

An Empirical Study on the Current Situation of College Students' Social Entrepreneurship Ability in Social Transformation*

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Abstract—Through field investigations, the knowledge, perceptions and abilities of Guangdong college students on social entrepreneurship have been explored so as to better target their ability development and enable them to better carry out social entrepreneurship. Conclusion are as below: college students have a low level of understanding of social entrepreneurship, and social needs are most likely to stimulate public entrepreneurship desires; they lack resources and entrepreneurial experience; college students lack the ability to choose, persuade, and assume the risk of starting a business; there are significant differences between different types of students. In response, the following points are put forward: academies can use social entrepreneurship as a channel choice for their graduates to find employment; after training, girls can try more social entrepreneurship; it's necessary to pay attention to the cultivation of college students' planning ability.

Keywords—college students; social entrepreneurship; ability improvement

I. INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship is a global new entrepreneurial model that has emerged in recent years. Its essential feature is the use of commercial means to create social public value. College students are currently the most active group in China's social entrepreneurship. The rise and rapid development of college students' social entrepreneurship is based on the actual needs of China's economic and social development during the transition period. The development of social entrepreneurship by college students has important practical significance for relieving employment pressure, solving social and people's livelihood problems, and building a harmonious society. However, there are still some factors in the entrepreneurial environment, and the insufficient ability and quality of entrepreneurs. Therefore, the improvement of college students' ability to start a business

has become an urgent problem to be solved.

At present, relevant research mainly focuses on the social support factors and social environment of college students' social entrepreneurship, including support factors of government, enterprises, colleges and social organizations etc., or exploring the entrepreneurial needs of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial pathways from the perspective of students. And the support and research on the college students' ability to start a business are lacking. In recent years, the entrepreneurial awareness, entrepreneurial quality, and entrepreneurial practice of college students in China have been significantly enhanced (Liu Minglong, 2011). In general, the support potency of college students' social entrepreneurship ability to launch social entrepreneurship is very low. Zeng Jianguo, (2014), Jie Yuandong (2016) have explored the main external influencing factors and support systems of university entrepreneurship. Wang Lijuan (2012) has pointed out the gap between domestic college students' innovation and entrepreneurship education and foreign social entrepreneurship education. Lin Xiaochan, Quan Mingzhe and some others (2014) have taken Heilongjiang universities as examples, pointing out the preferences and shortcomings of students in entrepreneurship, and suggesting the role that universities should play. Li Jing and Li Hangyuan have explored the practical path of college students' social entrepreneurship.

The above literatures rarely touch on the research of college students' social entrepreneurship ability, and the related empirical studies are very few. Therefore, by taking college students as the research objects based on empirical research, this project aims to build a support system for the promotion of college students' social entrepreneurship through field investigation, which is to understand college students' cognition, attitude and ability to social entrepreneurship, hoping to promote the construction of social support environment for college students' social entrepreneurship and enriching their ability to develop social entrepreneurship.

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II. INVESTIGATION OBJECTS, METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A. Investigation Objects

This survey takes the students in Guangzhou and Qingyuan as objectives. Guangzhou and Qingyuan are relatively concentrated areas in terms of colleges and universities in the Pearl River Delta and North Guangdong, therefore, the selected respondents are representative.

The number of effective questionnaires for this survey is 1,059, of which 44% are male students and 56% are female students, which is similar to the ratio of male to female (47.5%: 52.5%) of Guangdong universities (published by Provincial Department of Education in 2015), reflecting the representative of the survey data.

TABLE I. ANALYSIS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

	Educational Institution	Frequency	Ratio
Qingyuan	Qingyuan Polytechnic	217	20.5%
	Guangdong Nanhua Vocational College of Industry and Commerce	178	16.8%
	Guangdong Lingnan Vocational and Technical College	178	16.8%
Guangzhou	Guangdong University of Technology	81	7.6%
	Jinan University	102	9.6%
	Guangdong Industry Technical College	100	9.4%
	Guangdong Baiyun University	103	9.7%
	Guangdong University of Foreign Studies South China Business College	100	9.4%
	Total	1059	100%

It can be seen from "Table I" that the proportion of colleges and universities in Guangzhou and universities in Qingyuan is nearly 1:1. The types of institutions are divided into the first-batch universities, the second-batch universities, the Junior college A and Junior college B, in order to explore the gaps in the various aspects of social entrepreneurship among students in different colleges and universities.

In the sample, liberal arts students account for 50.7% and science and engineering students account for 49.3%, which follows the principle of sample balance.

B. Investigation Method

The self-administered questionnaire method is used. From April to June in 2016, the random sampling and intercepting questionnaire survey was conducted in Guangdong's colleges and universities, which have social entrepreneurship incubators and have experience of taking part in social entrepreneurship and winning prize; at the same time, the selection of various colleges and universities was stratified. For example, there were two junior colleges that were investigated respectively for academy A and academy B, and it is the same to first-batch and second-batch universities. A total of 1100 questionnaires were issued

C. Investigation Procedure

Through literature and exploratory research, the purpose, meaning and requirements of the theme are clarified; design research plan; develop a sampling plan and clarify the survey area, unit, and object followed by selecting a sampling method; design a questionnaire and then, carry out trial question followed by modifying the questionnaire. Then, finalize it and print it. After that, a field survey will be conducted in Guangzhou and Qingyuan to collect materials from April to June in 2016; organize the data and use SPSS17.0 statistical software for statistical analysis; write an article and summarize the content of it, and make targeted recommendations.

III. ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS

A. Analysis of College Students' Cognition and Attitude Towards Social Entrepreneurship

1) *College students' understanding of social entrepreneurship is not high; boys and liberal arts students are more aware of it:* Regarding the level of understanding of social entrepreneurship, the proportion of students who know a little is the highest with 62.7%, and the students, who have not heard the concept take up 19.8%. And the rest of students, who have total understanding and relatively understanding take up 17.5%, which indicates that there are few propaganda on social entrepreneurship. At the same time, it also reflects the short development time of social entrepreneurship practice, so that the scale effect has not yet been formed and not been known familiarly or accepted by the public.

Further analysis shows that men are more aware of social entrepreneurship than women ($P=0.003<0.05$, $\Lambda=0.014$). And liberal arts students know more about social entrepreneurship than science and engineering students ($P=0.049$, $\Lambda=0.024$). This phenomenon may be related that boys and arts students are more concerned about social news than girls and science and engineering students.

2) *Most college students have never considered social entrepreneurship. Men have more willingness and motivation to engage in social entrepreneurship than women:* For the intention of social entrepreneurship, the proportion of students who have never considered it is the largest (61.2%), while 36.3% of them once considered it; the number of students who are planning entrepreneurship and those who have successfully started their business account for 1.8% and 0.8% respectively, which are both low proportion. It can be seen that most college students have not considered social entrepreneurship.

TABLE II. THE INTENTION OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP * GENDER CROSS TABULATION

The intention of social entrepreneurship	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Have never Considered Social Entrepreneurship	53.80%	63.70%	61.20%
Once Considered Social Entrepreneurship	38.10%	34.90%	36.30%
Planning to Perform Entrepreneurship	2.60%	1.20%	1.80%
Have Successfully Started a Business	1.50%	0.20%	0.80%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Further analysis shows that the proportion of female who have never considered social entrepreneurship (63.70%) is significantly higher ($P=0.011<0.05$, $\Lambda=0.013$) than men (53.80%), as shown in "Table II". The ratio of male who once considered social entrepreneurship (38.10%), are planning to perform entrepreneurship (2.60%) and have successfully started a business (1.50%) are all higher than that of women (34.90%, 1.20% and 0.20%, respectively), which shows that men have more willingness and motivation to engage in social entrepreneurship than women.

3) *The needs of social development can best stimulate the desire of college students for social entrepreneurship:* The analysis finds that the most inspiring factors for college students' desire for social entrepreneurship are the needs of social development (30.5%); the second is the influence of the successful entrepreneur (23.9%) and their own entrepreneurial ability (23.3%); the proportion of family encouragement and support (8%) and other factors (3.3%) is pretty small, as shown in "Fig.1". It can be seen that the needs of social development and the influence of entrepreneurs and their own entrepreneurial ability can best stimulate the desire of college students for social entrepreneurship.

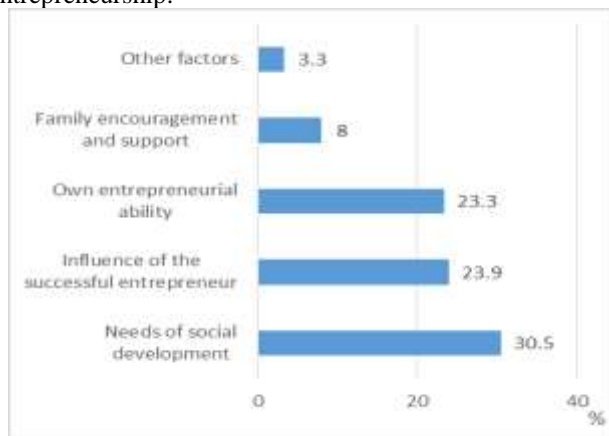


Fig. 1. The factors that can best stimulate the desire of college students for social entrepreneurship.

B. Analysis of the Required Ability and Difficulty of College Students' Social Entrepreneurship

1) *Communicative competence, communication ability, management ability and innovation ability are the special needs of college students' social entrepreneurship:* The data show that college students believe that there are top 4 abilities of social entrepreneurship: communicative competence (81.5%), communication ability (78.9%), management ability (66.3%) and innovation ability (64.9%). The remaining abilities are about 45%, as shown in "Fig.2". It can be seen that communicative competence, communication skills, management ability and innovation ability are the most necessary abilities for college students to believe in social entrepreneurship.

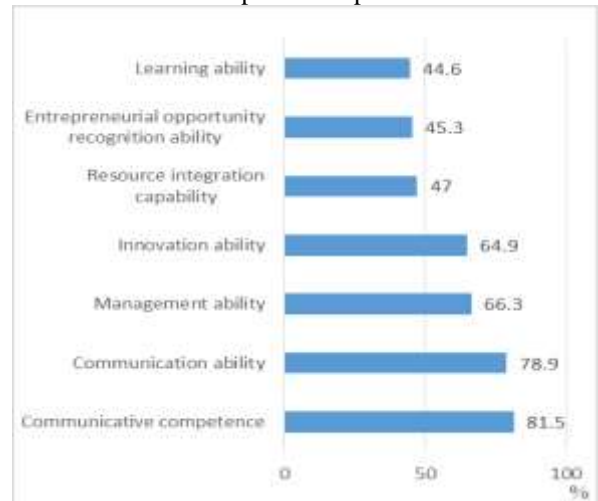


Fig. 2. The most important ability that social entrepreneurship needs based on college students' opinions.

2) *The most prominent difficulty in college students' entrepreneurship is the shortage of resources and the lack of experience:* The survey finds that for the opinion of college students, the most prominent problems in social entrepreneurship are resource shortages (62.6%), followed by insufficient social entrepreneurship experience (62.3%), lack of social relations (54.4%), unclear direction of entrepreneurship (46.5%), lack of execution ability of project management (36.8%), low social recognition (33, 4%), lack of creativity in entrepreneurial projects (30.1%) and insufficient knowledge of public welfare entrepreneurship (29.3%). It can be seen that the shortage of resources and the lack of experience are most prominent problems.

C. An Overall Analysis of College Students' Individual Entrepreneurial Ability

In this study, the individual entrepreneurial ability is designed into two scales, namely the planning ability scale and the executive ability scale. The evaluation scale consists of a set of statements, each of which has five answers: "conformity", "somewhat conformity", "uncertainty", "a little non-conformity", and "non-conformity", and they are

respectively marked as 1, 2, 3 4, 5. The total score of planning ability and execution ability of each respondent is the sum of all the scores of his answers to each question of the two scales, which can explain his abilities of the two types.

1) *The planning ability of college students is quite different, but the execution ability is more concentrated:* The total scores interval for college students' planning ability in five fields is 5 to 25 in the college students' eyes and 15 is an intermediate value. The lower the score is, the stronger the planning ability is. According to the statistical results, the planning ability of college students is generally in line with the average level with tendency to somewhat conformity (mean value $X = 13.5$), and the difference between individuals is large (standard deviation $SD = 3.6$).

The total scores interval for college students' executive ability in ten fields is 10 to 50 in the college students' eyes and 30 is an intermediate value in the scale. According to the statistical results, the executive ability of college students is generally in line with the conformity with tendency to average level (mean value $X = 22.5$), but the difference between individuals is small.

The relative standard deviation of college students' planning ability is $RSD = SD/X = 0.267$, which is larger than 0.249, which is the relative standard deviation of their executive ability. It can be seen that the college students' planning ability is more discrete and the executive ability is more concentrated.

2) *The planning ability of students is average level with tendency to relative conformity:* There are five statements in the college students' planning capability scale, which are "As long as I do my best, I believe I can solve most of the problems I may encounter in the entrepreneurial process." "I can introduce myself to strangers without any difficulty." "I can independently take risks of entrepreneurship" and "I am good at wooing others and use this ability to bring me certain benefits" and "In order to start a business, I will choose to give up other superior jobs." The five statements are respectively summarized as: solving problems, showing self, taking risks, persuasion and the ability of making choice. Through the mean value of college students' opinion on about each statements (projects), the ability of college students in all aspects will be reflected.

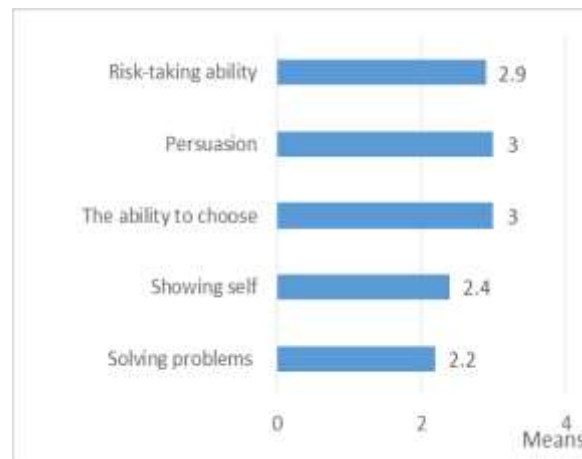


Fig. 3. The comparison of the projects means of planning ability scale.

^a Note: The smaller the mean, the higher the conformity.

The analysis shows that the mean value of projects conformity of the college students' planning ability scale is between 2.2 and 3 (1=totally conform with me, 2=the conformity is high, 3=not sure, 4= the conformity is low, 5=totally not conform with me), which indicates that the ability of college students in five aspects is generally tend to be relative conformity. The two items with higher compliance are "solving problems (mean value=2.2, the same below)" and "showing self (2.4)"; the three of the lower conformity are the ability to choose (3), persuasion (3), and risk-taking ability (2.9), as shown in "Fig.3". This shows that college students' ability to solve problems and show themselves is strong, and the risk-taking ability, persuasiveness and the ability to choose need to be improved.

3) *The overall executive ability of college students is strong:* There are ten statements in the executive ability scale, which are "I will always care about the people around me", "I will always pay attention to the emotions of team members", "I can easily resolve conflicts with others", "I will continue to improve the company's management level", "I like to think and have many good ideas", "I am good at controlling the progress of projects or activities", "I am innovative", "I can get the resources I need in a timely and effective manner", "I have a lot of experience in organizing organizations" and "I can effectively manage the company's capital operations." The ten statements are summarized as: caring for others, paying attention to others' emotions, dealing with contradictions, perfect management, thinking ability, control ability, the nature of innovation, help-seeking ability, organizational ability and fund management.

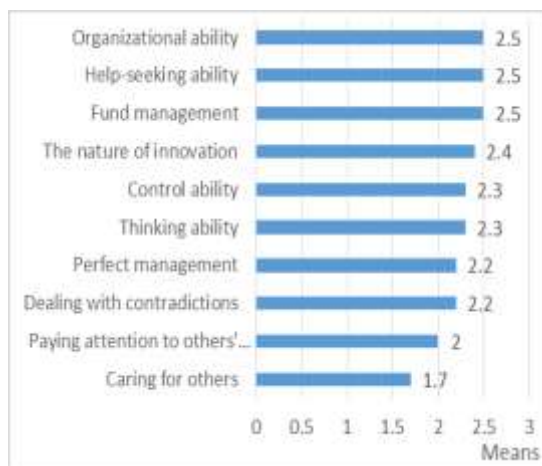


Fig. 4. The comparison of the projects means of executive ability scale.

Note: The smaller the mean, the higher the conformity.

The analysis shows that the conformity mean value of all aspects of the college students' executive ability scale is between 1.7 and 2.5, which indicates that the college students in ten aspects are generally tend to be relative conformity. The two items with the highest conformity are caring for others (1.7) and caring for others' emotions (2); the three items of the lowest conformity are capital management, help-seeking ability, and organizational ability (mean value of all of them is 2.5), as shown in "Fig. 4". It can be seen that in the execution ability of college students, the performance of caring for others and paying attention to others' emotion is better, and the fund management, help-seeking ability and organizational ability need to be further improved.

4) *The higher the planning ability or executive ability of the college students is, the higher the willingness of them to start social entrepreneurship is:* Through the analysis that whether the planning ability and execution ability have relations with the consideration of social entrepreneurship or not, it is found that the higher the planning ability of college students is, the higher the willingness of them to launch social entrepreneurship is ($P=0.000<0.05$, $\text{Gamma}=-0.408$, or the higher the execution ability of college students is, the higher the willingness of them to launch social entrepreneurship ($P=0.004<0.05$, $\text{Gamma}=-0.266$) is. The data shows that planning capabilities are more relevant to entrepreneurial willingness.

D. Analysis on the Specific Situation of College Students' Socially Entrepreneurial Ability

Because planning ability is a type of college students' lack among social entrepreneurship abilities, it's necessary to do deep exploration so as to perform more targeted training.

1) *Men and higher vocational students are more capable of undertaking entrepreneurial risks independently:* The analysis finds that there is a significant difference in the ability to independently undertake entrepreneurial risk for different genders ($P=0.00<0.05$, $\text{Lambda}=0.49$).The accumulative proportion (Abbreviated as "possession", the

same below)of male students who choose "conformity" and "somewhat conformity" is (47.5%) ,which is 20% higher than that of girls (27.7%), indicating that boys are more capable of undertaking entrepreneurial risks than girls.

At the same time, it is found that there is also a significant difference in the ability to independently undertake entrepreneurial risk for students in different types of colleges and universities($P=0.00<0.05$).As the level of institutions gradually decreases(first-batch university, second -batch university, academy A, academy B),the proportion of junior college students who choose "possession" has a gradual upward trend, indicating that junior college students are more likely to undertake entrepreneurial risks independently than undergraduates.

2) *Boys and junior college students are more prominent in their efforts to solve problems in entrepreneurship:* For the best efforts to solve the problems and dilemmas in the entrepreneurial process, generally, the accumulative proportion of students who choose "conformity" and "somewhat conformity" is 65.8% (21.5% + 44.3%).However, the male who choose "conformity" is 26.3%, significantly ($P=0.006<0.05$) higher than female (17.7%), indicating that the ability of men to overcome difficulties in the face of dilemmas is stronger than that of women.

Further research finds that students of different types of colleges and universities will make significantly different efforts to solve problems and dilemmas in the entrepreneurial process ($P=0.001<0.05$).The proportion of students choosing "conformity" in first-batch universities is only 8%, which is more than ten percentage points lower than that of other colleges and universities. It means that first-batch university students pay more attention to knowledge accumulation, and other colleges' students prefer the use of knowledge. Especially for higher vocational students, generally speaking, they are more courageous than undergraduates to overcome difficulties in entrepreneurship.

3) *Boys are more persuasive than girls:* For being good at "please others to bring some benefits to themselves", there is a significant difference between boys and girls ($P=0.002$).The proportion of boys (42.6%) is much higher than that of girls (30.6%), which shows that boys have better persuasion than girls.

4) *College students and boys are more determined to choose social entrepreneurship:* For "in order to start a business, I will choose to give up other superior jobs," there are significant differences between different institution types ($P=0.000$, $G=-0.184$) and different genders (0.012, 0.015).The proportion of students in different colleges and universities is relatively first-batch university (18.8%), second-batch (23.2%), academy A (31.9%) and academy B (34.1%),which shows that the lower the level of the institution is, the greater the determination is to choose a business; boys (35.5%) are more determined than girls (25.6%) to choose to start a business.

5) *Boys are better at introducing themselves*: For "I can introduce myself to strangers without difficulty", the proportion of boys (64.3%) is significantly higher ($P=0.003$, 0.011) than girls (52.9%), which explains that boys are more capable of self-promoting.

The following is an in-depth discussion of the fund management, help-seeking and organizational skills that are lacking among college students in terms of executive ability.

6) *The fund management ability of junior college students is higher than that of undergraduate students*: For "I can effectively manage the company's capital operation", there are significant differences between different institutions ($P=0.019$, $Gammar=-0.116$). As the level of institutions gradually decreases (first-batch university, second -batch university, academy A, academy B), the proportion of students with capital management capabilities has gradually increased (39.6%, 38.1%, 46.1%, 47.5%), which indicates that junior college students are more capable than undergraduate students in funds management.

7) *Boys' ability to seek help is significantly higher than that of girls*: For "I can get the resources I need in a timely and effective manner", the proportion (52.8%) of boys who meet the requirements is significantly higher ($P=0.001$, $Lambda=0.022$) than girls (43.9%), which show that boys are better at asking for help.

8) *Junior college students and boys have stronger organizational ability*: For "there is a lot of experience in organizing events," significant differences exist between different institutions ($P=0.031$, $Gammar=-0.062$) and genders (0.007, 0.015). With the gradual reduction of the level of colleges and universities (first-batch university, second -batch university, academy A, academy B), the proportion of students with organizational management ability are relatively (54.5%, 45.3%, 58.9%, 55.5%), which shows that the organization management ability of junior college students is stronger than undergraduate students.

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Conclusions

1) *Cognition and attitude of college students to social entrepreneurship*: College students have not good understanding of social entrepreneurship, and nearly 40% of college students have considered or are planning to implement social entrepreneurship projects; the needs of social development, the influence of role models and the strong individual ability can best stimulate the desire of college students for social entrepreneurship.

2) *The necessary ability and difficulty of college students' social entrepreneurship*: The most needed ability for social entrepreneurship is communicative competence and communication skills; shortage of resources, lack of experience and lack of social relations are the main bottlenecks restricting college students' social entrepreneurship.

3) *College students' ability to launch social entrepreneurship*: The planning ability of college students is weak and discrete, and the execution ability of them is strong and concentrated; among the planning abilities, what is lacking is the ability to select, persuade, and assume the risk of starting an enterprise. Among the executive abilities, funds management and help-seeking ability and organizational ability are lacked; the higher the planning ability or executive ability is, the higher the willingness of college students to start social entrepreneurship; planning ability can stimulate students' willingness to start social entrepreneurship better than executive ability.

4) *There are significant differences in cognition, willingness and ability of social entrepreneurship among students of different types of colleges and universities and genders*.

B. Discussion

1) *The academies can increase the propaganda of social entrepreneurship, and regardsocial entrepreneurship as a channel choice for their students' employment*: When it comes to academic qualification, the junior college students tend to be at a disadvantage relative to the undergraduate students. But the junior college students can more do their best to solve the problems and dilemmas in the entrepreneurial process, more independently undertake the entrepreneurial risks, and have more entrepreneurial willingness and stronger fund management as well as organization management ability. Therefore, it's important to increase the propaganda of social needs, set role examples to stimulate the enthusiasm of college students for social entrepreneurship, and encourage college students to take social entrepreneurship as a channel choice for employment.

2) *After training, girls canmore try social entrepreneurship*: The data show that girls are weaker than boys in the willingness to start a business, the ability to take risks, the persuasiveness, the ability to seek help and the organizational capacity, which may be due to the influence of the traditional culture of male rights in China. Social entrepreneurship requires love, patience, responsibility, dedication, etc., which are very consistent with femininity. Therefore, paying attention to the training of female college students in terms of concept and entrepreneurial ability and encouraging and supporting them in practice are expected to attract more female college students to get onto the road of social entrepreneurship.

3) *Paying attention to the cultivation of planning ability and enhancing the enthusiasm of college students for social entrepreneurship*: College students' planning ability is often weaker than their ability to execute. It is related to the lack of relevant theoretical foundation and entrepreneurial experience in the learning phase. Due to the greater impact of the planning ability than the executive ability on entrepreneurial willingness (the correlation coefficients are

relatively $\text{Gammar} = -0.408$, $\text{Gammar} = -0.266$), it is necessary to cultivate the students' ability of planning, especially the ability of selection, persuasion and risk taking, in order to improve the enthusiasm of the students for social entrepreneurship.

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