



Path of exploring opportunities in a migrant workers returning- to home entrepreneurial ecosystem

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ABSTRACT: *With the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization, returning-home entrepreneurship has received increasing attention from social and academic circles. This paper adopted the method of descriptive statistics to analyze the current situation, and the process by which entrepreneurs in the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem participate in the development of entrepreneurial opportunities from two dimensions: resource acquisition and institutional support. This research adopted the method of social network analysis to explore the mechanism of opportunity development of each subject of the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem. The results showed that during the opportunity development of returning-home entrepreneurship, all the subjects in the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem participated with their own resources and capabilities and jointly promoted the development of opportunities. During the development of these opportunities, each subject in the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem participated in different ways and with different emphases. This paper enriched the integration research of returning-home entrepreneurship theory and innovation ecosystem theory, and provided a reference for realizing rural revitalization and promoting regional economic development.*

Key words: *entrepreneurship of migrant workers returning-home, returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem, opportunity exploitation, resource acquisition, institutional support.*

O caminho da exploração de oportunidades em um ecossistema de trabalhadores migrantes e empreendedorismo de retorno de cidade natal

RESUMO: *Com o rápido desenvolvimento da industrialização e da urbanização, o empreendedorismo voltando para cidade natal tem recebido cada vez mais atenção dos círculos sociais e acadêmicos. Nesse texto, adotando um método de análise estatística descritiva, analisamos a situação atual e o processo pelo qual os empreendedores do ecossistema de empreendedorismo voltando para cidade natal participam do desenvolvimento de oportunidades empreendedoras nas duas dimensões: aquisição de recursos e apoio institucional. E adotando o método de análise de rede social, exploramos o mecanismo de desenvolvimento de oportunidades de cada sujeito do ecossistema de empreendedorismo de retorno de cidade natal. Os resultados mostram que durante o desenvolvimento das oportunidades de empreendedorismo de retorno de cidade natal, todos os sujeitos do ecossistema de empreendedorismo de retorno de cidade natal participaram com seus próprios recursos e capacidades e promoveram conjuntamente o desenvolvimento de oportunidades. Durante o desenvolvimento dessas oportunidades, cada sujeito do ecossistema do empreendedorismo de retorno de cidade natal participou de diferentes formas e com diferentes ênfases. Este texto ajuda a enriquecer a pesquisa de integração da teoria do empreendedorismo de retorno de cidade natal e da teoria do ecossistema de inovação, e além disso fornece uma referência para realizar a revitalização rural e promover o desenvolvimento econômico regional.*

Palavras-chave: *ecossistema de empreendedorismo de retorno de cidade natal, empreendedorismo dos trabalhadores migrantes que retornam para cidade natal, exploração de oportunidades, aquisição de recursos, apoio institucional.*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is the driving force of economic growth (BRUTON et al., 2021). Rural entrepreneurship plays an irreplaceable role in promoting the diversified development of rural industries and eliminating rural poverty

(GALVAO et al., 2020). The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China formally put forward the “Rural Revitalization” Strategy, and believed that encouraging and supporting farmers’ entrepreneurship was an important path to realize rural revitalization (XI, 2017). Encouraged by the policy of returning to rural areas, returned

entrepreneurs are important participants in the entrepreneurial boom in China (ZHANG et al., 2021). As the starting point of entrepreneurial activities, identifying good entrepreneurial opportunities can fundamentally promote entrepreneurial activities and improve entrepreneurial quality (MIRA-SOLVES et al., 2021). SHANE & VENKATARAMAN (2000) defined entrepreneurial activities from the perspective of opportunity for the first time. They believed that the process of participation in entrepreneurial activities is reflected mainly through opportunity “identification” and “development”. As for the research on returning-home entrepreneurship, scholars mostly focused on the single subject, and lacked of the interaction research between returning-home entrepreneurship migrant workers and other subjects, which was difficult to reveal the uniqueness of returning-home entrepreneurship activities under multi-agent interaction (KIER & MCMULLEN, 2021; THOMPSON et al., 2018).

Entrepreneurial ecosystem can reflect a situation that how returning-entrepreneurial migrant workers create an appropriate entrepreneurial environment through the interaction with other subjects, so as to help migrant workers succeed in entrepreneurship (CAI. et al., 2019). A good entrepreneurial ecosystem can not only provide necessary financial resources, human resources and technical resources for returning entrepreneurs (SPIGEL, 2017), but also promote the interaction between entrepreneurial subjects and the construction of network relations (SPIGEL & HARRISON, 2018) and provide necessary institutional and cultural environment support for the survival and development of returning entrepreneurs (CAI. et al., 2019). The opportunity development behavior from the perspective of entrepreneurial ecosystem is not only limited to the opportunity of discovering and creating a single subject, but also the opportunity of developing under the interaction of multiple subjects.

In the field of entrepreneurship research, how do the subjects in a returning-home entrepreneurial ecosystem participate in the development of returning-home entrepreneurial opportunities? In addition, what role do the participants play? To answer the above questions scientifically, this paper adopted the method of descriptive statistics to analyze the current situation, and the process by which entrepreneurs in the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem participate in the development of entrepreneurial opportunities from the two dimensions: resource acquisition and institutional support. The social network analysis method was adopted to explore

the mechanism of development opportunity of each subject of the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem. The contribution of this paper is to improve the level of entrepreneurial activities in the returning-home entrepreneurial ecosystem, enhance the revitalization of rural areas, promoting the growth of urbanization, and increasing regional development.

Theoretical foundation

Returning-home entrepreneurship

Studies on the entrepreneurship of migrant workers returning-home mainly focus on the drivers and barriers on the migrant workers returning to entrepreneurship. Regarding entrepreneurial subject, the personal characteristics of migrant workers returning-home (SINKOVICS & REUBER, 2021), caring for elderly people and children (CAO, 2019) and pursuing economic income (TIWARI, 2021) could motivate migrant workers to return home and start businesses. Regarding entrepreneurial environment, the support of national policies (ZWEIG et al., 2021) and increasing opportunities for rural entrepreneurship (LASSALLE et al., 2020) and the survival statuses of migrant workers in the places where they work (LI & XIE, 2019) would increase the willingness of migrant workers to return home and start businesses. Shortages of venture capital, financing difficulties, backward infrastructures, and a lack of entrepreneurship education and training were the main barriers on migrant workers' return to their hometown for entrepreneurship (WANG et al., 2020).

Dimensions of entrepreneurial opportunity development

Resource acquisition

Research on opportunity exploitation mainly focuses on how entrepreneurs obtain various resources to form enterprises. In the past, researchers often studied the whole process of opportunity exploitation by focusing on resource acquisition (CHANG & CHEN, 2020). Resource acquisition refers to the acquisition of key resources by individuals or enterprises in some way (SMITH & SMITH, 2021). Based on WIKLUND & SHEPHERD 's classification of resources, this study divided resources into knowledge-based resources and asset-based resources (WIKLUND & SHEPHERD, 2003; JU et al., 2019). Knowledge resources refer to all kinds of knowledge and skills acquired from the outside. Knowledge resources are scarce, irreplaceable and have a high cost. Asset resources refer to the property and materials necessary for the establishment of an enterprise and the funds obtained through external financing channels, such as angel investment or venture capital.

However, there is no consensus on the definition of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Most scholars believe that the entrepreneurial ecosystem is not limited to the external environment of entrepreneurial enterprises, but a complex system composed of entrepreneurial subjects and surrounding environment. (COHEN, 2006; ABOOTORABI et al., 2021; LAFUENTE et al., 2021; HERNÁNDEZ-CHEA et al., 2021). The direct subjects (entrepreneurs), indirect subjects (governments, financial institutions, universities and scientific research institutions, etc.) and entrepreneurial environment constituted the whole system and constantly evolve to promote the overall level of entrepreneurial activities of the whole system. Entrepreneurial ecosystem focuses on the core context of entrepreneurial opportunity development and the output results of the improvement of entrepreneurial activity level (CAI et al., 2016; LI&NI, 2021).

Literature Review

Studies on returning-home entrepreneurship in the existing literature mainly focused on exploring the intentions (ZHANG et al., 2020; ZHU et al., 2021; WANG et al., 2020b), situations and characteristics (LASSALLE et al., 2020; WANG et al., 2020a), difficulties (LI, 2015), counter measures and suggestions (MIAO et al., 2020) of returning-home entrepreneurship. These studies did not examine the specific process of entrepreneurial activities. The path of opportunity development in returning-home entrepreneurial activities has rarely been explored. In the research on opportunity exploitation, most of these studies are based on a certain factor and lack integrity and a systematic design. However, entrepreneurial activities are highly context-dependent, and different situations

will cause their nature, process characteristics and entrepreneurial results to be different (YANG, 2013). Therefore, to study the problem of returning-home entrepreneurship, this paper introduced the perspective of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and takes opportunity exploitation as the main focus, regarding entrepreneurs, governments, financial institutions, universities and scientific research institutions as the entrepreneurial subjects in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This research explored the role of these entrepreneurial subjects in the process of opportunity exploitation from the micro level, and finally revealed the opportunity exploitation path of each subject in the returning-home entrepreneurial ecosystem.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data source

The data in this study mainly come from a project named “research on the long-term mechanisms of the entrepreneurship of returning-home migrant workers and other personnel”. 23 pilot counties (cities and districts) were selected to investigate their entrepreneurial service policies and entrepreneurial effects in this paper. Considering the differences and imbalances of the economic development levels among the different regions, 23 counties (cities and districts) were evenly distributed in the eastern, central and western sections of the project study area (6 in the east, 8 in the central and 9 in the west), as shown in table 1.

Methods

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistical method is used in the empirical analysis of this study. Descriptive statistics are mainly used to summarize and express the overall

Table 1 - Sample distribution of the investigated areas (23 counties (cities and districts) in China).

Region	Number	Name of county (city, district)
Eastern	6	Qingyuan, Guangdong; Weixian, Hebei; Suqian, Jiangsu; Tonglu, Zhejiang; Zoucheng, Shandong; Dawa, Liaoning
Central	8	Jieshou, Anhui; Ruzhou, Henan; fangzheng County, Heilongjiang; Tongcheng County, Hubei; Luotian County, Hubei; Zixing, Hunan; Wangqing County, Jilin; Dexing, Jiangxi
Western	9	Qijiang, Chongqing; Huanxian, Gansu; Lingshan, Guangxi; Huichuan, Guizhou; Pingli, Shaanxi; Yibin, Sichuan; Neijiang, Sichuan; Yining, Xinjiang; Zhanyi, Yunnan

※Note: The division of eastern, central and western regions of China is formed according to geographical location, which is a statistical division.

situations of phenomena and the relationships and categorical relationships between observations. This paper used descriptive statistical methods to carry out a specific analysis on the entrepreneurial activities in the national pilot areas of returning-home for entrepreneurship, and summarized the opportunity development path of the subjects of the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Social network analysis

Social network analysis aims quantitative analysis of social relations, which is suitable for analyzing the “relationship” between actors. The social network method focuses on the internal structure and development model of the organization, and identifies the causes and results of the relationship. The opportunity development process is a complex adaptive system. The subjects influence each other and have a synergetic growth, which is manifested as network organization in structure. With the method of social network analysis, this study obtained the interaction mechanism of subjects in the return entrepreneurship ecosystem in the process of opportunity development.

Data analysis

After collecting, summarizing the data, this paper used the descriptive statistics method to analyze the current situation, and the process by which entrepreneurs in the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem participate in the development of entrepreneurial opportunities from the two dimensions of opportunity development: resource acquisition and institutional support.

Current situation

(1) Since 2000, the overall number of migrant workers returning-home to start businesses has continued to increase year by year. Before 2000, the number of returned entrepreneurs accounted for 14.6%, between 2000 and 2010, the number of returned entrepreneurs accounted for 37.6%, and after 2010, the number of returned entrepreneurs accounted for 45.7% (Figure 2-1). (2) The income level of returning entrepreneurs was generally higher than that of other villagers. Forty four percent of the villagers believed that their income was equal to that of other villagers, and 47% of the villagers believed that their income was higher than that of other villagers, which showed that returning-home and entrepreneurship activities can increase the income level of entrepreneurs (Figure 2-2). (3) Returning entrepreneurs had high life satisfaction. Regarding

the returned entrepreneurs, 41.3% were relatively satisfied with their life satisfaction, while 33.8% were satisfied with their life satisfaction (Figure 2-3). (4) The scale of migrant workers returning-home to start businesses was generally small. Seventy three percent of startups had less than 10 employees; 56% of startups had an annual turnover of less than 200,000 yuan (Figure 2-4, Figure 2-5). (5) The entrepreneurial industries of returning entrepreneurs were concentrated in the primary industry. Fifty two percent of migrant workers chose the primary industry to start a business, such as agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fish and other, followed by wholesale and retail, accounting for 25% (Figure 2-6).

According to the above analysis, it can be concluded that the number of returning entrepreneurs in China was increasing, and the behavior of returning entrepreneurs can help to improve the income level and life satisfaction of migrant workers. However, at present, the returning entrepreneurship industry was generally concentrated in the primary industry. The scale of returning entrepreneurship enterprises was generally small. The number of employees in returning-home enterprises were small, and the annual turnover was low. In this context, it is urgent and necessary to explore returning-home and entrepreneurship. Through the analysis of the specific process of the opportunity exploitation of returning-home entrepreneurship, the ability of resource establishment, production and operation of returning-home entrepreneurship enterprises can be improved. It can also improve the turnover of startups and expand the scale of start-ups. Finally, it can effectively promote the development of entrepreneurial activities in returning entrepreneurial areas.

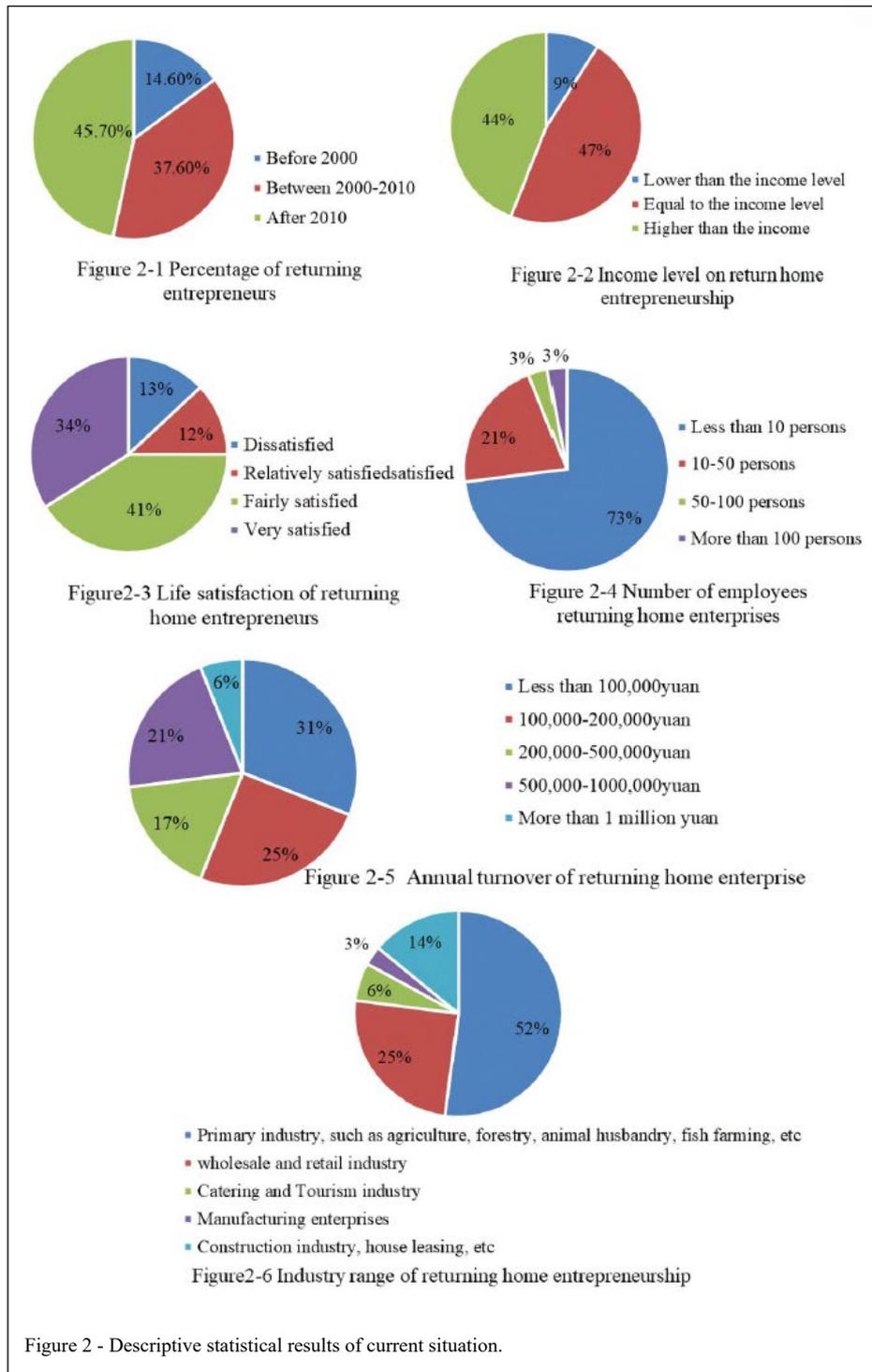
Resource acquisition

For start-ups, resource acquisition is the key for opportunity development. Resource acquisition traverses the whole process of opportunity development. This study divides resources into asset resources and knowledge resources and then discusses and analyzes the process of opportunity exploitation from the perspectives of asset resource acquisition and knowledge resource acquisition.

Asset resource acquisition

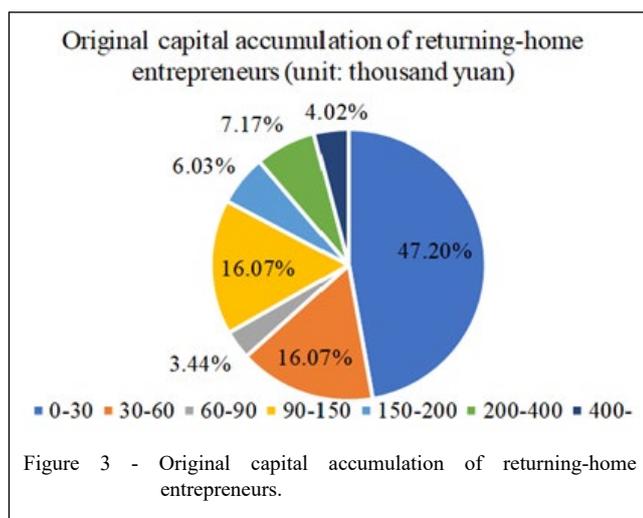
1) Entrepreneurs' Previous Work Experience in Accumulating Entrepreneurship Funds

By working, migrant workers that eventually return home as entrepreneurs often earn an economic income that is greater than the outflow of funds needed for their expenses. We view the start-up capital that returned entrepreneurs initially



accumulate as the initial capital accumulation. Initial capital accumulation is obtained by deducting the city investment and the family living expenses sent to their hometown from the surplus funds.

Returned entrepreneurs have a certain degree of initial capital accumulation. As shown in figure 3, among the farmers that returned entrepreneurs, 47% have accumulated funds of



0-30,000 yuan, 16% have accumulated funds of 30,000-60,000 yuan or 90,000-150,000 yuan, and only 4% have accumulated funds of more than 400,000 yuan. It can be seen that to prepare for their own start-up, almost all the farmers returning-home as entrepreneurs have accumulated different funds through their previous work experience. However, if the initial capital accumulation of most farmers returning-home as entrepreneurs is small, the entrepreneurs' choice of business scope and scale will be limited.

2) Financial institutions providing financial support

In the entrepreneurial ecosystem, financial institutions can provide entrepreneurial enterprises with a certain amount of capital for the acquisition of corporate capital resources. In the pilot areas of returning-home entrepreneurship, if migrant worker entrepreneurs have relatives and friends working in banks or other financial institutions, their ability to obtain financing was enhanced. It has been found that some migrant workers' relatives and friends working in banks or other financial institutions. Among the farmers that are returning-home entrepreneurs, approximately 27% have relatives and friends working in banks, and approximately 12% have relatives and friends working in other financial institutions. Entrepreneurs returning-home say that in the process of opportunity development, the financial support provided by financial institutions can effectively help solve the problem of acquiring asset resources. As shown in Figure 4, returned entrepreneurs receive financial support from various channels. Only 12.34% of returned entrepreneurs

said that they had never received external financial support, while the rest received financial support from different channels.

According to the above analysis, the acquisition of asset resources in the process of opportunity development depends mainly on the initial capital accumulation of returned entrepreneurs and the financial support provided by various financial institutions.

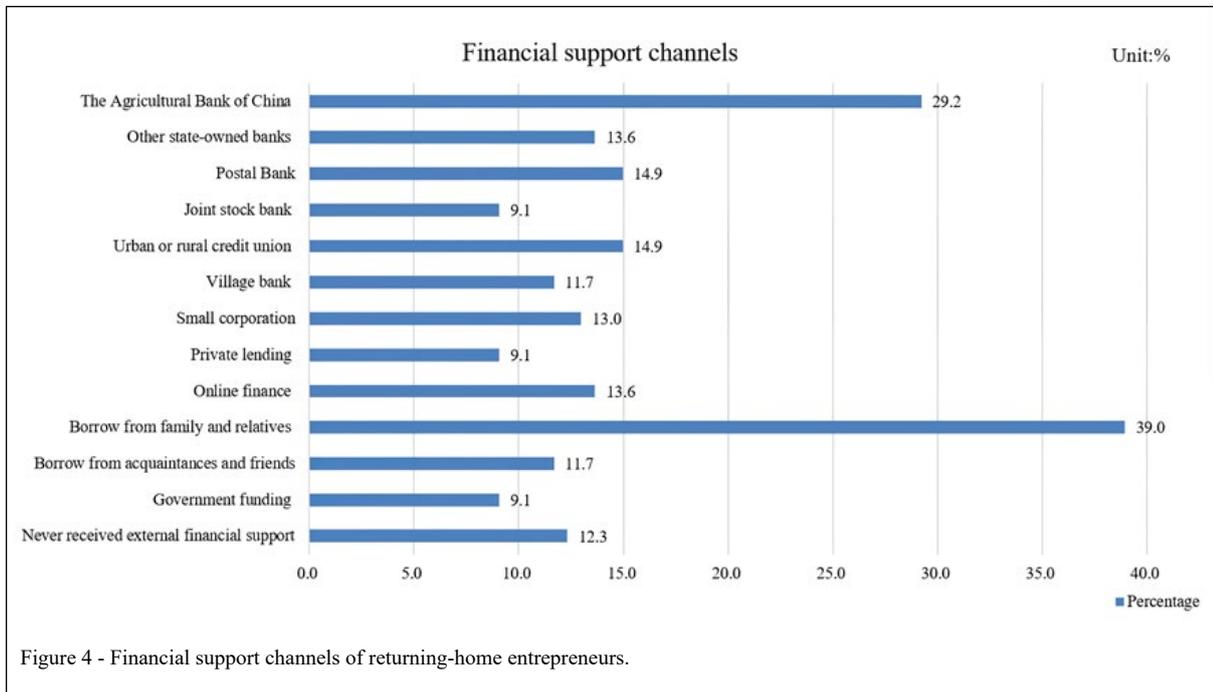
Knowledge resource acquisition

1) Previous work experience and social relations of entrepreneurs

The experience of migrant workers can help them understand the industry and business operations and obtain business opportunities for entrepreneurship. In addition, 90% of these entrepreneurs have had previous experience leading cadres. Conversely for farmers who are returning-home entrepreneurs, the previous social relationships formed in their previous cadre work resulted in the accumulation of network resources and the development of a reputation. This provided these returning entrepreneurs with the opportunity to obtain legitimacy in entrepreneurial organizations and thus facilitated the migrant workers returning to their hometown for entrepreneurship. Conversely, the group of migrant workers with experience leading cadres may be more highly qualified and may have a higher opportunity sensitivity and identification ability.

2) Knowledge and talent output of Universities and scientific research institutions

Universities and scientific research institutions can provide the knowledge and talents



necessary for entrepreneurial activities, thus promoting the establishment of new enterprises. In the pilot areas of returning-home entrepreneurs, some urban areas with start-up businesses began to establish entrepreneurial universities to provide necessary talents and technical resources.

3) Professional services and guidance provided by intermediaries

Through the development of an understanding of the needs of start-ups, intermediary institutions provide them with professional services and guidance. Some pilot counties (cities and districts) began to explore mechanisms in which the government would purchase services from social organizations, cultivate and expand specialized market intermediary service institutions, and provide in-depth services for the entrepreneurial activities of returned migrant workers and other personnel.

4) Entrepreneurship training carried out by the government

According to the investigation, for returned migrant workers, all county (city and district) government institutions place great importance on entrepreneurship training and skill training. They do the following: prepare and implement various training plans; integrate existing

training resources and attract new training institutions; develop multilevel training projects; strengthen the construction of the entrepreneurship teachers' team; and effectively carry out entrepreneurship training in various forms. This training has resulted in certain achievements, including improving the entrepreneurial ability of the returned migrant workers and other personnel, increasing the number of successful entrepreneurs and employees, promoting the orderly flow of trainees and their transfer to employment, and promoting the cultivation of an entrepreneurial atmosphere.

According to the above analysis, with their own resource elements and varying degrees of capabilities, the returned entrepreneurs, universities, scientific research institutions, intermediary service institutions and government all participate in the development of returned entrepreneurial opportunities. The previous experience and social relations of returned entrepreneurs help to identify opportunities and establish resources; universities and scientific research institutions provide talents, technology and other resources for returned entrepreneurs; intermediary service institutions provide information, services and other resources for returned entrepreneurs; and the government provides entrepreneurship training for returned entrepreneurs to improve their entrepreneurship quality and ability.

System support

In the home entrepreneurship ecosystem, the government is the main source of institutional support. Institutional support, including government financial policies, can also create a good entrepreneurial environment, which can help returned entrepreneurs develop opportunities and build a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

*Policy support**1) Simplification of Administrative Examination and Approval Procedures for Entrepreneurship*

The work summary of 23 pilot counties (cities and districts) revealed that approximately half of the counties (cities and districts) reported that they had deepened commercial reform, improved the government service efficiency, and relaxed the entry threshold for innovation and entrepreneurship. The commercial reform of counties (cities and districts) has achieved initial results and has lowered the threshold for participation in innovation and entrepreneurship. As shown in Table 2, many migrant workers returning-home to start businesses think that the administrative approval processes of villages and towns are relatively convenient.

2) Construction of Entrepreneurship Parks for Migrant Workers Returning-Home

The work summaries of the pilot-area migrant workers returning-home to start businesses reveal that the counties (cities and districts) have done much work and exerted considerable effort in construction and development activities to allow migrant workers returning-home to start businesses; these counties have also strengthened the migrant workers' entrepreneurship training and other aspects, producing positive effects. In the work summaries of the 23 counties (cities and districts) sampled, each county (city and district) describes plans to build various levels of entrepreneurial parks and platforms for migrant workers returning-home, such as an entrepreneurial park, an entrepreneurial incubation base, an industrial demonstration base, and an e-commerce entrepreneurial base.

Financial support

To support returned migrant workers and other people returning to their hometown for entrepreneurship, local governments play a substantial role in providing guidance for financial funds, increasing the financial support, and strengthening

Table 2 - Evaluation of administrative approval procedures by returning-home entrepreneurs.

Research Project	Degree	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Simplicity of administrative approval procedures in villages and towns	Little	155	9
	Less	52	3
	More	464	27
	Much More	654	38
	Large	396	23
	Total	1720	100
Number of administrative procedures in the registration process	1-5	499	29
	6-10	310	18
	11-15	877	51
	>15 ↑	34	2
	Total	1720	100
Number of registered seals	≤5	619	36
	>5	1101	64
	Total	1720	100
Registration waiting days	≤One week	430	25
	One week-Two weeks	138	8
	Two weeks-Three weeks	258	15
	Three weeks-Four weeks	52	3
	>One month	843	49
	Total	1720	100

financial services. The governments of 23 pilot counties (cities and districts) have formulated targeted support programs according to the local conditions and actual needs of their returning entrepreneurs and have provided entrepreneurial guarantee loans for qualified returning entrepreneurs. Financial departments administered loan discount funds and optimized the loan approval process.

The survey found that villages and towns provide more preferential and support policies for entrepreneurs returning-home, as shown in table 3. A total of 75% of people think that there are more tax preferences in villages and towns, and 69% of people think that villages and towns provide more financial support for entrepreneurs returning to their hometown. The vast majority of entrepreneurs returning to their hometown think that villages and towns provide more tax preferences, financial support and credit support for migrant workers returning to their hometown. The tax and financial support policies guided by the government enable the returning migrant workers to realize actual benefits. Stimulating the enthusiasm of migrant workers to return home and start businesses, these policies have achieved success by lowering the entrepreneurship threshold and removing some of the barriers to entrepreneurship.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the descriptive statistical method, starting from the two dimensions of resource acquisition and institutional support of entrepreneurial opportunity development, this study conducted a cross-sectional analysis of the entrepreneurship of migrant workers returning-home from two aspects: the horizontal dimension of opportunity development and the vertical dimension of the main body of the entrepreneurial system. In addition, regarding the

current situation of migrant workers' returning-home and entrepreneurship, this paper conducted a detailed examination focusing on three aspects: the basic situation, resource acquisition and system support.

The results of the research on the entrepreneurial activities in the pilot areas of returning-home entrepreneurs show that entrepreneurs, governments, financial institutions, intermediaries, universities and scientific research institutions and other entrepreneurial entities all participate in the development of opportunities in the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem. These entrepreneurs, with their own resources and capabilities, help the returned entrepreneurial enterprises establish resources, promote the production and operation of the returned entrepreneurial enterprises, and, with other ecosystem members, jointly promoted the development of opportunities for the returned entrepreneurial enterprises. Based on the above analysis, this paper summarized the path for entrepreneurs to participate in the development of opportunities in the home entrepreneurship ecosystem, as shown in figure 5.

The specific path exploration results are as follows:

(1) Paths by which entrepreneurs can participate in opportunity development. Entrepreneurs play a major role in the returning-home entrepreneurial ecosystem. Migrant workers who are returning-home entrepreneurs have accumulated capital through their previous work experience. This capital represented important start-up capital and an asset that enables migrant workers to return to their hometowns and start businesses. The previous work experience and social relations accumulated by the migrant workers who are returning-home entrepreneurs comprise knowledge resources for returning-home entrepreneurship and help to improve the core competitive advantage of their enterprises.

Table 3 - The evaluation of financial support and financial services for returninghome entrepreneurs.

Research project	Frequency	-----Degree-----					Total
		Little	Less	More	Much More	Large	
Financial support of villages and towns	Frequency (person)	189	344	533	533	121	1720
	Percentage (%)	11	20	31	31	7	100
Preferential tax policies for villages and towns	Frequency (person)	189	241	585	533	172	1720
	Percentage (%)	11	14	34	31	10	100
Credit support of villages and towns	Frequency (person)	189	344	533	379	275	1720
	Percentage (%)	11	20	31	22	16	100

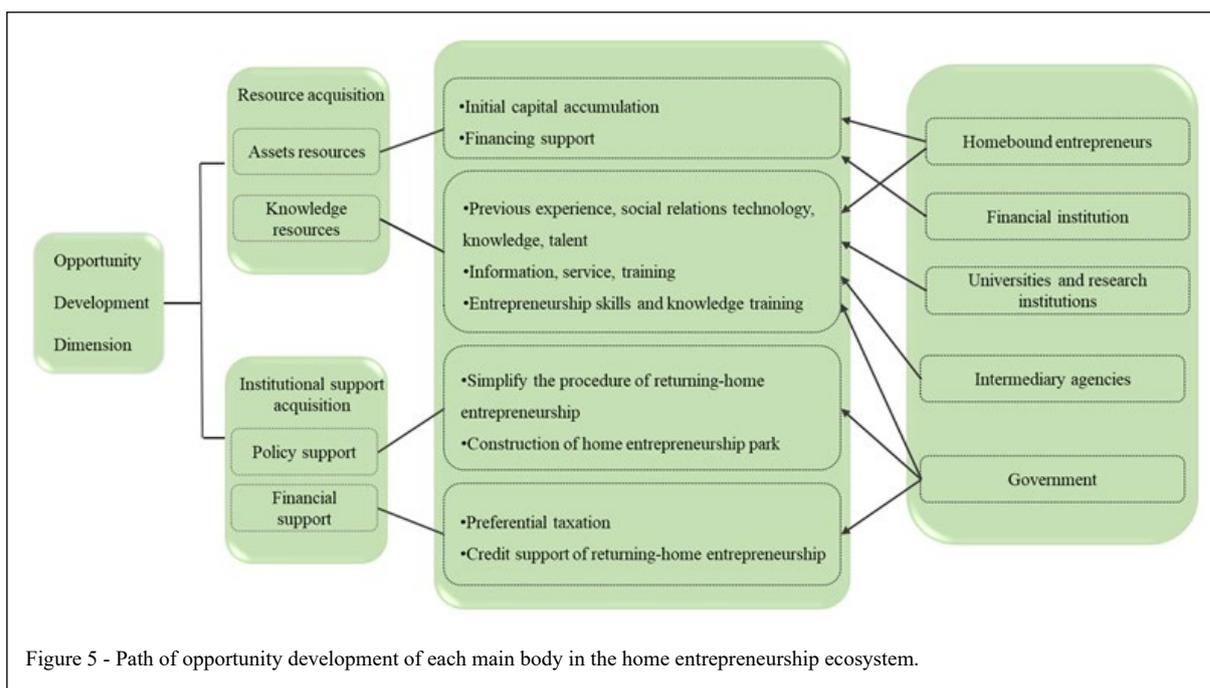


Figure 5 - Path of opportunity development of each main body in the home entrepreneurship ecosystem.

(2) Paths by which financial institutions can participate in opportunity development. By enabling returning-home entrepreneurs to obtain capital, financial institutions make it convenient for enterprises to secure financing. In addition to the capital accumulation of entrepreneurs themselves, investments from financial institutions are also a main source of initial start-up capital for entrepreneurs. Financial institutions not only provide financial support for the development of entrepreneurial opportunities but also make use of their own capital advantages and their relationships in the capital market and raw materials and product markets to help enterprises identify and develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

(3) Paths by which universities and research institutions can participate in opportunity development. Universities and scientific research institutions transport talents, technology and other resources for start-ups. These resources can help enterprises obtain knowledge resources, which are scarce and irreplaceable; thus, the core competitiveness and competitive advantage of start-ups can be improved.

(4) Path by which intermediary agencies can participate in opportunity development. For migrant workers of returning-home entrepreneurs, intermediary agencies provide in-depth and professional services, such as consultation and guidance, training services,

procedures agency, legal services, quality and safety, and information services. Intermediary agencies help migrant workers and other returned entrepreneurs to solve ability problems, resources and experience encountered in the establishment, operation and development of enterprises.

(5) Path by which the government can participate in opportunity development. The government provides support for returned entrepreneurship enterprises through policy guidance, such as by simplifying the administrative approval procedures for returned entrepreneurship and building a returned entrepreneurship park. The government plays a guiding role and provides incentives for returned entrepreneurs. Conversely the government provides financial support for returned entrepreneurship activities through tax preferences and credit support measures to reduce the entrepreneurial threshold. In addition, the government also improved the personal skills of returned entrepreneurs through various forms of entrepreneurship training, which provided knowledge resources for returned entrepreneurs and improves the success rate of returned entrepreneurship.

Prospects

Due to the current focus on hot issues, such as mass entrepreneurship and innovation and the Rural

Revitalization Strategy, this study takes opportunity development as the main focus of research. This paper refers to the two dimensions of resource acquisition and institutional support and, based on field survey data of the pilot areas of migrant workers returning-home to start businesses, introduces the entrepreneurial ecosystem as the research perspective. This paper built a model mechanism for opportunity development in the returning-home entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The theoretical significance of this study is as follows. First, the entrepreneurial subjects are analyzed and discussed according to the two dimensions of resources and policies, which provides a new perspective for the research of entrepreneurial opportunities. Second, this study regards each subject as an integral part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and analyzes the path of each subject's participation in the development of entrepreneurial opportunities back home from the internal perspective. Third, this study is helpful to enrich the current emerging green entrepreneurship theory. Fourth, this paper not only enriches institutional theory but also promotes the integration of institutional theory and entrepreneurial research theory.

The application value of this study is as follows. Based on the current hot topics of mass entrepreneurship and innovation and the Rural Revitalization Strategy, this study examines the entrepreneurial activities of migrant workers returning-home. Starting from the level of the government and the level of returned entrepreneurial enterprises, this paper optimizes the mechanism of the development of opportunities for returned entrepreneurs, thereby providing a more valuable and original research contribution, which has more practical guiding significance. This paper may be helpful in further promoting the urbanization of our country and in promoting the coordinated development of regions.

Research deficiencies and prospects

By summarizing the theoretical literature and using data analysis and a case test, this study focuses on the opportunity development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem back home. However, in this study, there are still some deficiencies that need further study and improvement.

For example, the data of this study came from 23 home entrepreneurship pilot areas. Although, the pilot areas are distributed in the eastern, central and western regions of China and reflect a certain representativeness, the sample range can be further expanded in future research, and thus, the conclusions

will be more convincing. In addition, in the research on the development of returned entrepreneurial opportunities, this study does not distinguish the industries of entrepreneurial enterprises. In the process of opportunity development, the cooperation mechanism between enterprises in different industries and the main body may be slightly different. Therefore, in a follow-up study, we can conduct a deeper exploration and discussion of the different industries. Finally, this study focuses on the analysis of a single path in the main body of the entrepreneurial ecosystem but does not examine the relationships between the main subjects. On the basis of this study, follow-up research can build network connections in the main body of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and demonstrate the integration mechanism of the entrepreneurial development paths in the ecosystem.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The founding sponsors had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, and in the decision to publish the results.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed equally for the conception and writing of the manuscript. All authors critically revised the manuscript and approved of the final version.

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