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Family education? Unpacking parental factors for tourism and hospitality students' entrepreneurial intention

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ABSTRACT

This paper advances a social influence perspective on the nurturing of tourism and hospitality students' entrepreneurial intention. Specifically, we hypothesize the mediated nature of the parent-offspring entrepreneurial intention link, and locate the key influencer at parents' attitude formation, rather than treating parents' attitudes as given. Our theorization and empirical results from analyses of Chinese tourism and hospitality students add to the ongoing academic discussions around students' intention for tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship, and bear implications for tourism and hospitality educators, practitioners, and policymakers alike.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship in tourism and hospitality plays a prominent role in economic development (Altinay, Sigala, & Waligo, 2016; Lee, Hallak, & Sardeshmukh, 2016; Ndou, Mele, & Del Vecchio, 2019). Meanwhile, elucidating the entrepreneurial intention (EI) of university students has been a long-term preoccupation of entrepreneurship research: Ever since the 1980s, generations of scholars in entrepreneurship in general and in tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship, in particular, had begun to seek ways to understand the factors leading to this arguably reliable predictor for behavior generation (Carr & Sequeira, 2007; Esfandiar, Sharifi-Tehrani, Pratt, & Altinay, 2019; Gurel, Altinay, & Daniele, 2010; Krueger, 1993; Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000; Liñán, Urbano, & Guerrero, 2011; Shapero & Sokol, 1982). Notably, in the field of tourism and hospitality management, in the recent decade, the parental background has been proposed as one of the main factors that could influence entrepreneurial intentions (Altinay, Madanoglu, Daniele, & Lashley, 2012). However, while there is a handful of research that has garnered important insights into the parent background-EI link's existence, e.g., through examining family members' entrepreneurship experience (Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999), *or their attitudes with regards to getting involved in a family business* (Zellweger, Sieger, & Halter, 2011), little attention has been paid to symmetrically examine the components and mechanisms entailed in what we call parental background. Put differently, while learning from role models such as parents in relevant social contexts (e.g., home, education) is understood as essential for entrepreneurship (Zozimo, Jack, & Hamilton, 2017), we still know very little as to how tourism and hospitality students' intention to enter entrepreneurship is affected by specific aspects of their parents' background.

To fill this important gap in our knowledge, in this study, we propose a social influence perspective on the relationship between parents' attitude and tourism and hospitality students' entrepreneurial intention. Specifically, we stress the mediated nature of the

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relationship and trace parents' influence back to their attitude formation, rather than treating their attitude as given. Based on empirical data collected from university tourism and hospitality students in China, our analysis finds that said attitude is related to such factors as parents' human and financial capitals and family composition. Painting a clearer picture of the parent-student EI link than extant knowledge would allow, this article contributes to our ongoing debates around tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship (Fu, Okumus, Wu, & Köseoglu, 2019; Li, 2008) in the following meaningful ways. First, this study expands our current knowledge on the external factors of EI in the context of tourism and hospitality students (Zhang, Li, Liu, & Ruan, 2020). With insights on parents' human and financial capitals, the study provides a social influence perspective on how parents' normative and value judgments may form the basis of subjective norms, as outlined dominant models of entrepreneurial intention, such as the championed mode by Liñán and Chen (2009). We show that while parents foster students' personal growth, their attitudes are also prominent shapers of students' EI. In this sense, our research constitutes a valuable supplement to extant analyses of other parental influences such as psychological traits (Altinay et al., 2012).

Second, this research reveals the importance of understanding attitude formation for tourism and hospitality students' parents, who have been largely trivialized in existing research on tourism and hospitality education. Adding to current general knowledge on the effect of entrepreneurial perception EI (e.g., Kolvereid, 1996; Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999), our research shows that demographical and compositional characteristics of parents (e.g., parents' occupation, education, age, family income, number of children) have an impact on the formation of student's entrepreneurial attitudes.

Third, we further highlight the mediated nature of the parents-offspring EI link. Contrary to conventional wisdom on this relationship, our research shows that the impact of parental background is better explainable with a closer look at individual behavior and attitude, highlighting the specific mechanisms that could mediate said relationship.

Fourth, this paper, with our understudied empirical setting, contributes the Chinese piece to the big picture of the tourism and hospitality students' EI. Current literature offers valuable insights into the EI of tourism and hospitality students in the West (Altinay et al., 2012); as reaffirmed by our analysis, such links stand in the context of Chinese university tourism and hospitality students. Our research reveals that Chinese styled intergenerational interactions indeed show stronger collectivist tendencies, and children tend to comply with parental expectations (Chiu & Hong, 2011; Smith, Bond, & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2006).

For policymakers, this paper provides clues about fostering entrepreneurship among students in the tourism and hospitality schools and departments, especially against the background where entrepreneurial vitality among young people tends to be low in the developing world (Jaafar, Abdul-Aziz, Maideen, & Mohd, 2011). In China, one of the fastest-growing tourism markets and one of the biggest tourist origin countries in the world, the importance of tourism for economic growth has long been noted (Xiao, 2006). However, the Chinese government's recently elevated support has not been translated into tourism and hospitality students' EI and, subsequently, entrepreneurship entry into tourism. For instance, recent Chinese studies have shown that university tourism and hospitality graduates to payrolls decline year by year in tourism enterprises, the employment rate in the industry after graduation is only 10%–20%, which is a stark contrast to the boom in China's tourism markets, and also poses a great challenge to the professionalization and high-quality development of tourism industry (Yang, Song, & Wang, 2015). Our findings in this research could be of value to policymakers in China and other countries as they investigate the other reasons behind the striking contrast between support and low entrepreneurial vitality in tourism.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. After reviewing the extant literature and developing our social influence perspective, we introduce the research design, detailing the data and measurement. We then test our hypotheses on the effect of parents' attitudes on tourism and hospitality students' EI. We end this paper with a discussion of our findings and their implications.

2. Literature review and theory development

The decision to become an entrepreneur is a process that takes shape over time (Goethner, Obschonka, Silbereisen, & Cantner, 2012; Kautonen, van Gelderen, & Tornikoski, 2013). In the extant literature, "intention" is often seen as a prerequisite for the actual behavior when it is difficult to observe the latter (Bogatyreva, Edelman, Manolova, Osiyevskyy, & Shirokova, 2019). As the first step in a series of potential entrepreneurial activities (Krueger et al., 2000), EI therefore is considered to be the simplest and most effective predictor of behavior (Esfandiar et al., 2019; Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006; Kolvereid, 1996; Pomeransky & Khriplovich, 1999).

Extant research largely draws on cognitive models for EI to explain entrepreneurial decisions. Among these models, the most notable is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991), which has been widely applied in various fields (Arranz, Ubierna, Arroyabe, Perez, & Fdez. de Arroyabe, 2017; Autio, Robert, Klofsten, Parker, & Hay, 2001; Bird, 1988; Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Kautonen, van Gelderen, & Fink, 2015; Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Santos, Roomi, & Liñán, 2016; van Gelderen et al., 2008; Veciana, Aponte, & Urbano, 2005).

In this model, Ajzen (1991) defines intention as the willingness of a person to perform a given action, and argues that three antecedents mainly determine it, i.e., attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. According to this model, subjective norms reflect the influence of external factors on individual decision-making, i.e., the perception that "reference people" would (or would not) approve of the individual's decision to take certain actions. On the other hand, perceived behavioral control is the ability of an individual to perceive and perform certain behaviors. Krueger et al. (2000) concluded that the TBP model is widely regarded as having excellent consistency and accuracy. Since then, the TPB has gained increasingly current across related streams of research as a prominent analytical framework in the study of entrepreneurial intention.

The TPB model has a significant affinity to the social influence perspective, where individuals are understood as inherently social and susceptible to influence from our surroundings (Cialdini, 2005). Although acknowledging the role of individuals' awareness of and preference for entrepreneurship in forming their entrepreneurial attitudes (Ajzen, 2001; Autio et al., 2001; Kolvereid, 1996), the TBP

model argues that subjective norms are formed from normative beliefs, and the motivation to comply with these beliefs (Bird, 1988), which are often affected by the most influential groups for individuals (Krueger et al., 2000). Recent tourism and hospitality research has also proposed family background as one of the main factors influencing EI (Altinay et al., 2012). Therefore, we select to zoom in on tourism and hospitality students' parents to unpack the students' EI.

Parents are an important source of information, advice, and support for offspring's activities (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Following this logic, it is expected that parental attitudes would impact tourism and hospitality students' willingness to start a business. Yet, we argue that more important questions need to be asked, especially those "how" questions pertinent to the mechanisms through which parents influence students' EI. Krueger et al. (2000) consider perceived behavioral control and self-efficacy as similar constructs, with both reflecting an individual's perception or belief about whether or not they can adopt adaptive behavior in the face of challenge in an entrepreneurial environment. Ajzen (2002) emphasizes that the former construct entails the judgment on one's ability to become an entrepreneur and the perception of the controllability of behavior. Indeed, values and norms passed down by other people have been found to have a significant impact on how individuals perceive entrepreneurship (Casson & Giusta, 2007; Cooper, 1993; Mathews & Moser, 1995). In this sense, it can be argued that subjective norms first determine an individual's attitude and perceived behavior control, and then indirectly affect his EI (Autio et al., 2001; Fretschner & Weber, 2013; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Liñán & Rodríguez-Cohard, 2015). Therefore, we expect a positive effect of parents' attitude on their offspring's willingness to start a business, first by impacting the latter's attitude and through behavior control. In other words.

H1. Parental attitude will have a positive impact on tourism and hospitality student's personal attitude.

H2. Parental attitude will have a positive impact on tourism and hospitality student's perceived behavior control.

Accordingly, we put forward the following interrelated hypotheses on the mediating roles of individual entrepreneurial attitude (PA) and individual perceived behavior control (PBC).

H3. Personal attitude will have a positive impact on tourism and hospitality student's entrepreneurial intention.

H4. Perceived behavioral control will have a positive impact on tourism and hospitality student's entrepreneurial intention.

Although there has little consensus on what specific aspect of parenthood influences children's entrepreneurship entry the most, researchers generally believe that human capital, representing the collective knowledge and cognitive abilities of family members (Coleman, 1988), improves the cognitive ability of individuals to build and sustain businesses (e.g., Shane, 2003). As general human capital comes from life experiences, we take age and education to observe human capital. Specifically, in line with prior tourism and hospitality research (Ramos-Rodríguez, Medina-Garrido, & Ruiz-Navarro, 2012), we expect parents' age and education to have a significant impact on their attitude toward children starting their own business. Research has shown that age (Kautonen, Tornikoski, & Kibler, 2011) and education (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013) are associated with human capital differences in general. For example, achieving a certain age also means that the family member has established networks with important social contacts, i.e., colleagues or friends (Granovetter, 1985) through whom access to business-related information could come. Furthermore, given our research context of tourism and hospitality students in China, we are interested in the age-cohort aspects of parents' influence on the students' EI. The drastic economic and social change in China over the last 40 years created job market realties that are in stark contrast to each other for parents of different age-groups (Liu, McMahon, & Watson, 2014), i.e., parents born after the 1950s experienced the planned economy era where the stability of employment was the priority, meanwhile, parents born after the 1970s experienced the market economy era where entrepreneurship became a possibility (Yang & Li, 2008), opportunities for success and risks coexisted, and career choices were more diversified. We, therefore, hypothesize that.

H5. Parents' age will have a significant influence on parents' attitudes toward their children's entrepreneurship.

In addition to age, higher education levels also impact an individual's cognitive skills, enabling them to better understand and evaluate information. Particularly in the context of entrepreneurship, well-educated individuals are thought to be better at recognizing underexploited resources and taking advantage of economic opportunities (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Educational levels are also often associated with the likelihood of achieving economic status in society (Millán, Congregado, Román, van Praag, & van Stel, 2014). Following these insights, we expect that parents' human capital significantly impacts their attitude toward children starting their own business. Specifically, we hypothesize that.

H6. Parents' educational level will have a significant influence on parents' attitudes toward their children's entrepreneurship.

In addition, existing research finds that entrepreneurial experience improves family members' cognitive skills, and that information obtained through family members proves invaluable for entrepreneurship (Becker & Tomes, 1986). For instance, parents who have entrepreneurial experience might think they could use their connections and other resources to kick start the entrepreneurial activities needed for successful entrepreneurship. Based on these insights, we hypothesize that.

H7. Parents' prior entrepreneurial experience will significantly influence parents' attitudes to their children's entrepreneurship.

In addition to human capital, scholars have found that differences in financial capital, such as income level (Ramos-Rodríguez et al., 2012), affect how people evaluate the likely outcome of starting a business (Liñán, Nabi, & Kueger, 2013; Pinillos & Reyes, 2011). Financial capital availability is particularly important for young people as they attempt to build their businesses (Cassar, 2004), which is especially true when relationships with financial institutions and other creditors or investors are yet to be built. We expect that parents' financial capital will impact the way they regard their offspring's entrepreneurship. Related to this, research has shown that

individuals' occupation largely reflects their socio-economic status and the amount of resources at their disposal (Bian, 1996; Lin & Dumin, 1986). For instance, parents with certain occupations are more likely to accumulate business-related contacts that may also become useful information sources (Ganzeboom et al., 1992). Following this social capital line of reasoning, we expect that occupational categories will also play a role. We, therefore, hypothesize that.

H8. Parents' income levels will have a significant influence on parents' attitudes toward their children's entrepreneurship.

H9. Parents' occupational category will have a significant influence on their attitudes toward their children's entrepreneurship.

On top of the above hypotheses, we are curious to see if the students' family composition impacts their EI, especially given our empirical context of Chinese tourism and hospitality students. Compared with those Western countries, such as the USA and Canada, where individualistic values prevail, Eastern family typically shows a stronger collectivist tendency (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Sorge & Hofstede, 1983). For instance, parents tend to place greater psychological and emotional value on children (e.g., love, companionship, pride) and greater emphasis on behaviors that conform to parents' expectations (Chiu & Hong, 2011; Smith et al., 2006). We expect that different family compositions affect individuals' views confidence vis-à-vis the external world, hence the following hypothesis.

H10. Whether the students are an only child will significantly influence their parents' attitudes toward their entrepreneurship.

3. Research design and methods

3.1. Data sources

Final year students at universities are very commonly studied in the entrepreneurship literature (Autio et al., 2001; Esfandiar et al., 2019; Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006; Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999; Veciana et al., 2005). Besides, Reynolds, Bygrave, Autio, and Hay (2002) note that university graduates between 25 and 34 years old usually show the highest propensity to start their own business. Therefore, we selected final-year undergraduate and graduate students at tourism and hospitality management schools and departments as our study sample. To better reflect the overall population of Chinese university's tourism and hospitality students, the survey comprehensively considered the geographical location (Beijing, Northeast, Eastern, Central, and Western China) and institution status (national key universities and ordinary ones). Ensuring that each region contains one or two key universities, we eventually chose 23 tourism and hospitality schools and departments. Then at each sampled institution, we randomly selected students who meet the year requirements as respondents. The questionnaire survey started in February 2016 and ended in May 2016. A total of 570 questionnaires were distributed and collected 494 eventually. Fourteen of them were removed due to data missing, which renders the total number to 480.

In terms of geographical distribution, 78 respondents are from the universities in Beijing, 97 in Northeast China, 104 in Eastern China, 69 in Central China, and 132 in Western China. Among them, 234 respondents were from the tourism management schools or departments of national key universities (nicknamed "211 Project" Institutions). Altogether 129 master students and 22 Ph.D. students participated in the survey. The average age of respondents is 23.4 years old. The overall sex ratio of the sample was 44.6% for men and 55.4% for women. Table 1 breaks down the respondents in terms of their gender, age, stage of studies, university category (national key vs. ordinary), and geographical distribution.

3.2. Research method

The questionnaire consists of two parts: the basic information of individuals and parents and the measuring scale of EI. Among them, the measurement items of EI and its antecedents (entrepreneurial attitude and perceived behavior control) come from the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) designed by Liñán and Chen (2009), which has been shown in existing empirical studies as having good reliability and validity (Ferreira, Raposo, Rodrigues, Dinis, & do Paço, 2012; Francisco; Liñán, Rodríguez-Cohard, & Rueda-Cantuche, 2011). Simultaneously, the measurement of psychological properties for the students with Chinese cultural background also shows good applicability (Wu & Wu, 2008). The questionnaire utilized six items to measure tourism and hospitality students' EI, focusing on behavioral aspects of intention (Armitage & Conner, 2001). The personal entrepreneurial attitude was measured using five items employed in Krueger et al. (2000) and Goethner et al. (2012). Perceived behavior control consisted of six measurement items, and, to follow Ajzen's (2002) suggestion, included both self-efficacy and controllability elements.

This study regards the perception of parents' attitude as the main source of the subjective norm, which measures the perceived social pressure to (or not to) carry out entrepreneurial behaviors. A simple scale for the degree of an individual's perceived approval from "important others" for his entrepreneurial decision is usually used in existing research as a measurement (Krueger et al., 2000; Ajzen, 2001; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Liñán et al., 2015). In this paper, we redesigned the parents' attitude measurement scale to create an aggregate measure for the perceived parental attitudes to fully reflect parents' values and norms. To ensure the validity of the measurement items, we selected nine tourism and hospitality students' parents and conduct semi-structured interviews on the students' entrepreneurship. Based on the interviews, the original questions were further revised, eventually leading to four measurement items. Table 2 summarizes the overall survey items and descriptive statistics of the EI model.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Test of reliability and validity of variables

To ensure the reliability and validity of the empirical analysis, Chandler and Lyon (2001) recommend that the psychological scale's reliability and validity should be tested first. In this study, we use Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS 22 (IBM). The results show that all values range between 0.81 and 0.929 (see the last row in Table 3), all above the widely accepted threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Thus, our measurement scales show good internal consistency and may be considered as reliable. For validity analysis, content validity and structural validity have been carefully considered. On the one hand, we took much care to ensure that the parental attitude construct items are relevant and representative. And the rest is mainly based on the generally used scale used in the extant research. Thus, all items may be considered as matching the theoretical construction of our model.

Substantive validity here refers to the convergent and discriminant characteristics of the construct. Convergent validity can usually be assessed by factor analysis (Klein, Astrachan, & Smyrnios, 2005; Klein & Kleinman, 2002; Kreiser, Marino, & Weaver, 2002). In our study, the sample's KMO statistic is 0.945, which indicates the sample size is sufficient. And Bartlett's sphericity test is also significant ($p < 0.001$), which demonstrates that the strength of the relationship among variables is strong. Thus, it is suitable for factor analysis for the data. Table 3 presents the rotated factor matrix. Four factors were extracted, which is consistent with the questionnaire structure. The cumulative variance explained by the extraction is 69.33%. As may be observed, each item was restricted to load on its a priori specified factor only (All loadings > 0.5), which shows that the measurement scale's convergent validity is ideal.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also carried out. Multivariate normal distribution test results of the sample indicate that the corresponding multivariate kurtosis coefficient was 171.114, signifying that the sample fails the significance test and cannot satisfy the multivariate normal distribution assumption. In this case, estimations on Chi-square and standard error obtained by maximum likelihood (ML) analysis are not precise enough. Considering this, Satorra and Bentler (1994) proposed an S–B scaled method. This method mainly takes the adverse influences of kurtosis on estimation results into account. Based on it, the Chi-square achieved was referred to as the Satorra-Bentler scaled Chi-square test statistic. Relevant studies also proved that S–B correction was a valid method under conditions of non-normality (Chou, Bentler, & Satorra, 1991; Curran, West, & Finch, 1996; DiStefano, 2002). Therefore, the MLM estimator in Mplus7.0 was employed in this paper to carry out the CFA and subsequent structural equation model analysis for sample data. As a result, the associated Chi-square value and the standard error are Satorra-Bentler $\chi 2$ and robust standard error. Moreover, the CFA also shows that normalized factor loading values of all observed items are higher than 0.7 and composite reliability (CR) values of four latent variables range between 0.811 and 0.929 (>0.7) (Nunally, 1978), which further reflects preferable internal consistency. Model fit statistics suggest that the measurement model fits the data reasonably well.

The first step for evaluating the discriminant validity is calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) of any construct before comparing the AVE's square root with the correlations among the latent variables. As the discriminant validity indicates the extent to

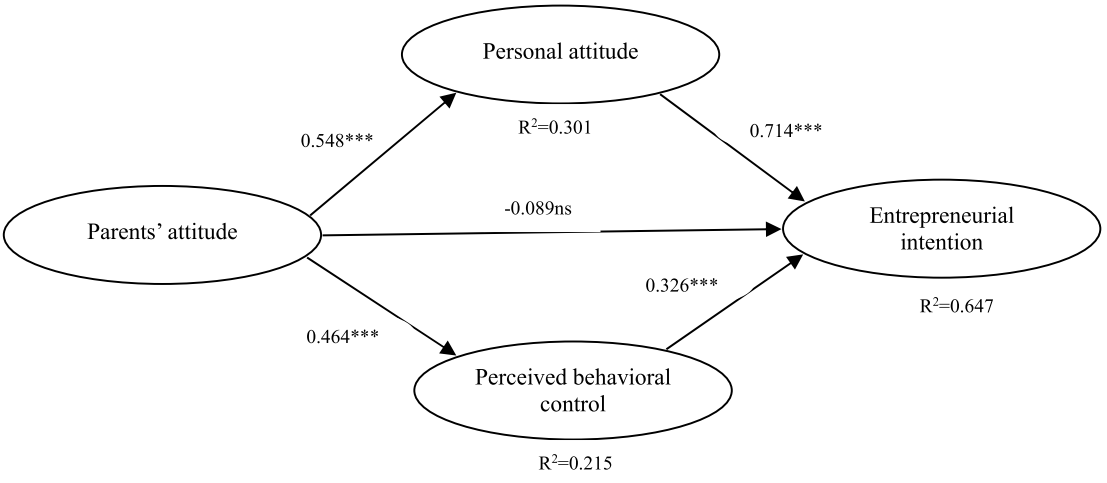

Fig. 1. Estimation Results for the Path Analysis.
NOTE: $\chi 2 = 345.925$, df = 184, RMSEA = 0.043, CFI = 0.966, TLI = 0.962, SRMR = 0.107
Significant levels: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

which a given construct is different from other constructs, the square root of the AVE of one latent variable should be greater than the correlation coefficients with other variables (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 4 displays the discriminate validity test results. In line with it, the square roots of all AVEs on the diagonal line are larger than the off-diagonal elements in the corresponding rows and columns, demonstrating good discriminant validity.

To further ensure discriminant validity and to control for common method variance, we estimated different specifications of the CFA model (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Firstly, we compared the fit of a four-factor structure to that of a one-factor structure. As shown above, our four-factor structure fits the data very well. The results of the one-factor structure ($\chi2 = 1384.380$, df = 189, RMSEA = 0.115, CFI = 0.752, TLI = 0.724, SRMR = 0.095) are significantly worse than for the four-factor structure (difference in $\chi2 = 1117.447$, df = 6, $p < 0.001$). And we also analyzed two-factor structures and three-factor structures. In every possible specification, the model fit was worse than in the original one where all items load on their theoretically specified factors, indicating that the measures we used are theoretically and empirically distinguishable, and that common method bias is not a concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

4.2. Results from the analysis

The model was assessed with SEM analysis with Mplus7.0. As can be seen from Fig. 1, only the relationship between parents' attitude EI was not significant, which is in line with results by other researchers (Autio et al., 2001; Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Santos et al., 2016). Therefore, we choose to analyze a more concise model that removes the direct path of parents' attitude on entrepreneurial intention. Fig. 2 presents all path coefficients and the model fit statistics. The estimation results show satisfactory fit indices, except SRMR ($\chi2 = 349.089$, df = 185, RMSEA = 0.043, CFI = 0.966, TLI = 0.961, SRMR = 0.107). Besides, all path coefficients are significant ($p < 0.001$). Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 are therefore accepted. The results suggest that college students who perceive that their parents think more positively about them creating a new venture will have a stronger entrepreneurial attitude and perceived behavioral control. At the same time, personal attitude and perceived behavioral control will positively influence tourism and hospitality students' EI. The model also explains 64.3% of the variance in EI based on PA and PBC. This figure is even higher than the results of Liñán and Chen (2009) based on Spanish and Taiwanese university students, which are 57.9% and 57.8%, respectively. As may be considered, the revised model shows better explanatory power for the analysis of Chinese college students' entrepreneurial intention. The standardized path coefficient and its standard error of the whole model are summarized in Table 5.

4.3. Analysis of the influencing factors of parents' attitude

The above results confirmed that the parents' attitude does have an important impact on tourism and hospitality students' EI. Yet, which factors lead to differences in the parents' attitude? To answer this question, we will use the univariate analysis to further explore the influence mechanism of various relevant factors on parents' attitude.

Dependent Variable: Through the factor analysis of the four observation items related to parents' attitude, we obtained the score coefficient of each observation indicator, which reflects the important level of each observation indicator to the explanation of the common factor. Therefore, this score coefficient could be adopted as weight. After normalization processing, the parents' comprehensive score was obtained to be regarded as the dependent variable.

Independent Variables: As mentioned earlier, the independent variables include parents' age, educational level, occupational category, entrepreneurial experience, family income, as well as whether the family has only one child. Age, educational level, occupational category, and entrepreneurial experience are specific information on individual characteristics. Therefore, in the setting of items, we mainly focused on one of the parents who impacted respondents' career choices in the questionnaire. What should be specified is that due to the diversity of occupations, a comprehensive classification method that takes into consideration occupational hierarchy[2] and nature of the employer was adopted by the paper, which divided occupations into six categories: administrative official, business manager/employer, the ordinary staff of administrative institutions, self-employed, farmer (including peasant-workers without permanent residence in cities), and ordinary employee of enterprises. Parents' education levels were divided into eight levels from low to high: the number one (1) indicates elementary school level education and below, while the number eight (8) represents a doctorate. The other two classification indicators are items about whether the parents have prior entrepreneurial experience and whether the student comes from a single-child family. If the answer is yes, the variable would be set as 1; otherwise, the variable would be 0. In addition, annual household incomes (in RMB) were processed by logarithmic processing, with the addition of the term of squared income, so as to observe possible non-linear correlations between parents' attitude and household income. Descriptive statistics for the measurement variables are summarized in Table 6.

5. Results

The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 22 (IBM). The three classification indicators, i.e., only child (or not), entrepreneurial experience, and occupational category, are introduced to the model as factors. And the other continuous variables are introduced to the model as covariates. The full factorial model was evaluated through the Type-III variance decomposition method at

[2] The classification of occupation class is inspired by Bian's (2004) and Lu's (2004) approach to the division of social classes in China.

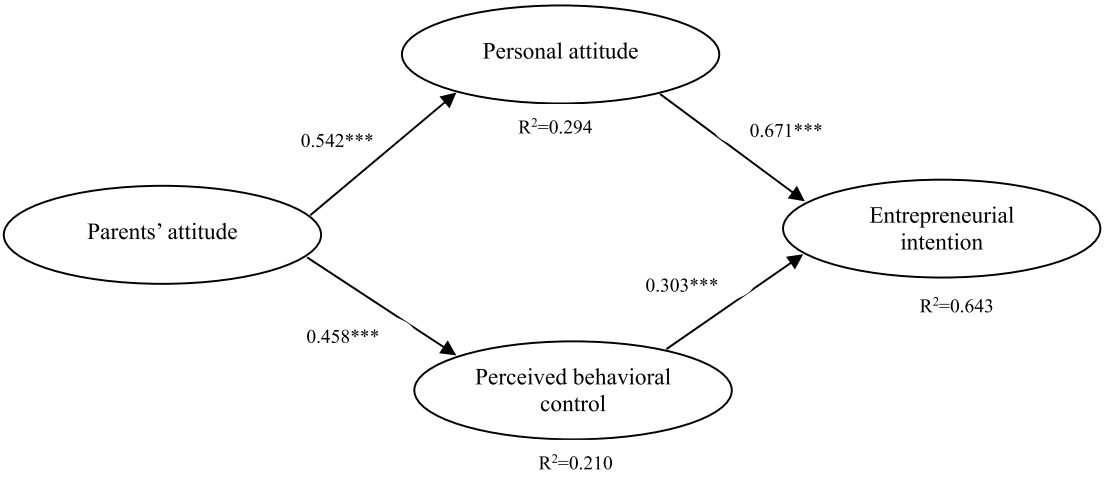

Fig. 2. Estimation Results for the Path Analysis. *NOTE*: $\chi 2 = 349.089$, df = 185, RMSEA = 0.043, CFI = 0.966, TLI = 0.961, SRMR = 0.107 Significant levels: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

first. The results shows that first-order and second-order interaction terms between the three factors (single-child family, entrepreneurial experience, and occupational category) did not pass the significance test. Therefore, only the main effects of each factor on the dependent variable were observed. Levene's test of equality of error variances shows that F-value is 1.009 (sig. 0.452); thus the null hypothesis (the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups) cannot be rejected. In this sense, we can infer that our sample fulfills the homogeneity of variance requirements and is suitable for variance analysis. The specific parameters and the test results of the model are shown in Table 7.

From the results, it is evident that age, family income, whether the only child or not, and occupational category significantly impact parents' attitude. Therefore, hypotheses 5, 8, 9, and 10 are supported. The other two indicators (Parents' educational level and whether they have the entrepreneurial experience) are not significant at the 95% level. Specifically, parents' age shows a negative correlation with their attitudes. That is, older parents tend to be more conservative in their children's entrepreneurial choices, which may be explained by the special time-periods in China's recent history in which these parents came to age and started working. In our sample, the respondents' parents are between 43 and 61 years old. Most of them have gone through China's whole transition process from the planned economy to the market economy. Therefore, their mindset and values may have been affected by the times of the planned economy. For instance, the popular Chinese sayings from those periods such as "Officialdom (public servant) is the natural career choice for good scholars" and "having a secure job (iron rice bowl) should be the priority" are often held as wisdom among Chinese of their age group. A job in the public sector or for the government after graduation is generally considered a desirable career choice for their children. In contrast, they showed a clear attitude of risk aversion to entrepreneurship. The older the parents are, the deeper they are affected by their times, and the more obvious their attitude of risk aversion will be towards entrepreneurship.

Secondly, the coefficients of household income and its square term are significant at the 99.9% level ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, we may think that annual household income and parents' attitude form a U-type relationship. With the increase of annual household income, parents' supportive attitude to their offspring's entrepreneurship decreases first but then increases. One possible explanation for this is that low-income families tend to be in the lower social strata; parents in such families often may have limited social resources, making it difficult to help their children's career development. Generally, they are proud of their children who complete higher education. Besides, they will have an open and supportive attitude towards their children's occupational choice, which makes their children receive more positive information in the face of entrepreneurial choice.

On the one hand, for high-income families, the parents' financial resources may enable them to deal with the risk of failure in their children's entrepreneurship. Therefore, these parents are usually willing to respect and encourage their children to make career choices according to their interests. On the other hand, compared with the middle-income class, higher-income groups generally have more social resources, which may enable them to provide needed help for their children to start a business. As a result, tourism and hospitality students from high-income families are more likely to perceive the support from their parents in the face of entrepreneurial choices.

Furthermore, family composition in terms of the number of children significantly impacts the parents' attitude; Parents with more than one child show more positive attitudes toward their children's entrepreneurship. Research has argued that the idea of filial piety is exacerbated in single-child families, where Chinese parents tend to place their ideas on the children (Deutsch, 2006). They expect their children to follow their arrangements to achieve these aspirations. With the only child as the sole carrier of the parents' ideals,

parents are prone to be risk aversion when their offspring is faced with a career choice with high uncertainty, such as being an entrepreneur. Ultimately, this leaves only-child tourism and hospitality students less aware of their parents' support for their entrepreneurial choices.

Furthermore, with the ordinary enterprise employees as the control group, the results show that different occupational categories can significantly affect parents' attitude. Specifically, administrative officials and business managers, including the private business owners, tend to be more supportive of children's tourism entrepreneurial choices, which is similar to why the parents in higher-income families have more positive attitudes. Administrative officials and business executives, on top of the occupational hierarchy, have higher salaries and more social resources. They can also provide better support for their children (e.g., experience, advice, financial support, etc.) who decide to start a business or even themselves participate in their children's business. As a result, it is expected that the parents of the two occupational categories show a more supportive attitude than the control group. In contrast, the ordinary staff in administrative institutions is found to have negative attitudes toward children's entrepreneurship. This may be due to the influence of the professional environment on individual cognitions. Employees in public and administrative institutions are still the most protected occupational group in China. Long term stable and secure working environment is likely to cause parents in this occupational group to further exclude their children from choosing high-risk entrepreneurial activities. For instance, ordinary employees at administrative institutions may hope their children to take the Chinese civil service examination and take on a similar job. Finally, there was no significant difference between the self-employed and farmers and the control group.

6. Concluding remarks

Overall, our findings suggest that parents' attitudes directly affect tourism and hospitality students' entrepreneurial attitude and perceived behavioral control, ultimately impacting these students' EI. On the other hand, parents' attitudes varied significantly depending on different ages, incomes, occupational categories, and family composition. From this point of view, different parental background, to a certain extent, determines the interest of entrepreneurship entry of tourism and hospitality students: younger parents are more likely to respect and support their children's entrepreneurial choices, enhancing their children's probability of starting up a business. In terms of household income, parents with an annual household income at one of two ends of the distribution (i.e., the lowest or highest annual household incomes) are more likely to support their children to start a business. Tourism and hospitality students who are from these families may have a higher possibility of entrepreneurship. Besides, tourism and hospitality students whose parents are administrative officials or enterprise managers (including employers) will also show a higher entrepreneurial vitality. By contrast, in families where the parents are ordinary employees of administrative institutions, the entrepreneurial interests of tourism and hospitality students is lower than the average level. Finally, compared to the students from the only-child family, those with siblings are more likely to make the entrepreneurial decision.

This study adds to our extant knowledge of EI, parental influence, youth entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship practice in the context of tourism and hospitality education (Zhang et al., 2020).

First, injecting insights from the social influence perspective into the revised entrepreneurial intention model by Liñán and Chen (2009), our study allows us to better understand the mechanisms through which parents' normative and value judgments form the basis of the subjective norms of student entrepreneurs. In this sense, our study expands our knowledge on the external factors of EI, and could be of value to analyses of other social influences for intention and activities in tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship.

Second, existing studies typically focus on entrepreneurship experience (Altinay et al., 2012) or attitude when studying the effect of entrepreneurial perception on EI (Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999). Our research enriches our empirical options of capturing parental background, showing that parents' demographical characteristics such as education, income, and even family composition impact the formation of attitudes. In this sense, this study extends the existing knowledge on personal idiosyncrasies and their influence on individual evaluations of entrepreneurial activity (Dyer, 1995; Koe Hwee Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010; Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Santos et al., 2016; Scherer, Brodzinski, & Wiebe, 1991; Timmons & Spinelli, 2003; Wang, Hung, & Huang, 2019) for theorization and empirical testing.

Third, our research supplements the growing body of research on determinants of tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship (Ramos-Rodríguez et al., 2012) by further engaging parents' influence on offspring's intention to enter tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship (Altinay et al., 2012; Minola, Donina, & Meoli, 2016). In our research, we highlight the mediated nature of the parental background and EI. Specifically, our research shows that individual perceived behavior control and individual entrepreneurial attitude mediates the parent-student EI link.

Fourth, this paper, with the understudied empirical setting, contributes the Chinese piece to our overall knowledge of tourism and hospitality students' EI in different countries. We findings suggest that the Chinese family composition, together with its unique intergenerational interaction patterns such as Confucian filial piety, the virtue of respecting parents the elder (Yeh, Yi, Tsao, & Wan, 2013), as well as the different life experiences of Chinese parents of different age groups have notable relevance for offspring's EI in the Eastern and transition economy contexts.

From a practical perspective, this paper also provides a reasonable explanation for the contrast between high entrepreneurial enthusiasm and relatively low entrepreneurial behavior in tourism that is often observed worldwide. Tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship appears to be a high-risk and challenging career choice despite the tourism boom in many countries such as China. As the results of this study show, parents' influence has a direct and significant impact on an individual's attitude and confidence level, which in turn, to a large extent, determines the formation of tourism and hospitality students' real EI. Therefore, this research challenges policymakers to examine new ways to boost low entrepreneurial vitality while providing government support for entrepreneurship.

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Appendix

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of samples.

	Category	Amount	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	214	44.6
	Female	266	55.4
Age	19–21	94	19.6
	22–24	267	55.6
	25–27	93	19.4
	28 and above	26	5.8
Stage	Undergraduate student	329	68.5
	Graduate student	151	31.5
University category	Key university	234	48.8
	Ordinary university/college	246	51.2
Geographical distribution	Beijing	78	16.3
	Northeast China	97	20.2
	Eastern China	104	21.7
	Central China	69	14.4
	Western China	132	27.5

Table 2
Item-Construct and descriptive statistics.

Construct	Item	Mean	SD
Parents' attitude (A)	A1. Parents think that being an entrepreneur may be a good choice for me under the current social environment	4.237	1.376
	A2. Parents respect my choice to establish a business out of my own interest	3.938	1.359
	A3. Parents think youngsters deserve chances to choose careers through trial and error	4.442	1.500
	A4. Parents will give me as much support as they can both mentally and financially if I start a business	4.569	1.407
Personal attitude (B)	B1. Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me	4.494	1.360
	B2. A career as entrepreneur is attractive for me	4.240	1.459
	B3. If I had the opportunity and resources, I'd like to start a firm	4.492	1.393
	B4. Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfactions for me	4.379	1.419
	B5. Among various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur	3.981	1.460
Perceived behavior control (C)	C1. To start a firm and keep it working would be easy for me	4.302	1.352
	C2. I am prepared to start a viable firm	4.233	1.304
	C3. I can control the creation process of a new firm	4.379	1.500
	C4. I know the necessary practical details to start a firm	4.352	1.336
	C5. I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project	4.531	1.462
	C6. If I tried to start a firm, I would have a high probability of succeeding	4.392	1.465
Entrepreneurial intention (D)	D1. I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur	3.765	1.579
	D2. My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	3.985	1.570
	D3. I will make every effort to start and run my own firm	3.594	1.584
	D4. I am determined to create a firm in the future	3.867	1.567
	D5. I have very seriously thought of starting a firm	3.810	1.576
	D6. I have the firm intention to start a firm some day	3.896	1.625

Table 3
Factor load matrix after rotation.

Factor				
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
A1	.789			
A2	.769			
A3	.752			
A4	.776			
B1		.793		
B2		.747		
B3		.742		
B4		.757		

(*continued on next page*)

Table 3 (*continued*)

Factor	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
B5		.706		
C1			.760	
C2			.683	
C3			.718	
C4			.780	
C5			.731	
C6			.727	
D1				.776
D2				.639
D3				.770
D4				.729
D5				.729
D6				.793
Cronbach'sα	.810	.929	.878	.918

NOTE: Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged after five iterations. Loadings below 0.50 not shown.

Table 4
Correlation of constructs and square root of AVE values.

Variable	A	B	C	D
Parents' attitude (A)	**0.719**			
Personal attitude (B)	0.499	**0.851**		
Perceived behavior control (C)	0.397	0.620	**0.741**	
Entrepreneurial intention (D)	0.380	0.799	0.661	0.810

Table 5
Standardized Regression Weights of Entrepreneurial Intention model.

Path	Estimate	SE	Hypotheses
Parents' attitude →A1	0.711***	0.033	
Parents' attitude →A2	0.702***	0.032	
Parents' attitude →A3	0.717***	0.035	
Parents' attitude →A4	0.720***	0.032	
Personal attitude →B1	0.819***	0.017	
Personal attitude →B2	0.876***	0.013	
Personal attitude →B3	0.846***	0.014	
Personal attitude →B4	0.837***	0.015	
Personal attitude →B5	0.874***	0.012	
Perceived behavior control →C1	0.759***	0.025	
Perceived behavior control →C2	0.710***	0.028	
Perceived behavior control →C3	0.735***	0.026	
Perceived behavior control →C4	0.786***	0.023	
Perceived behavior control →C5	0.735***	0.025	
Perceived behavior control →C6	0.717***	0.026	
Entrepreneurial intention→D1	0.728***	0.025	
Entrepreneurial intention→D2	0.703***	0.034	
Entrepreneurial intention→D3	0.766***	0.028	
Entrepreneurial intention→D4	0.809***	0.025	
Entrepreneurial intention→D5	0.821***	0.024	
Entrepreneurial intention→D6	0.924***	0.011	
Parents' attitude → Personal attitude	0.542***	0.040	Support
Parents' attitude → Perceived behavior control	0.458***	0.044	Support
Personal attitude → EI	0.671***	0.025	Support
Perceived behavior control→ EI	0.303***	0.030	Support

*NOTE:*Significant levels: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

Table 6
Descriptive statistics of variables.

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Parents' attitude	1	7	4.298	1.127
Educational level	1	8	3.263	1.657
Entrepreneurial experience	0	1	.365	.482
Age	43	61	47.894	2.688
Income	8.006	13.816	11.004	.972
Income*Income	64.102	190.868	122.041	21.022

(*continued on next page*)

Table 6 (*continued*)

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Occupation				
Administrative official			7.917%	
Business Manager/employer			10.208%	
Ordinary staff of administrative institution			10.833%	
Self-employed			13.333%	
Farmer			37.292%	
Ordinary employee of enterprise			–	
Only child or not	0	1	.617	.487

Table 7
Variance analysis of parents' attitude.

Variable	Coefficient	SE	df	F-value	Sig.
Educational level	.042	.033	1	1.590	.208
Entrepreneurial experience (Have entrepreneurial experience)	1	1.556	.213		
No entrepreneurial experience	-.121	.097			
Age	-.054**	.016	1	10.946	.001
Income	−5.698***	.723	1	62.055	.000
Income *Income	.255***	.034	1	56.894	.000
Occupation (Ordinary employee of enterprise)			5	4.440	.001
Administrative official	.494*	.216			
Business Manager/employer	.403*	.197			
Ordinary staff of administrative institution	-.427**	.163			
Self-employed	-.118	.158			
Farmer	-.234	.144			
Only child or not (Compared with the single-child)1			1	14.000	.000
Non-single child	.375***	.100			
Intercept	38.283***	3.899	1	98.606	.000
Corrected model	11	20.439		.000	
$R^2 = 0.325$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0$ .309					

NOTE: Dependent variable: Parents' attitude. Significant levels: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

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