

Analysis of Environmental Factors Affecting Female Entrepreneurship in Remote Areas of China and Its Prospect

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Abstract: In the context of the current rural revitalization policy and the post-pandemic era, more and more entrepreneurs are choosing to start businesses in remote areas. Among them, female entrepreneurs should not be ignored. This paper focuses on four environmental factors that currently affect female entrepreneurs. It is hoped that this study can help female entrepreneurs better use environmental factors for future female entrepreneurs and adapt measures to local conditions. This paper mainly adopts the chart method and case analysis. This paper finds that the current four environmental factors: the gender equity environment, the entrepreneurial environment in China's rural areas, the entrepreneurship environment provided by social media and the internet, and the entrepreneurship in the post-epidemic era are very suitable for female entrepreneurship in remote areas, and will bring a positive impact.

Keywords: Gender equity, Women entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship in rural areas, Remote areas

1. Introduction

The research is written under the condition that there are still blank spaces in research on environmental factors affecting female entrepreneurship in remote areas in China. The published paper available nowadays is mostly based on the Internet environment for start-up businesses and the rise of family status after women start their businesses. This paper will consider the environmental factor which affected rural areas' women entrepreneurship based on the internet and social media environment, the benefit of starting businesses in rural areas, and the current environment of gender equity in China. The research contains a case study of Li Ziqi, who started her own business in rural areas by uploading videos online. This case study will help people to analyze the women's entrepreneurship environment in China's rural areas. In addition, the paper also has a wide significance. It not only can help women in China's rural areas to fully take advantage of the current environmental benefits of starting businesses in rural areas by using the internet and social media, but also can provide references and data to evaluate the future trend of women's entrepreneurship.

2. Analysis of Environmental Factors Affecting Female Entrepreneurship in Remote Areas

2.1. The Gender Equity Environment

The present gender equity environment in China is relatively open. Since the year 1980, China has devoted itself to eliminating inequality between two genders. The presence of women leaders in many fields has also had a positive impact on management in all fields [1]. The gender inequality problem is not evident in urban areas, but it still exists in rural areas.

2.1.1. The Women's Health Perspective

From maternal and child health to women's health institutions in our country, the reform of the distribution, as a whole, tends to be more market-oriented, and infant mortality is lowering. Maternal and child health resource allocation in the dimensions are in a state of optimal fair, the Gini coefficient is less than 0.3, the maternal and child health resource allocation in the geographic dimensions of Gini coefficient between 0.1298 ~ 0.4256, The number of midwives and medical devices was the highest (≥ 10000 yuan), both exceeding 0.4, indicating the existence of unfair warning[2].

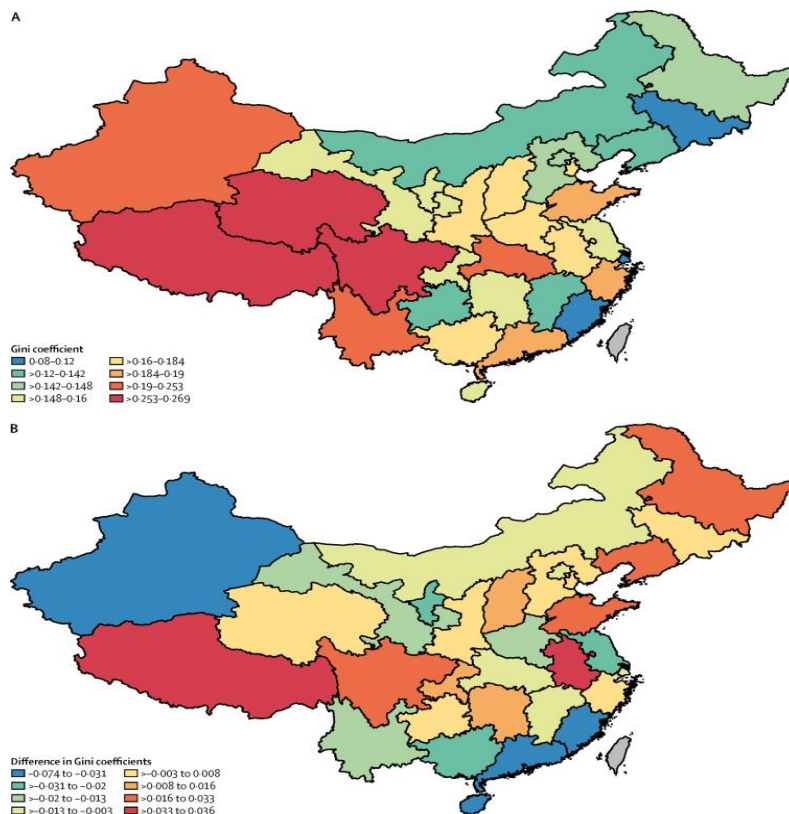


Figure 1: Inequality of maternal mortality ratios at the province level in mainland China Measurements were calculated as Gini coefficients [3].

Besides, in terms of women's health, 62.9 percent of women considered themselves in good general health, and the prevalence rate of gynecological diseases was 13.2 percent [4].

2.1.2. Other Perspectives

From the education perspective, according to the fifth national census, the educational gap between men and women in China is gradually narrowing, but men still have an advantage.

In terms of political participation, men are more politically engaged than women, especially in rural areas [5]. From the perspective of marriage and family status, Chinese women's consciousness of subjectivity has been strengthened and they enjoy equal rights of family property ownership and inheritance with men [6].

2.2. The Entrepreneurial Environment in China's Rural Areas

2.2.1. The Promotion and Improvement of Infrastructure

China has been promoting the development of digital inclusive finance in rural areas since 2005 and has increased the availability and coverage of financial business services. There are also significant improvements in the living conditions of farmers in payment, credit, insurance, and other aspects. In this case, it is more advantageous for more farmers to start their businesses. Over 99 percent of administrative villages across the country now have fiber-optic and 4G connectivity, and all villages have broadband access. In terms of logistics settings in remote areas, most villages and towns have set up express terminal outlets to improve the convenience of express delivery [7].

2.2.2. The Implementation and Promotion of the Rural Revitalization Policy

Rural revitalization was proposed in 2017 and is currently in the implementation stage. The rural revitalization policy not only promotes the construction of infrastructure but also encourages college students to return to work in rural areas. Such policies have provided rural areas with talents, improved local quality, provided residents with the necessary knowledge for starting businesses, and laid a solid human resource foundation for starting businesses in remote areas.

2.3. The Entrepreneurship Environment Provided by Social Media and the Internet

At present, the Internet has entered the Era of WEB 3.0, which is characterized by: content created by users and data belonging to users, but at the same time, technology companies use algorithms to push traffic to users, forming the "Echo-chamber" effect. Under the current environment of Internet plus and new media, China has more than 800 million Internet users, who spend an average of 4 hours on the Internet. In this environment, diversified business models are provided. In addition, the Internet is also characterized by "decentralization", and new media is more inclined to the mass mode of communication through circular layer communication and user-centered. This way of communication makes user relationships stronger, stickiness high, and cost-saving. Today's new media has two characteristics: personalization and high trust, so more entrepreneurs choose to engage in the media industry. At the same time, thanks to the spread of the integration of post-feminist thoughts, media tolerance has been improved. More and more women have started expressing their thoughts on social media such as Tiktok and Weibo [8].

2.4. Entrepreneurship in the Post-epidemic Era

The post-epidemic era has had a great impact on the rural economic structure and population structure. Because of its non-contact, visual, and interactive characteristics, rural entrepreneurship has become a new trend in agricultural product sales [9].

As a fusion form of rural economy and a new media entrepreneurship model, "agricultural products + live streaming" has had a positive impact on the sales of agricultural products. More and more agricultural products are sold directly from their origin to consumers. Such a new sales method not only ensures the freshness of fresh food but also increases the direct income of farmers. But at the same time, there are still problems caused by imperfect infrastructure and supply chains.

3. Case Study Analysis of Li Ziqi

3.1. Entrepreneurial Background

In 2012, The total number of Internet users in China was 538 million and the Internet penetration rate was 39.9 percent. Among them, the number of mobile users reached 388 million, and mobile phones surpassed desktop terminals to become the largest Internet terminal for the first time [10]. We media creation has begun to rise in China. Take Weibo for example. At the end of 2016, the net monthly active users of the app increased by 77 million to 313 million, with mobile devices accounting for 90%. Daily active users also grew to 139 million [11].

3.2. Grow Path

3.2.1. Initial Start-up Business

In 2012, Li Qi began to upload her videos on the Meipai platform to make a living. In 2015, she began to make short videos of making traditional food by herself and upload her works on multiple social media platforms such as Meipai and Weibo. In 2016, as live-streaming, short videos, and other forms became the new hot spots of we-media content innovation, Sina Weibo launched a plan to support content creators, and Li Qi's video creation was further developed and recommended to millions of users. In April, the short video "Cherry Wine" became popular on the home page.

3.2.2. Setting up a Joint Venture

In July 2017, Li Qi and Wei Nian set up Sichuan Ziqi Culture Communication Co., LTD., with 51% and 49% shares respectively. Li Ziqi serves as the legal representative and executive director. The general division of labor between the two is as follows: Ziqi culture is responsible for content creation, while Weinan carries out commercial layout around "Ziqi" IP. At present, Li Qi's videos have been uploaded to Weibo, Bilibili, iQiyi, and other mainstream video media platforms in China. By July 2022, she has uploaded 143 original videos online.

3.2.3. Setting up Youtube Channels

In the same year, Li Qi started her own Youtube channel, and she continued to upload videos from 2017 to 2021. In 2020, the number of fans on the channel exceeded 10 million, and she became the first Chinese writer with more than 10 million fans on this platform.

3.2.4. Opening the Brands' Tmall Store

On August 7, 2018, Li Qi opened her Tmall store. In the following year, the total sales of 21 products in the whole store exceeded 1.3 million yuan, and the total sales reached 71 million yuan. The launch of Luosifen is to make an attractive brand into a real gold absorption brand. In August 2020, Liuzhou City Bureau of Commerce and Li Ziqi brand announced that Li Ziqi would invest in a factory to produce its brand product.

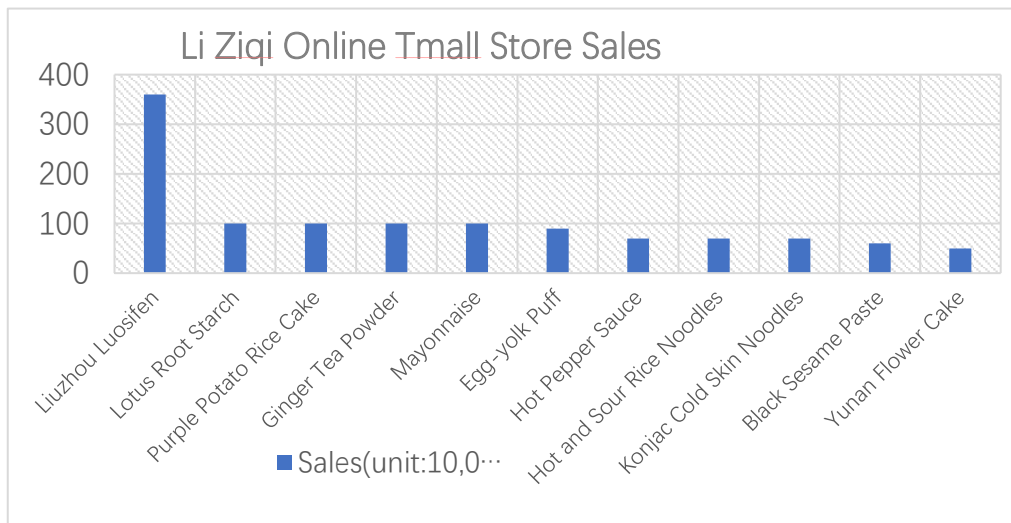


Figure 2: Li Ziqi Online Tmall Store Sales.

3.3. Brand Operation Mode

3.3.1. For the Domestic Video Platform

"Li Qi", from a we-media blogger to the founder of a food company, the IP presented in her videos has played a significant role. Before Li Ziqi, there were a few bloggers with similar content. But Li does a good job of continuing to convey the image of a woman in her videos, rather than just serving her video content. Coupled with the photography team shooting the unique rural scenery of the Chinese village, Li Ziqi created a unique video atmosphere, making Li Qi's video fans sticky.

3.3.2. For Foreign Video Platforms

Li's entry into YouTube and creation of the highest number of followers for a Chinese YouTuber is also a typical case showing that Asian women should not be stereotyped as purportedly shy, soft-spoken, submissive racial 'essence'[12]. It shows them a robust and ingenious image of Chinese women, which may alleviate some stereotypes such as "Yellow Fever" which is considered one of the discrimination problems happening in traditional media industries.

4. Analysis of the Entrepreneurial Environment of Li Ziqi

From the above analysis, it is not difficult to find that the success of Li Ziqi lies in the uniqueness of her video, which successfully sets up a capable image different from the traditional female solitary characteristics, and she is proficient in adapting and taking the advantage of social media. In terms of social media use, Li has the highest number of followers on Weibo and Tiktok. The users' characteristics of the Weibo and Tiktok platforms are similar in that most users are born in the 1990s and 2000s. The total number of microblog users born in the 1990s and 2000s accounts for 78% of the whole, and young women account for a high proportion, especially in the post-00s [12]. Ditto for Douyin, where about 90 percent of its highly active users are women who have posted videos of themselves. Users under 35 make up 70% of the total. Such an environment encourages more young female video creators like Li Qi to publish their work [13]. To sustain its brand popularity in the long term, the official brand's account on Weibo interacts with the fans who follow it to draw prizes to improve the stickiness of the brand. From the point of view of Internet +, after the success of the video business with traffic, Li Ziqi also skillfully combined the trend of the rise of e-commerce

platforms. They quickly set up an online shop in Tmall that provides many activities to sell the products with their brand characteristics. From the post-epidemic era of the entrepreneurial environment, in the establishment of their own brand's main product, Luosifen, the company will choose to do live streaming sales cooperating with KOLs to increase its income while also bringing popularity for its Tmall direct store.

5. The Future for Women's Entrepreneurship Based on Social Media

In the future, thanks to China's rural revitalization policy, more and more social media and e-commerce platforms will invest in the agricultural products industry such as Pinduoduo. In the four years from 2019 to 2022, Pinduoduo has shared 10 billion yuan of subsidies. To improve the supply chain and transportation problems in remote areas, Pinduoduo uses AI technology to provide merchants with route planning, automated warehousing, parcel sorting, and specific systems, which improves efficiency. At the same time, like other new e-commerce platforms, Pinduoduo also has its live broadcasting platform with goods, which further expands the popularity of agricultural products in various regions of the country and greatly contributes to the increase in sales. On the other hand, most users are young and open-minded, and it is believed that more women from remote areas will join the industry of Internet entrepreneurship in the future. Study shows that the rural female labor force's own equal gender role concept will significantly improve the probability of entrepreneurship; The concept of equal gender role plays a greater role in promoting the survival entrepreneurship of female labor force with low education level [14].

6. Conclusion

This paper concludes that the current overall entrepreneurial environment is encouraging and suitable for women in remote areas based on the current gender equality environment, social media and internet entrepreneurial environment, entrepreneurial environment in remote areas, and the post-epidemic era. Through the case analysis of Li Ziqi, it is found that the rise of new media and e-commerce platforms has promoted the development of female entrepreneurship in remote areas. The space for improvement in this paper is: due to time and space reasons, field interviews and investigations in remote areas of China cannot be carried out, so the conclusion cannot be adapted to local conditions. In the future, more research may be done in this area to study the rural areas' entrepreneurship in China.

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