic of industrialization, the core idea of the logic of rural entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship and farmer entrepreneurship is to re-examine, re-excavate and re-develop the resources of agriculture, rural areas and farmers. Agricultural entrepreneurship is not a natural derivative of urban entrepreneurship (Zhang & Feng, 2019) [1]. Rural entrepreneurship is not to reproduce the logic of urban entrepreneurship, but to re-develop according to the unique environment and resources of rural areas. If rural entrepreneurship only relies on industrial logic, it will undoubtedly have a bad impact on the ecology and society of rural areas. This is also the reason that the national policy constantly emphasizes the exploitation and play of the resource advantages of rural areas, so as to turn the clear waters and green mountains of rural areas into real gold and silver mountains.

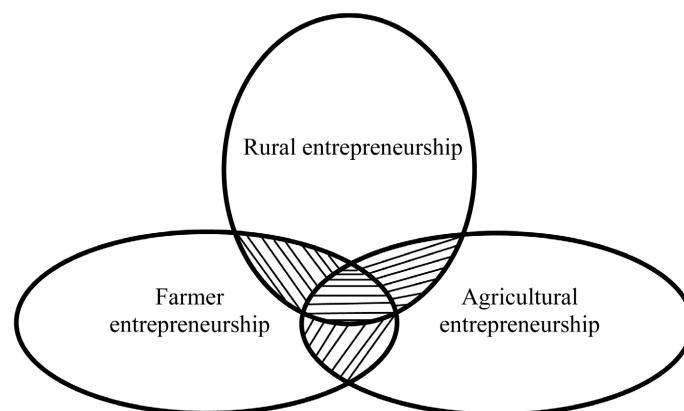


Figure 1. The relationship of agriculture, rural and farmer entrepreneurship.

3.2. The Field of Entrepreneurship and Sociology in the Field of Integration Perspective to Explore Rural Entrepreneurship, Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Farmer Entrepreneurship

In the existing research, some scholars nest the field of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship in the field of entrepreneurship, some scholars mainly from the sociological point of view to explore the issue of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship. In recognition of rural values and rural issues on the basis of exploring the issue of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship will find that the discussion of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship cannot be discussed from the social structure, nor can it be completely separated from the existing entrepreneurial theory. Therefore, the future can take the perspective of entrepreneurship and sociology integration to discuss the issue of agriculture, rural areas and farmer entrepreneurship.

3.3. In the Understanding of Rural Values and Rural Issues on the Basis of Exploring Opportunities for Entrepreneurship in Agriculture, Rural and Farmers

Entrepreneurial opportunities are nurtured in the unique resources of agriculture, rural areas and farmers that are not fully utilized. The homogenized resources in the city can no longer meet people's demand for high-quality living standards, so they have turned their attention to rural resources with VRIN attributes. Rural natural resources and cultural resources provide a lot of opportunities for agriculture, rural areas and farmers to start businesses.

3.4. In the Understanding of Rural Issues on the Basis of Exploring Rural Entrepreneurship, Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Farmer Entrepreneurship

The existing researches look at the entrepreneurship of agriculture, rural areas and farmers from the perspective of "rural China". However, at present, we are in the midst of great changes unseen in a century. The rapid industrialization and urbanization over the past four decades have changed the connotation of "rural China".

First, due to the objective relationship ties and subjective emotional identity of migrant workers and young people in school, the objective level of relationship ties and subjective emotional identity are separated from the traditional local China (Zhou, 2018) [25]. It is difficult to integrate into rural life, it is difficult to identify farmers, and it is difficult to gain an in-depth understanding of agricultural production. This has brought talent pressure to the three rural entrepreneurship (Wen, 2021) [26].

Second, Rapid development makes the phenomenon of eager for quick success and instant benefits prevalent in rural areas, which makes it difficult to form stable relationships between people and form mutual expectation and cooperation (He, 2018) [27]. Therefore, in the discussion of the entrepreneurial activities of agriculture, rural areas and farmers, such as the use of network, etc., we should

use a new perspective to examine.

4. Conclusions

This paper summarizes the difference and connection between agriculture, rural and farmer entrepreneurship by combing the existing literature. The focus of agricultural, rural and farmer entrepreneurship is different. The agricultural entrepreneurship focuses on the agricultural industry; the rural entrepreneurship focuses on rural areas; farmer entrepreneurship focuses on farmer entrepreneurs. However, they are often closely linked in practice. Therefore, it should also be made clear whether the entrepreneurs are mainly farmers, whether the entrepreneurship focuses on the agricultural industry, or whether the entrepreneurship activities happen in rural areas, which interacts with the rural environment and has an impact on the local economy, and which interacts with the rural environment and has an impact on the local economy.

Based on this, we should make it clear that the exploration of entrepreneurship in agriculture, rural areas and farmers cannot rely on traditional industrial logic. And China's rural environment and agriculture cannot be divorced from the Chinese context to explore the development of agriculture and rural entrepreneurship.

However, the existing research still has some shortcomings. Some researchers explore entrepreneurship from the perspective of entrepreneurship logic, but do not place too much emphasis on the rural situation in China. However, some pieces of literature only emphasize the context of Chinese rural society, but lack exploring entrepreneurial activities from the perspective of entrepreneurship. Therefore, the two should be combined in the future to explore agriculture, rural and farmer entrepreneurship from the perspective of integration of entrepreneurship and sociology.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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