

Policy Implementation for Graduate Entrepreneurship in Hometowns: A Case Study from Hebei

ABSTRACT

Aims: The study aimed to investigate the publicity and implementation of national and local policies encouraging graduates to “start businesses in hometowns” and college students’ awareness of these policies.

Methodology: The study took college graduates majoring in foreign languages in Hebei Province, China, as the survey subjects. The research methods such as questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data.

Results: The results showed that governments are vigorously promoting relevant policies, but college students have low awareness of these policies and have higher demands for policy implementation. Based on the survey findings, several suggestions and countermeasures are put forward to help college students “start businesses in their hometowns”, including strengthening policy publicity and interpretation, improving market research and analysis capabilities, encouraging innovation and differentiated competition, strengthening entrepreneurship training and guidance, and improving the policy support system.

Conclusion: Although the government has issued a series of policy measures to support returning to their hometowns to start businesses, there are still many challenges and shortcomings in the actual implementation process, such as a lack of policy publicity and interpretation, insufficient market research and analysis capabilities, a lack of entrepreneurship training and guidance, and a shortage of policy support system.

Significance: The study is the first one in China to focus on foreign language graduates’ perspectives and awareness of policy implementation of entrepreneurship in their hometown.

Keywords: college graduates; employment; policy implementation; starting businesses in hometowns

1. INTRODUCTION

At the Central Rural Work Conference in 2022, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that “a group of talents should be introduced; college graduates, capable people, migrant workers and entrepreneurs should be guided to the countryside in an orderly manner, so as to help them start businesses”. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China once again emphasized the importance of comprehensively revitalizing the countryside. The 2024 Hebei Provincial Government Work Report pointed out that “employment priority should be highlighted. Multiple channels should be used to promote

stable employment for key groups such as college graduates, retired soldiers, and migrant workers." With the expansion of higher education in China, the number of college graduates continues to increase, making the employment situation of college students more and more complex, which has attracted widespread attention from society and has become a focal issue [1-3]. The "Opinions on Implementing the Employment Priority Strategy to Promote High-quality Full Employment" issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on September 15, 2024, pointed out that "employment is the most basic livelihood of the people, which concerns the vital interests of the people, the healthy development of the economy and society, and the long-term stability of the country"; it is necessary to "expand the channels for employment and talent development of college graduates and other young people"; "a number of new occupations that meet the needs of comprehensive rural revitalization should be introduced, and attention should be paid to guiding outbound talents to return to their hometowns and urban talents to start businesses in the countryside." Many college graduates in China come from rural areas and have acquired professional knowledge in related fields. They have vitality and innovation capabilities. These college graduates can take advantage of existing policies and return to their hometowns or start businesses in rural areas [4-10]. Their return to their hometown will not only help their personal development but also promote the implementation of China's rural revitalization strategy, solve agricultural, rural, and farmer problems, and promote the comprehensive development of the rural economy and society..

2. BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO POLICIES RELATED TO "RETURNING HOME TO START A BUSINESS"

This study retrieved two documents issued by the General Office of the State Council using the keyword "returning to hometown to start a business" on the website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. On June 21, 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Supporting Migrant Workers and Other People to Return to Hometown to Start a Business", which proposed "supporting migrant workers, college students and retired soldiers to return to their hometowns to start businesses, and through mass entrepreneurship and innovation, promoting all industries in the vast towns and villages." In addition, on November 29, 2016, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Supporting Returnees to Start Businesses and Innovation to Promote the Integrated Development of the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Industries in Rural Areas", which further clarified that returnees to start businesses in rural areas would enjoy the same local entrepreneurship support policies. These policies aim to encourage migrant workers, college students, and retired soldiers to return to their hometowns to start businesses by providing tax incentives, resource support, and training opportunities so as to promote the development of local economies and increase employment opportunities. In particular, the government promises to provide eligible returnees with tangible benefits such as tax and fee reductions, site arrangements, and one-time entrepreneurship subsidies. In addition, the government has stepped up publicity for youth employment and entrepreneurship activities through various channels, including online services of the Communist Youth League, in order to expand the benefits and influence of the policy.

At the provincial level, the Hebei provincial government actively responded to the national call and issued relevant implementation opinions on supporting returnees to start businesses in 2015 and 2017. These policies not only reiterated the support measures at the national level but also emphasized specific measures in optimizing the environment for returning to their hometowns to start businesses, providing fiscal and tax incentives, strengthening financial support, improving entrepreneurial capabilities, protecting social security rights and interests, and solving housing and education problems. The purpose is to lower the

threshold for returning to their hometowns to start businesses, provide entrepreneurs with the necessary funds and resource support, and thus promote the prosperity of the rural economy and increase the success rate of entrepreneurs returning to their hometowns.

Although the government has formulated a series of policies to support college graduates to return to their hometowns to start businesses, the actual effect depends mainly on the publicity, awareness and implementation of these policies. At present, scholars have conducted much research and analysis on the willingness and influencing factors of college graduates to return to their hometowns to start businesses [11-14]. Still, the publicity and implementation of policies related to returning to their hometowns to start businesses, as well as the understanding of college graduates about the policies for returning to their hometowns to start businesses, need to be further investigated. Ensuring that these preferential policies can be understood and utilized by the majority of college graduates who are willing to return to their hometowns to start businesses, as well as the implementation of the policies, is crucial to promoting their success in returning to their hometowns to start businesses. Therefore, studying the implementation of policies related to returning to their hometowns to start businesses among college graduates from the perspective of employment is of great significance to safeguarding people's livelihood and stabilizing employment.

Methodology:

About 43 universities in Hebei Province, China, cultivate foreign language talents. Among them, 30 universities enroll students from rural areas more than cities. The 30 universities are the sampling pools in the current. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the current situation of college graduates returning to their hometowns to start businesses, explore how to improve the use of policies for returning to their hometowns by college graduates, and improve their employment quality, this study conducted a questionnaire survey and individual interviews with 800 foreign language graduates from 30 colleges and universities in Hebei Province. The review data were used to explain the findings of the questionnaire and the collected data were analyzed by the software of SPSS 27.0. The primary purpose was to investigate their understanding, use, and implementation of policies for returning to their hometowns to start businesses. In the end, this study collected a total of 687 valid questionnaires and 11 interview transcripts.

Result and Discussion:

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES RELATED TO RETURNING HOME TO START A BUSINESS AMONG COLLEGE GRADUATES

This study classified and summarized the questionnaire data in terms of the publicity, awareness, and implementation of the policy of returning to their hometown to start a business among college graduates, and initially came to the following conclusions.

3.1 THE PUBLICITY OF THE POLICY OF RETURNING HOME TO START A BUSINESS AMONG COLLEGE GRADUATES MAJORING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

According to the results of the questionnaire survey, the publicity of the policy of returning to their hometown to start a business among college foreign language major graduates has shown a certain degree of popularity, but there is still room for improvement. 59% of the respondents said that they learned about the relevant policies of returning to their hometown to start a business through channels such as the school's career guidance center, government official websites, and social media platforms before and after graduation.

However, 26% of the respondents said that they lacked understanding of these policies, and 15% of the respondents said that they had never heard of them at all. The vast majority of graduates (91%) said that they learned about the policy of returning to their hometown to start a business through social media (such as Weibo and WeChat), and at the same time, believed that the publicity materials of the policy of returning to hometown to start a business were challenging to obtain, accounting for 81%.

The above survey results show that although the government and universities have taken some measures to promote the policies of returning to hometowns to start businesses, there are still blind spots in information transmission, and the publicity strategies and channels need to be further optimized to ensure that more university graduates can know about and use these policies.

3.2 AWARENESS OF THE POLICY ON RETURNING HOME TO START A BUSINESS AMONG FOREIGN LANGUAGE MAJOR COLLEGE GRADUATES

There are specific differences in the awareness of the policy of returning to hometown to start a business with foreign language college graduates. Some respondents have a good understanding of the preferential policies and their application procedures. Still, a considerable proportion of respondents do not know enough or do not know this information. In particular, in terms of satisfaction with the transparency and openness of the policy, a considerable number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, which may mean that the work of policy publicity and information disclosure still needs to be strengthened. In addition, although some respondents know how to obtain training and guidance for returning to their hometowns to start a business, many people lack understanding of this, and even a few people do not care about it, which may affect their knowledge and use of the policy of returning to their hometowns to start a business.

In general, although a certain proportion of college graduates are aware of the policies on returning to their hometowns to start businesses, there are still many obstacles and knowledge gaps, especially in understanding policy details, application procedures, and training and guidance resources.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY OF RETURNING HOME TO START A BUSINESS AMONG COLLEGE GRADUATES

Regarding the implementation of the policy of returning to their hometown to start a business, about 31% of the respondents said that they or the people around them had successfully applied for and enjoyed the preferential policies for returning to their hometown to start a business. These respondents were highly satisfied with the policies. On the other hand, 69% of the respondents said that they did not try to apply for these policies, including insufficient understanding of the policies, complicated application procedures, and fear of unsuccessful applications. In addition, some respondents who tried to apply reported that they encountered problems such as cumbersome material preparation and lengthy approval procedures in the actual operation process, which led them to give up the application in the end. Regarding the implementation strength and efficiency of the policy of returning to hometown to start a business, the satisfaction of the respondents was polarized. Some people were dissatisfied with the implementation efficiency, which suggested that the policy implementation agencies need to optimize the process and improve administrative efficiency. In terms of financial support, although a certain proportion of the respondents said that they had received support, a considerable proportion of the respondents felt that the support was insufficient or not supported at all, which shows that financial support measures need to be further strengthened to meet the needs of returnees. Most respondents agree

that the policy of returning to their hometown to start a business has promoted local economic development, which shows that the implementation of the policy has achieved specific results. However, policymakers should not ignore those respondents who disagree and need to understand their reasons in depth to optimize policy design. In terms of the overall evaluation, although a considerable proportion of respondents gave positive comments, many people also believed that the policy effect was limited or poor, which suggests that although the policy has achieved specific results, there is still room for improvement.

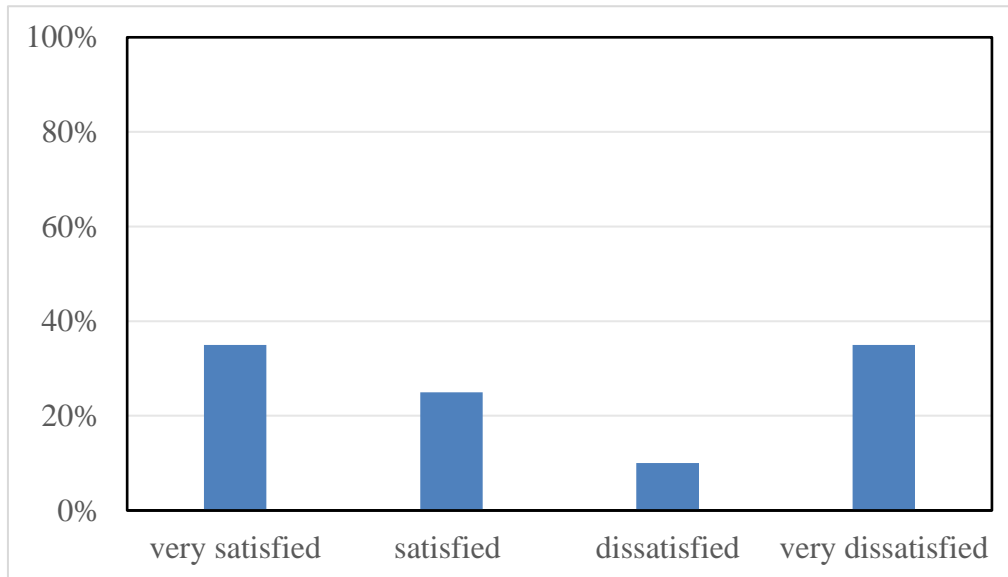


Fig. 1. Graduates' satisfaction with the intensity and efficiency of policy implementation

In summary, although the policy of returning to hometown to start a business has a certain degree of publicity and awareness among college graduates, there is still much room for improvement in its implementation. In order to better encourage college graduates to return to their hometowns to start businesses in the future, we should focus on strengthening the publicity and promotion of the policy, simplifying the application process, improving the transparency and implementation efficiency of the policy, and ensuring that the policy can truly benefit entrepreneurs with the intention.

3.4 CASE ANALYSIS OF COLLEGE GRADUATES TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE POLICY OF RETURNING HOME TO START A BUSINESS

Through individual interviews with 11 interviewees who left their contact information, we learned that Li, a graduate of an agricultural university, returned to his hometown to establish an organic vegetable planting and sales enterprise. By adopting advanced planting technology and combining Internet marketing strategies, he successfully opened up the market and obtained government entrepreneurship support funds. Through in-depth understanding, it was found that Li, as a graduate of an agricultural university, fully understood and utilized the government's tax exemption and financial subsidy policies for returning entrepreneurs when he returned to his hometown to establish an organic vegetable planting and sales enterprise. This shows the importance of college graduates actively learning and mastering relevant policies when preparing to return to their hometowns to start

businesses. By understanding in detail the various preferential policies provided by the government, such as tax incentives, financial subsidies, loan guarantees, etc., entrepreneurs can effectively reduce the cost of starting a business and enhance the feasibility and competitiveness of the project. Secondly, Li focused on technological innovation in the process of entrepreneurship, adopted advanced planting technology, and improved production efficiency and product quality. This practice not only enhances the market competitiveness of products but also reflects the full use of policy support policies for returning to hometowns to start businesses and encourage and support entrepreneurs' innovative activities. Therefore, when college graduates return to their hometowns to start businesses, they should be bold in innovation and integrate modern technology into traditional industries to enhance their competitiveness while also injecting new impetus into local economic development.

In short, Li's case reveals several key points for college graduates to take advantage of policy support when returning to their hometowns to start businesses: in-depth understanding and utilization of preferential policies provided by the government, accurate grasp of market demand, and focus on technological innovation. These factors together not only helped Li realize his entrepreneurial dream but also provided valuable experience for other college graduates who intend to return to their hometowns to start businesses.

4. COUNTERMEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the above analysis, the publicity, awareness and implementation of the policy of returning home to start a business among foreign language graduates of universities can be carried out from the following aspects.

First, strengthening policy publicity is the foundation. This not only involves using new media platforms, such as Weibo, WeChat public accounts, and short video platforms, to promote policy information, but also includes organizing special lectures, seminars, and successful case sharing sessions to explain the policy content in depth and demonstrate the actual benefits of the policy, thereby enhancing college graduates' understanding and interest in the policy of returning home to start a business. In specific operations, policy makers, successful entrepreneurs who return home, etc. can be invited as keynote speakers, and through real case analysis and interactive question-and-answer sessions, policy publicity can be made more vivid, specific, and easy to understand and accept.

Furthermore, considering the diversity and complexity of policies, it is necessary to improve the operability and implementation efficiency of policies by establishing a unified policy consultation and application platform. This platform should not only provide detailed policy information and application guidelines, but also support online application and real-time status tracking, thereby simplifying the application process and reducing time and cost consumption. At the same time, a special policy consultation service team should be set up to provide one-stop services from policy consultation, application guidance to follow-up tracking services, to help college graduates who intend to return to their hometowns to start businesses better understand the policies, choose the policy support that suits them, and successfully complete the entire application process.

In addition, improving the transparency and openness of policies is crucial to enhancing trust and participation in policies. Relevant government departments should regularly publish detailed policy implementation reports, disclose information such as policy coverage, number of beneficiaries, and use of funds, so as to enhance the transparency and credibility of policies. At the same time, third-party evaluation agencies should be introduced to regularly conduct policy effect evaluations, collect and analyze feedback, promptly identify

and solve problems, and continuously optimize policy content and implementation methods to ensure that policies can more accurately serve returnees.

Finally, training and guidance for returnees is also an indispensable part of improving the effectiveness of policies. It is recommended that colleges and local governments cooperate to set up special training courses for returnees, covering basic knowledge of entrepreneurship, policy interpretation, market analysis, financial management, etc., to help students understand the knowledge and skills required for returnees to start businesses in advance. At the same time, a team of returnees' entrepreneurship mentors composed of successful entrepreneurs, investors, industry experts, etc. should be established to provide professional guidance and advice to returnees, helping them better grasp market opportunities and cope with entrepreneurial challenges. In addition, returnees can be organized to visit successful enterprises for field visits and study, so that they can intuitively feel the possibilities and advantages of returnees to start businesses.

By implementing these specific measures, we can not only increase the awareness and implementation of the policy of returning home to start a business among college graduates , but also stimulate the enthusiasm of more college graduates to return home to start a business, and inject new vitality into the prosperity and development of the local economy.

5. CONCLUSION

From the perspective of employment, after analyzing the implementation of relevant policies for college graduates majoring in foreign languages in Hebei Province to return to their hometowns to start businesses, it is not difficult to find that although the government has issued a series of policy measures to support returning to their hometowns to start businesses, there are still many challenges and shortcomings in the actual implementation process. In response to these problems and challenges, this paper puts forward several suggestions and countermeasures, including strengthening policy publicity and interpretation, improving market research and analysis capabilities, encouraging innovation and differentiated competition, strengthening entrepreneurship training and guidance, and improving the policy support system. The practical implementation of the policy of returning to hometowns to start businesses is a complex social project that requires the joint efforts and collaboration of the government, colleges and universities, enterprises, and all sectors of society. Only by continuously optimizing the policy environment, strengthening policy publicity and interpretation, and improving entrepreneurs' market analysis and innovation capabilities can we genuinely encourage college graduates to return to their hometowns to start businesses and achieve sustainable development of the local economy. Therefore, we have reason to believe that with the continuous improvement of relevant policies and the strengthening of implementation, returning to hometowns to start businesses will become the choice of more and more college graduates, contributing to rural revitalization and regional coordinated development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study is the research result of the project of "Investigation and Analysis on the Implementation of Relevant Policies for Returning Hometowns to Start Businesses from the Perspective of Employment of College Graduates" (Grant number: JRSHZ-2024-01110), which is supported by the Hebei Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security. I want to give my warm thanks to the Hebei Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security.

CONSENT

The authors declares that 'written informed consent was obtained from patients for publication of this case report and accompanying images. A copy of the written consent is available for review by the Editorial office/Chief Editor/Editorial Board members of this journal.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The studies involving humans were approved by Ethics Committee of Siyue Educational and Technological Institute (SETI 2023014). The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

The author hereby declares that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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