

Effect of Social Power, Cultural Intelligence, and Socioeconomic Status on Students' International Entrepreneurial Intention

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Background: Undeniably, international entrepreneurship is important to a nation's development. The government has engaged in various activities to support international entrepreneurship in China. However, the results were less embracing, particularly among students. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence students' intentions toward international entrepreneurship is vital in the effort to develop entrepreneurship. Therefore, this study examined whether social power and international entrepreneurship intention are related based on social capital theory, as well as the possible influence of cultural intelligence and socioeconomic status on this relationship.

Methods: A quantitative study was conducted to test the hypotheses. Data were collected through paper-based questionnaires from 372 undergraduate students at 19 universities in China. The partial least squares structural equation modeling technique was used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses using the SmartPLS software.

Results: Social power has a positive effect on international entrepreneurship intentions, and motivational cultural intelligence plays a mediating role in this relationship. In addition, behavioral cultural intelligence played a mediating role in this relationship but not in the hypothesized direction. The effect of social power on international entrepreneurship intentions via motivational cultural intelligence is strengthened by socioeconomic status. However, socioeconomic status failed to moderate the mediating effects of social power on international entrepreneurship intentions, as transmitted through behavioral cultural intelligence.

Conclusion: This study contributes to the scarce empirical literature on students' international entrepreneurship intention in China by testing the relationship between social power and international entrepreneurship intention via cultural intelligence. In addition, these findings demonstrate that future research should focus on improving students' perceptions of international entrepreneurship as an important career choice.

Keywords: international entrepreneurial intention, social capital theory, social power, cultural intelligence, socioeconomic status

Background

Because of the continuing expansion of higher education in China, the number of college graduates has grown dramatically since 1999.¹ Consequently, the employment pressure on college students is more intense than that of past college graduates. Therefore, entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship can play essential roles in creating employment opportunities for college graduates.² A new policy was developed in China by the Ministry of Education, called the National Graduate Entrepreneurship Initiative, with the goal of assisting graduates in starting up small businesses.³ However, the proportion of college graduates in China, who become entrepreneurs remains low.⁴ To encourage college students to overcome psychological barriers and become more entrepreneurial, it is necessary to identify factors that might influence this ability.

In general, IE involves finding, simulating, assessing, evaluating, and capturing business opportunities across national borders and in an international environment.⁵ Since the Belt and Road Initiative was announced in 2013, China has been producing more young entrepreneurs than ever before.⁶ Furthermore, higher education institutions have started to raise

awareness about IE opportunities among Chinese students and imbue them with IE intentions.⁶ Combined, these factors indicate that IE is now a far more accessible dream for young Chinese adults. Therefore, a major aim of entrepreneurship studies is to recognize and assist students interested in expanding their entrepreneurial activities internationally. Educating the next wave of IE students is also important for ensuring that international entrepreneurial capabilities meet the global challenges of the twenty-first century.⁷

Many previous studies have attempted to identify the factors that affect entrepreneurial intentions, such as education,⁸ contextual factors,⁹ and personality traits.¹⁰ However, few studies have investigated the factors that affect IE intention. To date, scholars have only recognized personality-related determinants of IE intention (eg, proactive personality, personal attitude), leaving the role of contextual and psychological predictors largely unexplored.^{11,12} This study answers the call for research on IE intention (eg, Jie & Harms, 2017)¹¹ by examining the following research question: What factors nudge young adults toward IE as a career path?

Previous research has shown a low survival rate of international entrepreneurs because they encounter a variety of intercultural issues (eg, language barriers and belief systems)¹² that may cause them to feel stressed and isolated in unfamiliar environments. Therefore, before transitioning abroad, entrepreneurs need to learn how to adapt to prevent frustration with their conditions and improve their IE success. To overcome these challenges, entrepreneurs must learn how to find, evaluate, and use resources. For instance, entrepreneurs must know how to develop social relationships with people in their host country to acquire information or gain access to resources. According to social capital theory,¹³ social power is a resource that can be used to relieve stress and frustration. In addition, social power can make the transition easier, help develop a sense of belonging, and foster mutual trust in a new country.¹⁴

In the process of forming social power, a person's connection to their social environment is strengthened. Social power is defined as the ability to access valued resources in a social relationship, such as those between colleagues, neighbors, friends, family members, and even romantic partners.¹⁵ Social power can play a particularly significant role in entrepreneurs' success in the same way it does for changing agents.¹⁶ Specifically, the ability to sell innovative ideas to other parties such as investors and suppliers may require entrepreneurs to possess certain attributes such as social power.¹⁷ Without the ability to influence how these parties perceive the value of their ideas and social network positions, an entrepreneur will not be perceived as successful. Although it appears that social power influences entrepreneurial success, we cannot yet determine whether successful entrepreneurs possess more social power than unsuccessful ones. The present study answers this call for research on IE intention¹¹ by examining whether social power nudges young adults toward IE as a career path.

Social power can be used to create a sense of community in an entrepreneur's host country, enabling them to overcome cross-cultural challenges. However, the formation of social networks and increased cultural interactions does not automatically lead to successful intercultural experiences. Thus, the effect of social power on IE intention may not be a simple direct relationship. Indeed, research is yet to shed light on the mediating mechanism underlying the ability of social power to enhance students' IE intentions. Therefore, in this study, we directed our attention toward cultural intelligence (CQ). CQ is the ability to interpret the meanings of different behaviors in intercultural settings and has long been recognized as a fundamental measure of an individual's ability to succeed in new cultural settings.^{18,19} The present study considered the possibility that CQ mediates the relationship between social power and IE intention and, in doing so, responds to repeated calls for identification of the competency process that leads to IE intention.^{7,11} While CQ is seemingly important for international entrepreneurs' success, it has not been widely studied in association with IE intention. The role of CQ in developing entrepreneurs' social network ability to adapt to the business environment has been recognized by social capital theory.²⁰ People with high CQ can meet challenges in new cultural settings and possess the resources necessary to deal with stressful conditions. Based on social capital theory, this study viewed CQ as a personal resource and a mediating mechanism that underlies the link between social power and IE intention.

Previous research has shown that starting a new business depends on various factors, such as social, academic, and family issues, which influence entrepreneurial intention early on, that is, during college education or even earlier.²¹ As a contextual predictor, parents' socioeconomic status (SES) is a key external factor that can develop or hinder entrepreneurial interest and thus influence post-graduation career choices.²¹ Previous research^{22,23} has recognized that people with higher SES have more career choices than those with lower SES. Social capital theory holds that SES may

affect a person's ability to obtain the resources needed to secure social capital; however, low SES may hinder the process of transforming resources into social capital. Therefore, a person's SES can be viewed as a conditional factor that affects how much resources they receive and use. However, only a few studies have examined how SES affects resource acquisition across cultures. Therefore, this study investigated the moderating effect of SES on the relationship between social power and IE intention using the CQ.

In the next section, we argue that the association between social power and an individual's IE intention might be better understood by considering how CQ, as a central-mediating mechanism, underlies the links between social power and IE intention. We further explored the moderating role of SES in this relationship, as shown in our conceptual model (Figure 1).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Social Power and IE Intentions

Networks of relationships between people are an essential feature of social capital that enable society to operate effectively.²⁴ Social capital affords people access to resources contained in social relationships, which they can then mobilize to achieve their career goals.^{13,25} The core idea of social capital theory is that interpersonal relationships are a useful resource for people¹³ and help them attain goals that they would not have been able to achieve on their own.²⁶ Maintaining and increasing social capital is possible through social interactions and continuous investment in social ties.²⁷ According to social capital theory, individuals with social power can access important resources that increase their human capital.^{25,28} When individuals leave their country to start a business abroad, they leave their social network. The limited social resources they have as foreigners force them to actively seek new resources to grow their social capital. According to previous studies, social capital refers to the resources people have access to as a result of their social relationships.^{6,25} Individuals with social power can become more connected to their social environment and interact with one another more deeply with each other.⁵⁵ Those who use social networks to obtain information and opportunities gain access to privileged information.^{13,25} In sum, social power is essential to both the concept and the practice of entrepreneurship. Indeed, many scholars view entrepreneurship as a goal-oriented accumulation and deployment of resources that can be used to yield social power and achieve personal goals.²⁹ As asymmetric control over resources in social relationships,³⁰ social power can expand an individual's career horizon and open their minds to self-employment possibilities. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Social power increases IE intentions.

The Mediating Effect of CQ

Transportation, communication, and information technologies have achieved globalization and intercultural diversity at the next level. In this context, young adults face abundant and exciting international business opportunities.³¹ With increased cross-border interactions, as well as increased diversity within a country's political borders, comes a plethora of

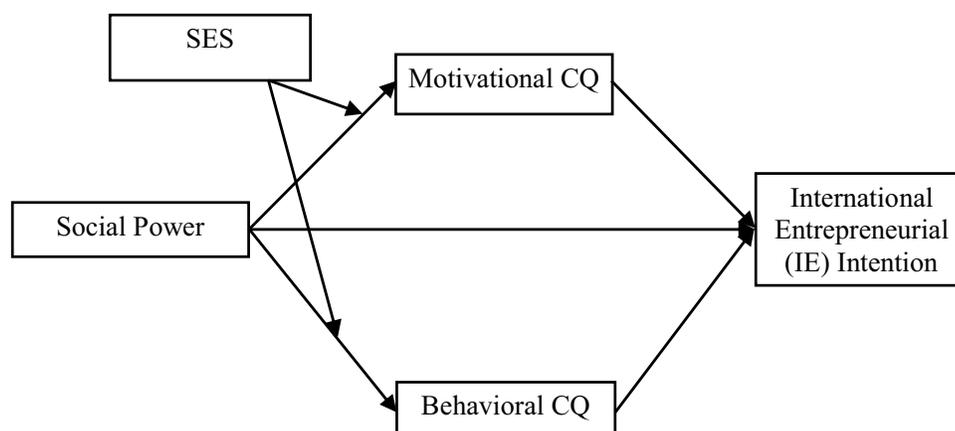


Figure 1 Conceptual model and hypothesis.

new challenges and learning opportunities. Furthermore, entrepreneurs are increasingly interested in replacing rigid and culturally insensitive ways of doing business with flexible and cross-culturally affirmative ways. Individuals who leave their home countries feel estranged from their previous relationships and experience considerable distress. To relieve stress, they often form new relationships and social networks within a new culture.³² Individuals with a high level of social power have a greater chance of forming new relationships and engaging in social activities. Conversely, a lack of social connectivity can mean feeling isolated and incapable of effectively managing emotions and daily life, which can lead to anxiety.^{33,34}

Students can improve their CQ by participating in various cultural and educational activities involving cross-cultural interactions.³⁵ This study concludes that entrepreneurs can enhance their cultural competency by cultivating social contact with host country residents. For example, a previous study reported that contact with cross-cultural groups can help individuals develop a positive attitude toward a new culture and motivate them to adapt to the cultural norms and traditions of the host country.³⁶

A higher CQ has been associated with a stronger interest and performance in cross-cultural careers.³¹ Furthermore, those with higher motivational and behavioral CQ are better able to cope with uncertain situations.³⁷ The motivational dimension assesses the ability to function effectively in a cross-cultural environment, whereby a high motivational CQ indicates strong interest, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and confidence in dealing with cross-cultural encounters.³⁸ Behavioral CQ assesses an individual's ability to demonstrate appropriate behaviors when interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.³⁵ Indeed, from an information-processing perspective, CQ increases the capacity to categorize and store new information.⁷³ CQ can reduce uncertainty associated with IE activities, thereby increasing the intention to engage in IE. Prior research has suggested that individuals with high CQ tend to be more successful in entrepreneurial activities.¹⁸

According to the social capital theory, the only way to develop social capital is to engage in social interactions and continue to invest in social ties.²⁷ It is possible that social interactions can be converted into valuable resources through CQ to assist individuals in accumulating resources. CQ may enhance an individual's understanding of how information can be integrated and applied to develop new resources. This allows resources to be pooled, and encourages individuals to invest in resources for future use.³⁹ The present study suggests that CQ provides a mechanism that facilitates students' ability to grasp new knowledge and experiences to resolve cross-cultural problems.

Furthermore, CQ can increase entrepreneurs' confidence when initiating cross-cultural interactions and relationships,⁴⁰ holding culturally appropriate eye contact,⁴¹ recommending less complex cognitive approaches to problem solving,⁴² and appearing more confident when it comes to IE opportunities.⁷ Together, this evidence suggests that motivational and behavioral CQ underlie the link between social power and IE intention. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H2: (a) Motivational CQ and (b) behavioral CQ mediate the relationship between social power and IE intentions.

Moderated Mediation Effects

High-SES families are thought to provide family members with more educational opportunities and social capital,^{43,44} thus preparing them for superior career choices. In contrast, low-SES families are thought to lack essential resources and are prone to poverty-induced psychological stress, which hinders career ambition.⁴³ Multiple studies have found that family SES affects college students' attitudes, academic performance, and career prospects (eg, increases their self-efficacy).^{45,46} According to one study, students from low-SES families have lower self-esteem and fewer academic accomplishments than those from high-SES backgrounds.⁴⁷ Students from low-SES backgrounds are typically less confident and have more negative attitudes toward opportunities than their peers.⁴⁸ The networks of contacts for students with a higher SES can often be more varied and larger than those for students with a lower SES.⁴⁹

In addition, high-SES parents are more likely to transfer their career-related aspirations and values to their children; by doing so, they make critical contributions to the future of their children as they become young adults and encounter career choices.^{47,50} Further, high-SES parents tend to be instrumental in encouraging young adult children to pursue career interests and goals.⁴⁹ On the other hand, low-SES parents who are less financially secure must balance the career

aspirations of their children against the immediate economic needs of the family, and are therefore less involved in their children's education and job counseling.⁵¹ Compared to students from higher SES backgrounds, those from low-SES families are not as confident or optimistic when seeking opportunities and not as prepared or empowered to respond appropriately when confronted with such opportunities.⁵⁰

Social power is essential to both the concept and practice of entrepreneurship. Indeed, many view entrepreneurship as a goal-oriented accumulation and deployment of resources that can yield the social power necessary to achieve goals.²⁹ Consequently, individuals with access to the resources of their high-SES parents tend to yield more social power than their low-SES family counterparts.⁴³ Social power can expand an individual's career horizon and open their minds to self-employment opportunities.³⁰ Furthermore, students with high SES have a better opportunity to develop their cultural competence with the resources they acquire through social power than students from lower SES. As a result, SES makes it easier to find and allocate resources needed to meet the demands imposed on students. As a result, students with high SES may be better able to identify opportunities that could enrich their cultural knowledge and increase their understanding of cultural differences, which leads to further interest in becoming an entrepreneur overseas. Thus, SES is expected to strengthen the relationship between social power and IE intention via motivational and behavioral CQ. Therefore, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H3: SES moderates the mediating relationship between social power and IE intention via (a) motivational CQ and (b) behavioral CQ. Specifically, these relationships are stronger when SES is high than when it is low.

Methods

Sample and Data Collection

Self-reported data were used in this study. The self-reported data were responses to a survey completed by senior undergraduate university students in China. A total of 610 respondents, most of whom were students at Zhejiang University City College (29.9%), Zhejiang University (27.2%), and Zhejiang University of Technology (30.2%), were randomly selected and asked to complete a paper-and-pencil survey. After removing incomplete surveys, 372 responses were received (effective response rate of 60.98%). More than half of the respondents (59%) were female, 35% were male, and 6% did not provide information on their sex. The majority (61%) were aged between 21 and 22 years. Among the respondents, 54.6% were single, 44.9% had committed relationships, and 0.5% were married.

Ethics Statement

Following the 2013 revision of the Helsinki Declaration, we designed our study to emulate a medical research study. The study was reviewed and approved by the ethics committee professor of the School of Business of Zhejiang City College University. Wenwu Xie and Jianzhuang Zheng. The data were volunteered by the participants, all of whom provided written informed consent.

Measures

Back-translation procedures were used to verify the validity of all measures after translation from English to Chinese.⁵²

Social Power

Social power was measured using the recommended 4-item measure,⁵³ which assesses respondents' subjective evaluation of being powerful and in control (eg, "I can get people to listen to what I say"). Each item was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, each item was scored on a 5-point Likert scale.

CQ

A previous study employed Sternberg's framework, which proposes a multi-loci view of intelligence to conceptualize multidimensional CQ, comprising metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ.³⁵ In a follow-up study, they created a reduced two-dimensional (motivational and behavioral) measurement scale that satisfactorily captured the underlying latent construct with higher parsimony than the original scale.¹⁸ In this study, CQ

was measured using a scale,⁵⁴ which includes a 5-item motivational CQ section (eg, “I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me”) and a 5-item behavioral CQ section (eg, “I am a flexible person in culturally diverse situations”). Each item is rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) on a Likert scale of 5 points.

SES

Income was assessed using item,⁵⁵ “Which category best describes your parents’ monthly household income?, (a) \leq 5000 yuan, (b) 5000–16000 yuan, (c) 16000–27000 yuan, (d) 27000–38000 yuan, or (e) $>$ 38000 yuan?” To assess students’ social class, we presented them with a picture of a ten-rung ladder and asked them to place themselves according to their parents’ combined income, education, and occupation, in comparison with other students’ parents in China. Responses were converted to a 10-point scale ranging from 1 (lowest rung, lowest perceived social class) to 10 (highest rung, highest perceived social class).

IE Intention

IE intention was measured using a 6-item measure⁵ (eg, “I am ready to do anything to be an international entrepreneur”). Items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = a little to 5 = quite a lot.

Data Analyses

The structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique was employed to analyze the data and test the hypotheses using SmartPLS software.⁵⁶ PLS-SEM has gained increasing popularity as a variance-based methodology in many fields of research, including entrepreneurship.⁵⁷ SEM was used to examine a wider range of interrelationships among the constructs in the present study.

We used the SPSS macro, Process 3.0, to analyze the latent variable scores ($M = 0$, $SD = 1$) generated in SmartPLS to test the moderated mediation hypothesis. Additionally, the statistical significance of the index of moderated mediation was assessed by interpreting the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI; 5000 samples).

Measurement Model

As expected from the SEM analysis, the reflective measurement model was assessed by the evaluation of composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. As shown in Table 1, Cronbach’s alpha for the model’s constructs was higher than 0.7, which is recommended for reliability cutoffs. Therefore, the items within each variable exhibited high internal consistency and high reproducibility of the findings.⁵⁸

To measure the convergent validity, we used the indicator “factor loading” and average variance extracted (AVE) criteria. In general, a standard factor loading of 0.7 or higher and an AVE value of 0.5 or higher can collectively indicate adequate convergent validity.⁵⁸ As shown in Table 1, all factor loadings and AVE values adhered to the rule above the thumb. Thus, there is sufficient evidence of convergent validity.

To determine discriminant validity, we compared the square roots of the AVE with inter-construct correlations using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.⁵⁸ As shown in Table 2, a construction’s AVE square root is always higher than the correlation coefficient between the constructs. Accordingly, the measurement model is considered to have discriminant validity. This means that the items of each latent variable are significantly different from those of the other latent variables.⁵⁹ However, previous recommendations for detecting discriminant validity in variance-based SEM studies have been criticized because they are unreliable.⁵⁸ For this reason, we also applied the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations.⁶⁰

Structural Model

We began by checking the collinearity issues in the structural model, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) value was used as the only technique to assess collinearity issues.⁶¹ Table 1 shows that all VIF values fell below the fifth threshold level,⁶² demonstrating that collinearity did not affect the structural model.

Table 1 Measurement Model (Mean, Convergent Validity, Reliability, and Discriminant Validity)

Construct, Item, Source	Mean	Factor Loading	t-value	CR	CA	AVE	VIF
Motivational CQ (Van Dyne, L., S. Ang, and C. Koh., 2008)	2.71			0.87	0.81	0.58	
Item 1		0.792	25.03				1.689
Item 2		0.802	27.18				1.965
Item 3		0.815	32.97				1.774
Item 4		0.684	17.04				1.353
Item 5		–	–				–
Behavioral CQ (Van Dyne, L., S. Ang, and C. Koh., 2008)	2.67			0.89	0.85	0.62	
Item 1		0.780	26.05				1.636
Item 2		0.795	28.03				1.887
Item 3		0.791	26.66				1.869
Item 4		0.828	39.35				1.725
Item 5		–	–				–
Social power (Dubois et al, 2015)	3.07			0.83	0.72	0.55	
Item 1		0.799	35.37				1.280
Item 2		0.754	24.65				1.438
Item 3		0.678	13.70				1.350
Item 4		–	–				–
International entrepreneurial intention (Coviello, N., 2010).	2.58			0.94	0.92	0.72	
Item 1		0.853	50.55				2.704
Item 2		0.856	43.71				2.785
Item 3		0.854	48.71				2.778
Item 4		0.874	55.30				2.987
Item 5		0.855	46.56				2.783
Item 6		0.809	34.05				2.145
SES	3.92			0.82	0.79	0.74	
Parents' income		0.909	35.19				1.324
Parents' social class		0.812	16.15				1.333

Note: – problematic indicator that was removed from the final analysis.

Abbreviations: CA, Cronbach's alpha; CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted; VIF, Variance inflation factor.

Table 2 Correlations and Discriminant Validity Between the Fornell–Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratios

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
1. Motivational CQ	0.763	0.757	0.212	0.427	0.680
2. Behavioral CQ	0.638	0.792	0.097	0.156	0.624
3. SES	0.191	0.069	1.000	0.404	0.312
4. IE intention	0.373	0.132	0.388	0.850	0.352
5. Social power	0.531	0.503	0.257	0.279	0.742

Notes: Diagonal elements (bold) are the square roots of AVEs. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. Above the diagonal elements are the heterotrait-monotrait ratios.

A blindfolded method with an omission distance of 7 was used to evaluate the structural model. A cross-validated redundancy report Q^2 value above zero indicates that the model is predictively relevant.⁶³ As shown in Table 3, Q^2 (motivational CQ) = 0.27, Q^2 (behavioral CQ) = 0.27, and Q^2 (IE intention) = 0.20. The Q^2 value is significantly higher than zero. Additionally, these results were validated using the coefficient of determination values (R^2). As shown in Table 3, R^2 (motivational CQ) = 0.48, R^2 (behavioral CQ) = 0.46, and R^2 (IE intention) = 0.29, these findings suggest that the in-sample predictions of the structural model were satisfactory.⁵⁷

Table 3 Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing

Structural Path	Path Coefficient	t-value	95% BC Confidence Interval	Hypothesis Result
<i>Structural model results</i>				
<i>Direct effect</i>				
Social power→IE intention	0.139**	2.158	(0.011, 0.266)	H1, supported
<i>Mediation effects</i>				
Social power→motivational CQ→IE intention	0.165***	4.924	(0.103, 0.230)	H2a, supported
Social power→behavioral CQ→IE intention	-0.064**	2.134	(-0.121, -0.008)	H2b, supported
Goodness of model fit SRMR composite model = 0.07				
Structural model fit R^2 ; determination of coefficients R^2 (motivational CQ) = 0.48; R^2 (behavioral CQ) = 0.46; R^2 (IE intention) = 0.29 Threshold for R^2 value ≥ 0.25 (weak); ≥ 0.50 (moderate); ≥ 0.75 (substantial)				
Predictive relevance of model fit Q^2 ; predictive relevance of endogenous (omission distance = 7) Q^2 (motivational CQ) = 0.27; Q^2 (behavioral CQ) = 0.27; Q^2 (IE intention) = 0.20 Threshold for Q^2 value > 0 indicate predictive relevance				

Note: **t (0.01, 4999) = 2.327; ***t (0.001, 4999) = 3.092.

Abbreviations: BCCI, Bootstrapping based on n = 5000 subsamples; SRMR, standardized root-mean square residual.

To determine the significance of the hypotheses, we examined path coefficient sizes. A bootstrapping procedure was used to calculate the significance of the path coefficients. Table 3 presents the path coefficients, t-statistics, significance level, and p-values, as well as the corresponding 95% bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap confidence intervals. All hypothesized direct relationships were supported by the analysis of the path coefficients and the level of significance. The empirical results reveal a direct, significant, and positive relationship between social power and IE intention (H1: $\beta = 0.139^{**}t = 2.158, p < 0.01$). Thus, H1 is supported.

In addition, the empirical results revealed a significant indirect relationship between social power and IE intention through the motivational CQ (H2a: $\beta = 0.165^{***}t = 4.924, p < 0.001$). Thus, H2a is supported. The empirical results revealed a significant negative indirect relationship between social power and IE intention (H3b: $\beta = -0.064^{**}t = 2.134, p < 0.01$). Thus, Hypothesis H3b was supported but not in the hypothesized direction.

Model Fit

Using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations as a criterion, we calculated the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of the overall model.⁶⁰ An SRMR value >0.08 is regarded as favorable.⁶¹ The SRMR value for the path model estimation is 0.07 in Table 3, which indicates that the general model fits the empirical data.⁶²

Testing of the Moderated Mediation

The index of moderated mediation for the conditional indirect effect of social power on IE intention through motivational CQ, based on SES, was statistically significant (0.005, 95% BCCI [0.001, 0.0119]). The conditional indirect effect results reported in Table 4 show that, as the moderator increased, the conditional indirect effect increased. Therefore, the indirect effect is larger at higher moderator values. Thus, H3a is supported.

Table 4 Conditional Indirect Effect Process Analysis

Conditional Effect	Level	Effect	Boot S.E.	95% BC Confidence Interval
Sense of power on IE intention through motivational CQ at levels of SES	Low	0.018	0.009	(0.0037, 0.0408)
	High	0.030	0.012	(0.0091, 0.0563)
	Index of moderated mediation	0.005	0.002	(0.0011, 0.0119)
Sense of power on IE intention through behavioral CQ at levels of SES	Low	-0.037	0.058	(-.1646, 0.0591)
	High	0.022	0.059	(-.0880, 0.1466)
	Index of moderated mediation	0.020	0.026	(-.0275, 0.0774)

However, the index of moderated mediation for the conditional indirect effect of social power on IE intention through behavioral CQ, based on SES, was not statistically significant (-0.020 , 95% BCCI $[-0.0275; -0.0774]$). Thus, H3b is not supported.

Ancillary Analyses

To further investigate the moderating effect of SES, we used the Johnson-Neyman technique.⁶⁴ Using this technique can help in mathematically locating the region of significance for a moderator's conditional indirect effect. In particular, when the moderator is a continuous variable, this technique provides a more complete picture than the simple slopes or spotlight methods that are more common.⁶⁴

As shown in Figure 2, the mediated effect of sense of power on IE intention via motivational CQ was not significant at SES values below 0.75, but for values above this, the mediated effect became positive and significant, and gradually increased. These results are consistent with the predictions of H3a but not of H3b.

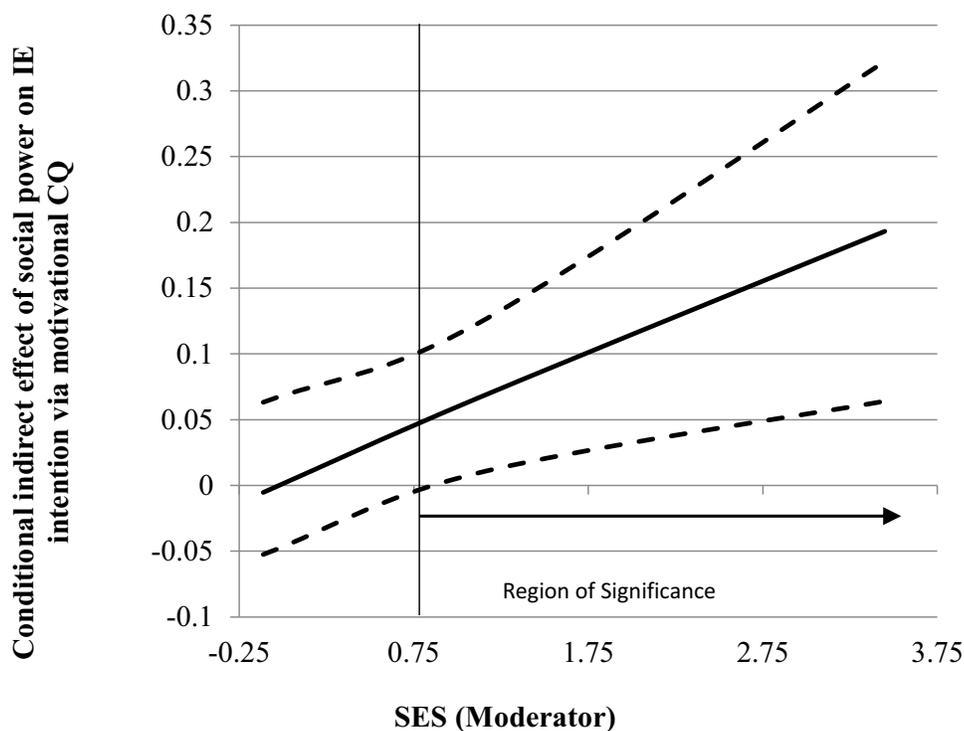


Figure 2 Johnson-Neyman regions of significance for the H4a moderated mediation. The solid line depicts the trajectory of the conditional indirect effect, and the dashed lines depict the upper and lower limits of the 95% CIs.

Discussion

A major goal of this study was to extend our knowledge of the factors that impact young adults' intentions to become international entrepreneurs through the lens of social capital theory.¹³

Theoretical Implications

Our findings have several theoretical implications. First, this study supports the validity of social capital theory in entrepreneurship education through empirical evidence. Drawing on the social capital theory, our study illustrates that social power is a key factor in the development of IE intentions among students. For example, if students invest more time in strengthening their social networks, they will have more access to valuable resources, such as new knowledge, support, and trust, when they move to a host country. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have found a link between social power and motivations for entrepreneurship⁶⁵ and entrepreneurial success.¹⁶ Therefore, our findings contribute to the literature on students' IE intentions.⁷ Additionally, this study answers repeated calls for more research on entrepreneurship in China.⁶⁶

Second, motivational CQ emerged as a mediator in the effect of social power on IE intention. Specifically, motivational CQ increased as young adults felt increased social power; with higher motivational CQ, they were more likely to consider IE. Although prior research has acknowledged CQ as a mitigator of IE's inherent uncertainty,¹⁸ it has not specified the specific role of CQ as a mediator. This study conceptualizes and empirically supports the view that motivational CQ is a psychological process that mediates the effects of social power on IE intention. Moreover, we identified motivational CQ as the only relevant CQ domain, in that it was the only one to predict IE intention. In addition, social power as a social resource can play a critical role as an essential prerequisite and attribute for entrepreneurship;²⁹ our findings on the impact of social power on IE intention via motivational CQ provide both theoretical and empirical support for this.

Behavioral CQ failed to emerge as a significant mechanism underlying this relationship. It is possible that the negative role of the behavioral CQ is due to the context of the study. This is because China has a rich cultural context. Since behavioral CQ includes both verbal and non-verbal behaviors, it may be less relevant to social interactions in a low cultural context (eg, Western countries). According to Zhang and Oczkowski,⁶⁷ behavioral CQ is important for a manager's adjustment to a change in work context when they move from low-to high-context communication in China but not when they move from high-context to low-context communication in Australia. It may be necessary for future research to employ the extended CQ scale,⁶⁸ which includes social interaction acts as well, to better understand behavioral CQ.

Finally, we found that the effect of social power on IE intention via motivational CQ was stronger when young adults had parents with high SES. This study adds to the literature by examining SES as a conditional factor that controls the amount of resources that a person can obtain and use. Social capital theory explains the link between social power and students' IE intention. It also explains the moderating role of family SES, which strengthens this link. These results emphasize the critical role SES plays in enhancing students' capacity to detect opportunities, utilize resources, and make appropriate judgments during cross-cultural encounters. One explanation for why career ambitions differ between individuals is that people from different SESs develop different social capital tendencies. Our results corroborate this view; we found that students from high-SES families had more resources and superior career choices than those from low-SES families. This finding is consistent with Chen et al's²⁰ findings, which highlight the importance of the role played by SES in improving students' ability to make career decisions.

Overall, our findings provide detailed insight into how students might use their resources to enhance their entrepreneurship intentions in a host country. Therefore, our findings contribute to the literature on international entrepreneurial intention.^{11,69}

Practical Implications

Our findings have practical implications that could help enhance IE intentions in young adults. The first practical implication pertains to the psychological mechanism underlying the relationship between parents' SES and IE intentions.

The finding that IE intentions are predicated on motivational CQ resonates with the need to continually seek ways to enhance young adults' social sources and affective and behavioral qualities before and during the crucial transition period from school to work. Ambitious career intentions, such as IE, require an individual to realize and believe in their social sources and have an intrinsic interest in cross-cultural interactions. Given the lack of initiatives that can sustainably alter parents' SES, parents, educators, businesspeople, and policymakers should identify alternative activities that could help enhance young adults' feelings of social empowerment and boost their motivational CQ. Examples of such activities include providing cross-cultural and international learning opportunities, competitions, and internships; expanding foreign language programs and curricula; establishing intercultural student organizations that hold international workshops and forums; and, most importantly, motivating young adults from all familial backgrounds to take advantage of such resources. These experiences may encourage the mindset to become more appreciative of and interested in IE.

Second, parents, educators, businesspeople, and policymakers should focus on the effects of parents' SES on young adults' psychological conditions and behavioral responses. Although it is naïve to assume that parents and/or policymakers can make significant improvements to their SES quickly and across the board, simply being aware of the salient effect of SES could serve as a reminder that many of the differences observable among young adults are rooted in socioeconomic hierarchies; that is, the realities that affect young adults discriminately. Being mindful of the structural determinants of career ambitions, such as IE intention, is a prerequisite to addressing discrepancies in SES and enhancing IE intentions at the familial and societal levels.

Limitations and Future Research

This study had three major limitations. First, this was a cross-sectional study, which did not allow us to capture the effects of social power on motivational CQ or IE intentions at different points in time. Future research should adopt longitudinal methods to complement and extend our findings. Second, this study focused on young adults' IE intentions. Future studies could assess the external validity of our proposed model by (a) applying it to other segments of the population and (b) using independent and mediator variables to explain IE intentions in general, as well as other career choices in the public or private spheres. Third, some studies have suggested that the relationship between parents' SES and young adults' career decisions is weaker in economically challenged contexts in developing countries relative to economically advanced developed countries.⁷⁰ Thus, further research is required to elucidate the external validity of our proposed model across political and cultural boundaries. Indeed, scholars have called for comparative studies of the effect of familial background on IE across Western and Eastern cultures.⁷ Finally, future research could explore other factors worthy of inclusion in the nomological network of constructs in the form of antecedents, mediators, or moderator variables. Given that young adults are an important element of the Belt and Road Initiative's global expansion strategies, we hope that future research will further investigate these findings.

Third, in previous studies, Sun et al (2016)⁷¹ have investigated whether one-child families were perceived by students as providing greater career-related modeling than multi-child families, and families from urban areas provided a greater amount of career-related modeling than those from rural areas. Therefore, future studies should examine significant differences in perceived SES between male and female students, between students from one-child families and families with more than one child, and between urban and rural students.

Conclusion

Although China's economy has been increasingly focused on emerging markets and entrepreneurs play a central role in China's development, little is known about IE intentions in that context,^{72,74,75} especially among Chinese students.⁷ Therefore, the aim of our study was to contribute to the literature on IE by improving our understanding by examining the possible influence of CQ and SES on the relationship between social power and IE intention, and using social capital theory as a theoretical foundation for this study.

Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in relation to this work.

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