

Research Article

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Factors Influencing Hong Kong Youths' Migration Entrepreneurial Intention in China's Greater Bay Area

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ABSTRACT

In line with the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the Hong Kong government has introduced policies aimed at encouraging young Hong Kong residents to pursue their careers and establish businesses in mainland cities located in the GBA. While recent studies have focused on the mobility of Hong Kong youths to GBA cities, the factors that influence their migration entrepreneurial intention (MEI) in GBA remain unclear. As such, the primary objective of this study is to establish a conceptual framework to identify the relationships between personal factors, perception of the environment of GBA cities, and MEI. This study adopted an online survey using Google Forms to collect data from Hong Kong youths aged 18 to 40 between May and July 2022. Based on responses from 230 validated participants, the chi-square test revealed that those with majors in management, business, and economics have a high MEI. Those with prior entrepreneurial experience have a high MEI and those with entrepreneurship family background have a high MEI. Regarding environmental factors, binary logistic regression analysis indicated that unfamiliarity with the business environment, such as business law and regulations, tax, legal protection of products and services, mainland lifestyles, business competitions, and social security, do not significantly influence MEI. However, concerns about credibility resulting from a business failure, worried about the local working relationships, and raising funds were found to negatively influence MEI. Finally, this study provides theoretical implications for extant entrepreneurship research and practical implications for policymakers and educators.

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a means to promote economic growth and reduce unemployment (Audretsch et al., 2015; Thurik et al., 2008). The growth of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) has resulted in many young people from Hong Kong migrating to the mainland to work and start new businesses. In response to this trend, the Hong Kong government has implemented various regulations to encourage and support entrepreneurial activity in the GBA, including the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Youth Entrepreneurship Funding Scheme" and "the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programs at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Existing entrepreneurship research has proposed frameworks to describe the factors that influence entrepreneurial intention and activities. Entrepreneurial intention refers to a desire to create a new business or engage in entrepreneurial activities (Bae et al., 2014). This intention can be influenced by both micro-level factors and macro-level institutions (De Clercq et al., 2013). Therefore, the complex interplay between the individual and institutional context makes it impossible to explain entrepreneurship solely based on personal characteristics or environmental factors (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). However, few studies have explored the factors influencing entrepreneurial intention from both individual and cross-regional perspectives.

While recent studies have focused on Hong Kong residents' mobility for studying and employment opportunities in GBA cities (Mok & Zhu, 2021; Zhu et al., 2021), limited attention has been paid to factors influencing Hong Kong youths' migration entrepreneurial intention in GBA cities. In the context of GBA, Hong Kong and mainland cities have different social systems, business environments, cultures, education, and social welfare (Ge et al., 2021; Liu, 2021; Wang & Zhang, 2021). This study aims to propose an appropriate theoretical framework identifying individual and environmental perspectives (the public perception of barriers in GBA) influencing migration entrepreneurial intentions (MEI). Specifically, the study aims to: (1) identify the relationship between personal factors (e.g., majors (Dao et al., 2021), and educational levels (Paray & Kumar, 2020), work experience (Brown & Mason, 2014), and entrepreneurial experience (Ardichvili et al., 2003), and family entrepreneurship (Chaudhary, 2017; Van Auken et al., 2006)) and MEI; (2) examine the relationship between perception of environment of GBA cities (e.g., finance, law and regulations, intellectual property protection) and MEI. The study focuses on Hong Kong's young people aged 18 to 40 because of their growing potential for migration their importance as the main force of GBA entrepreneurship, and their support from the Hong Kong government.

This study contributes to entrepreneurship research by proposing a framework to illustrate the personal and environmental factors influencing migration entrepreneurial intention. It also contributes to migration research by revealing that diverse factors influence different migration purposes (work, life, and entrepreneurship). Based on the study's results, policymakers and educators can take measures to better integrate youths into GBA entrepreneurship development.

The paper is organized as follows: literature review, hypotheses development, methodology, results, discussion, limitations, and future research.

Literature review

Drivers of entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been studied extensively for several decades, with scholars proposing theoretical frameworks. For instance, Lundström and Stevenson (2005) proposed an entrepreneurship policy framework of motivation, skills, and opportunity. Specifically, individuals immersed in an entrepreneurial social value might perceive starting a business as a feasible and viable career choice. This suggests that individuals immersed in an entrepreneurial social value may perceive starting a business as a feasible career choice. Motivation can be created through supportive information, exposure, and role models. Business knowledge and skills can be gained through entrepreneurship education, training, and practice experience. Finally, a business opportunity created by the government's support, such as ease of registration, financial support, and a favorable policy environment, is necessary.

Similarly, Acs and Szerb (2007) proposed a framework for an entrepreneurial economy in the context of the US. They illustrated policies from global, national, local, and individual perspectives. Policy measures such as easing business formation, ensuring access to finance, appropriate protection of intellectual property, and tax policies have primary impacts on entrepreneurs. Audretsch (2004) stated that psychological traits, formal education and other skills, financial assets, family history, and previous work experience are elements studied at the micro level. The macro viewpoint considers environmental influences such as technology, economics, culture, and government regulation.

Later research has focused on empirical studies of individual entrepreneurial intention based on institutional theory (North, 1990). For instance, Engle et al. (2011) surveyed 477 university students in three countries to explore the influences of formal and informal institutions on entrepreneurial intention. They found that in developing countries, parental experience, social norms, and trade positively influence entrepreneurial intention, while gender (female) negatively influences entrepreneurial intention. Farashah (2015) investigated three dimensions of institutional profile: regulatory, cognitive, and normative variables, and found that these variables influence self-efficacy. The regulatory areas included financial support, public procurement, tax regulations, dealing with government bureaucracy, registration procedures, and government program availability. Likewise, Elizabeth et al. (2020) surveyed 365 students from Gauteng province universities and revealed the positive effects of education and training, access to finance, entrepreneurial capability, and environment on youth entrepreneurship. Zhuang and Sun (2023) found regulatory and cognitive environments can influence entrepreneurial intention through opportunity recognition.

Mobility of GBA cities

To examine migration entrepreneurial intention in GBA, factors influencing migration must also be considered. While many scholars have paid attention to Hong Kong residents' mobility to GBA cities for work and living, few have studied entrepreneurship (Mok & Zhu, 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). Ge et al. (2021) found that situational concerns and previous experience of coming GBA cities mediate the attitude towards destinations and migration intention. In addition, from the perspective

of economic and non-economic perspectives, Mok and Zhu (2021) suggested that jobs in GBA cities can influence intentions to move, and considered expected future economic situations, familiarity with the destination, destination social networks, and language.

Entrepreneurship studies have identified common problems faced by Hong Kong entrepreneurs when venturing into GBA cities, such as financial and regulatory issues (Kang, 2022; Liu, 2021). Liu (2021) conducted in-depth interviews with 12 Hong Kong graduate entrepreneurs and found that most were inspired by GBA initiatives and university support. However, combining the two urban centers proved challenging. Despite the willingness of some Hong Kong business owners to work closely with their mainland counterparts, their lack of familiarity with mainland business norms, such as administrative procedures for business registration and funding applications, constrained their ability to do so. Some low-tech businesses required help to qualify for grants and other financial support.

Scholars have proposed theoretical frameworks to explain how government policies influence and drive entrepreneurial activities (Acs & Szerb, 2007; Lundström & Stevenson, 2005). The literature review suggests the common environmental factors (e.g., finance, market, regulation, tax, law, labor and social security) (Acs & Szerb, 2007; Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Lundström & Stevenson, 2005) and personal factors (e.g., education, training, entrepreneurial experience, parental experience, gender, age) (Elizabeth et al., 2020; Engle et al., 2011; Farashah, 2015) influence entrepreneurial intention. Regarding the environmental factors, empirical studies have explored the effects of the institution environment on individual entrepreneurial intention (Díaz-Casero et al., 2012; Engle et al., 2011; Oftedal et al., 2018; Urban & Kujinga, 2017; Zhuang & Sun, 2023) and activities (Stephen et al., 2005; Urbano & Alvarez, 2014). The proposed framework and literature suggest that it is necessary to simultaneously explain entrepreneurship by considering both the individual's characteristics and their surroundings (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

In the context of GBA, Hong Kong and mainland cities have different social systems, business environments, culture, education, and social security (Ge et al., 2021; Liu, 2021; Wang & Zhang, 2021). Factors influencing migration intention for employment and life in GBA for Hong Kong residents are multifaceted, such as situational concerns, lifestyles, institutional differences, and familiarity with destinations (Ge et al., 2021). Although some studies have employed qualitative methods to study cross-border mobility for entrepreneurship (Liu, 2021), few have addressed the factors influencing migration to start a business in GBA cities. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the factors influencing Hong Kong residents' migration entrepreneurial intention in GBA because individuals' mobility varies according their migration purposes (Frändberg, 2014).

As suggested by Farashah (2015), further studies should consider both the individual's and their surroundings' effects. Thus, this study first establishes a conceptual framework to identify the factors influencing the migration entrepreneurial intention (MEI) from the perspective of Hong Kong residents through representing the relationships between personal backgrounds, perception of environment of GBA cities and migration entrepreneurial intention. This study proposed the following research questions:

- (1) How do personal factors influence their migration to start a business in GBA cities?
- (2) How do environmental factors influence their migration to start a business in GBA cities?

(3) What are the expected measures can the policymakers and educators for the future development of Hong Kong youth entrepreneurship in GBA?

Hypotheses development

This section postulates the relationships between personal factors and MEI as well as the relationships between the perception of environmental barriers and MEI in GBA cities. The final conceptual model is reported in Figure 1.

Personal backgrounds

The human capital theory suggests that individuals with higher levels of education, such as business school graduates, are more likely to start their own businesses (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013). This theory has been used to emphasize the importance of education, training, work and entrepreneurial experience for immigrant entrepreneurship (Dabić et al., 2020) because these experiences enable immigrants to identify new markets and unfilled niches (Altinay & Altinay, 2008).

Previous studies have empirically demonstrated the importance of human capital on entrepreneurship. For example, individuals majoring in business may possess greater knowledge of management, business, and entrepreneurship than students in other fields, making them better equipped to identify and explore entrepreneurial opportunities (Dao et al., 2021). Paray and Kumar (2020) found that postgraduate students have greater entrepreneurial intention than undergraduate students. A recent survey found that 49% of Hong Kong entrepreneurs hold a master's degree or higher (HKTDC, 2021). This suggests that people with higher education possess greater professional expertise, enhancing their ability to establish a firm.

Individuals with prior entrepreneurial experience also have an advantage in starting a business (Ardichvili et al., 2003). They have gained tacit knowledge through prior business experience (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2009), which enables them to identify and evaluate new opportunities and source venture capital funding when starting a new business (Hsu, 2007). Prior entrepreneurial experience is a good predictor of entrepreneurial intention (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Similarly, research has shown that the length and types of work experience can also influence entrepreneurial intention (Zapkau et al., 2015). Individuals with rich work experience in a specific sector possess knowledge of markets, client issues, and product information inherent in their employment experience, which can help them identify entrepreneurial opportunities in their industries (Shane, 2000). In fact, most founders started their new businesses in the same field where they previously worked as employees (Brown & Mason, 2014).

Based on the literature, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H₁: Hong Kong people with business-related majors have higher migration entrepreneurial intention than those with other majors.

H₂: Hong Kong people with higher degrees have higher migration entrepreneurial intention than those with lower ones.

H₃: Previous entrepreneurial experience positively relates with migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₄: Work experience positively relates with migration entrepreneurial intention.

The family embeddedness theory (Uzzi, 1997) posits that family factors can have a significant impact on business decisions and intention (Bird & Wennberg, 2016; Hack-Polay et al., 2020; Sanders & Nee, 1996). It is well-established that immigrant entrepreneurs benefit greatly from their connections to and support from family (Bates, 2011; Sanders & Nee, 1996) due to a range of family resources, including emotional support, informational assistance, experience impartation (Mathews & Moser, 1995), and financial capital (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Previous research has shown that an entrepreneurial family background positively correlates with entrepreneurial intentions (Chaudhary, 2017). Children from business-oriented households are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial activities, and potential entrepreneurs are more likely to come from successful families (Van Auken et al., 2006) because most entrepreneurs hope their children will continue the family's line of work (Hutasuhut, 2018).

In the case of GBA, successful entrepreneurs can facilitate their generations' entrepreneurship with early-stage financial and mentoring support (Kang, 2022). In this context, Hong Kong youth with parents who have an entrepreneurial background are more likely to migrate to GBA cities to start a business.

H₅: Family entrepreneurship positively relates with migration entrepreneurial intention.

The perception of barriers of the Greater Bay Area environment

Personal factors such as education, prior entrepreneurial experience, and motivation are important are not the only factors determining an individual's likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur. Regional level factors such as regulatory laws and cultural norms can also significantly impact entrepreneurship (Smallbone & Welter, 2010). A supportive environment that offers opportunities and resources for entrepreneurs can foster high-growth businesses (Nicotra et al., 2018). When migrating to a new region, individuals may face challenges such as language barriers and unfamiliarity with business practices and support structures, which can impact their ability to launch and grow a successful business.

Institutional theory

The institutional theory posits that social norms and regulations can influence individuals' inclination towards entrepreneurial behavior (North, 1990; Zhuang & Sun, 2023) and the level of business activity in a given region (Chiles et al., 2007; De Clercq et al., 2010). Research highlighted the implications of institutional framework (Fuller, 2010), including property rights protection, market competitiveness, resource accessibility, and government regulation (Bruton et al., 2010). In the GBA context, recent studies have examined the obstacles faced by Hong Kong residents and entrepreneurs through surveys. Specifically, many Hong Kong individuals lack knowledge about the procedures for obtaining business registration and licenses, the differences in laws (e.g., labor laws, trademark registration rules), taxation, and commercial dispute resolution (Lin, 2018). This lack of information and familiarity with the region's regulations and practices impedes Hong Kong entrepreneurs' ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities in the GBA (Liu, 2021). Based on this discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H₆: Unfamiliarity with mainland law and regulations negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₇: Worried about the high business tax negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₈: Worrying that the influence of the credibility led by a business failure negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₉: Worrying about the insufficient legal protection of products and services negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₁₀: Worrying about the competition with established companies negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

Resource-based entrepreneurship theory

The resource-based entrepreneurship theory posits that entrepreneurs require a steady stream of resources to establish and sustain a successful business. Beyond time and money, entrepreneurs need access to other essential tools. The theory primarily emphasizes the importance of financial, social, and human resources. In the GBA context, youngest entrepreneurs start their businesses with personal or family-owned funds, with few obtaining bank loans (Ge et al., 2021). Recruiting local employees can also be a challenge, with most enterprises relying on introductions from friends or recruiting from their original hometowns (Ge et al., 2021). Additionally, the extent to which immigrant entrepreneurs can assimilate socially, including shared values, the host culture, language, and legal status, can impact their business prospects, networking, and resource access (Waldinger, 1994), even influencing the expansion of business opportunities (Baltar & Icart, 2013). Studies have highlighted cultural differences in employee management and lifestyles (e.g., language, living habits, and diet) between Hong Kong and mainland cities in the GBA (Li & Sheng, 2021; Lin, 2018). Government policy support also affects the decision of Hong Kong residents to remain in GBA cities, with graduates leaving due to a lack of social resources, such as education, medical care, and social security in Guangdong (Ge et al., 2021; Liu, 2021; Wang & Zhang, 2021).

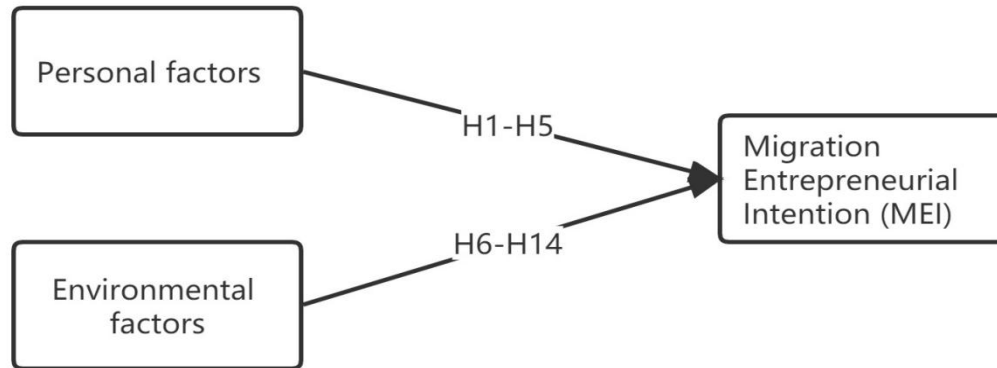
The research suggests that government support is crucial in facilitating startups by providing statutory assistance and financial backing (Rungi et al., 2016). Effective legal frameworks and government support can encourage young entrepreneurs to utilize existing resources to secure business outcomes, reduce startup costs, and even overcome failures (Smith & Ibrahim, 2012). Individuals may be more likely to become entrepreneurs in an environment that encourages innovation and risk-taking. However, overly restrictive financial conditions, inadequate legitimacy of entrepreneurship, and other market entry barriers can deter potential entrepreneurs (Parvaneh & Korosh, 2011; Schwarz et al., 2009). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H₁₁: Worrying about the mainland lifestyle negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₁₂: Worrying about maintaining a good relationship with the mainland bosses/employees negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₁₃: Worrying about raising funds negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

H₁₄: Worrying about social security negatively relates to migration entrepreneurial intention.

Figure 1.*Conceptual model***Methodology***Sample and data collection*

To get in touch with survey respondents of a broader age range, that is, young people aged 18 to 40 whom the Hong Kong government supports to start businesses in local and GBA regions, we adopted convenience sampling by distributing the questionnaire online. This study developed a self-administered questionnaire using Google Forms, and a pilot study was conducted with students before collecting surveys on a large scale to ensure the clarity of each question. The data collection period was from May to July 2022, and 230 respondents were finally considered valid after excluding those over 40 (See Table 1). Based on the study's objective, we analyzed two groups of people: 70 young people (30.4%) who have considered migrating to start a business in GBA and 160 (69.6%) who have not.

Table 1.*Respondents' demographics (N=230)*

Categories		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	77	33.5%
	Female	153	66.5%
Age	18-24	114	49.6%
	25-30	55	23.9%
	31-40	61	26.5%
Educational levels	Higher school or lower	35	15.2%
	Vocational degree	20	8.7%
	Bachelor's degrees	156	67.8%
	Master's degree or above	19	8.3%

Measure

The demographic variables include gender, age, educational levels, and majors, while the personal backgrounds in the survey include majors, educational levels, prior entrepreneurial experience, work experience, and family entrepreneurship backgrounds (Sun et al., 2022). Questions regarding

prior entrepreneurial experience, work experience, and family entrepreneurship are categorical scales (Yes/No).

This study designed the measurement items based on the barriers frequently mentioned in the literature (See Table 2). A five-Likert scale was used to measure Hong Kong youths' perception of barriers to starting a business in GBA, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

To measure the dependent variable "MEI," this study developed a single question (Yes/No) by asking, "Do you consider migrating to cities in the Greater Bay Area in the Mainland to start a business?"

Analysis method and software

This study employed SPSS Statistics to test all the hypotheses. The chi-square test was used to analyze the significance of the five personal variables (H1 - H5) among respondents with and without MEI. Additionally, binary logistic regression was adopted to test the influence of the perception of barriers (H6 - H14), as it helps to describe the association between one or more variables and a binary dependent variable (Yes or No) (Powers & Xie, 2008). Accordingly, this study had eight environment variables (the barriers of GBA) and a categorical dependent variable (MEI).

Table 2.

The item and references

Items	Ref
I am not familiar with mainland business law and regulation.	Lin (2018)
I am worried about high business tax in Mainland.	Lin (2018)
I am worried that the failure of starting a business will affect my credibility.	Lin (2018);
I am worried about the insufficient legal protection of products and services.	Lin (2018);
I am worried I will not be able to get used to the mainland lifestyle.	Ge et al. (2021);
I am worried I will not be able to maintain a good relationship with the mainland bosses/employees.	Ge et al. (2021);
I am worried it's difficult to compete with established companies in mainland China.	Ge et al. (2021);
	Ge et al. (2021);
I am worried about the difficulty of raising funds on the mainland.	Wang and Zhang (2021);
	Li and Sheng (2021);
I am worried that I will not be able to enjoy the same social security as mainland youths.	Ge et al. (2021);

Results

The results of chi-square test of independence demonstrate the effects of personal variables on MEI (See Table 3). Those with majors in management, business, and economics have a high MEI (Sig. < .001) (See Figure 2). Then, H1 is supported. However, educational levels do not have a significant effect on MEI (Sig. = 0.148), and H2 is not supported. Individuals with prior entrepreneurial experience show a high MEI (Sig. < .001) (See Figure 3), supporting H3. Conversely, working experience does not have a significant effect on MEI (Sig = 0.354), and H4 is not supported. Finally, individuals with family entrepreneurship backgrounds have a high MEI (Sig. < .01) (See Figure 4), supporting H5.

The results of binary logistic regression (See Table 4) indicate that young people who are worried about business failure leading to poor credibility have a low MEI ($B = -0.333$; $\text{Sig.} < .01$), supporting H8. Those who are worried about maintaining good relationships with mainland bosses/employees also show a low MEI ($B = -0.386$; $\text{Sig.} < .01$), supporting H12. Moreover, individuals worried about the difficulty of raising funds on the mainland have a low MEI ($B = -0.468$; $\text{Sig.} < .01$), supporting H13. However, unfamiliarity with mainland law and regulation ($\text{Sig.} = 0.330$), high business tax ($B = 0.445$; $\text{Sig.} < .01$), legal protection of products and services ($\text{Sig.} = 0.418$), business competition ($\text{Sig.} = 0.591$), lifestyles ($\text{Sig.} = 0.141$), and social securities ($\text{Sig.} = 0.750$) do not have a significant effect on MEI, and H6, H7, H9, H10, H11, and H14 are not supported.

Table 3.

Chi-square tests of independence results

Hypotheses	Variables	Value	Sig (2-sided)	Decision
H1	Major	21.225	0.000	Supported
H2	Educational levels	5.353	0.148	Not Supported
H3	Prior entrepreneurial experience	12.203	0.000	Supported
H4	Working experience	0.784	0.376	Not Supported
H5	Family entrepreneurship	3.509	0.061	Supported

Figure 2.

Major and MEI

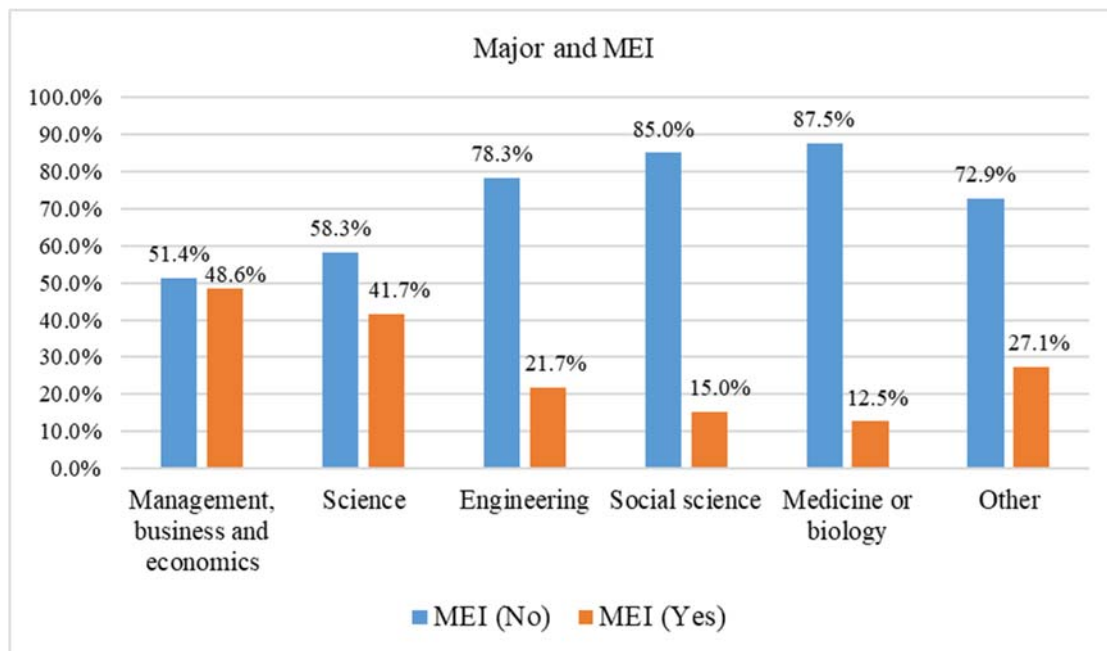


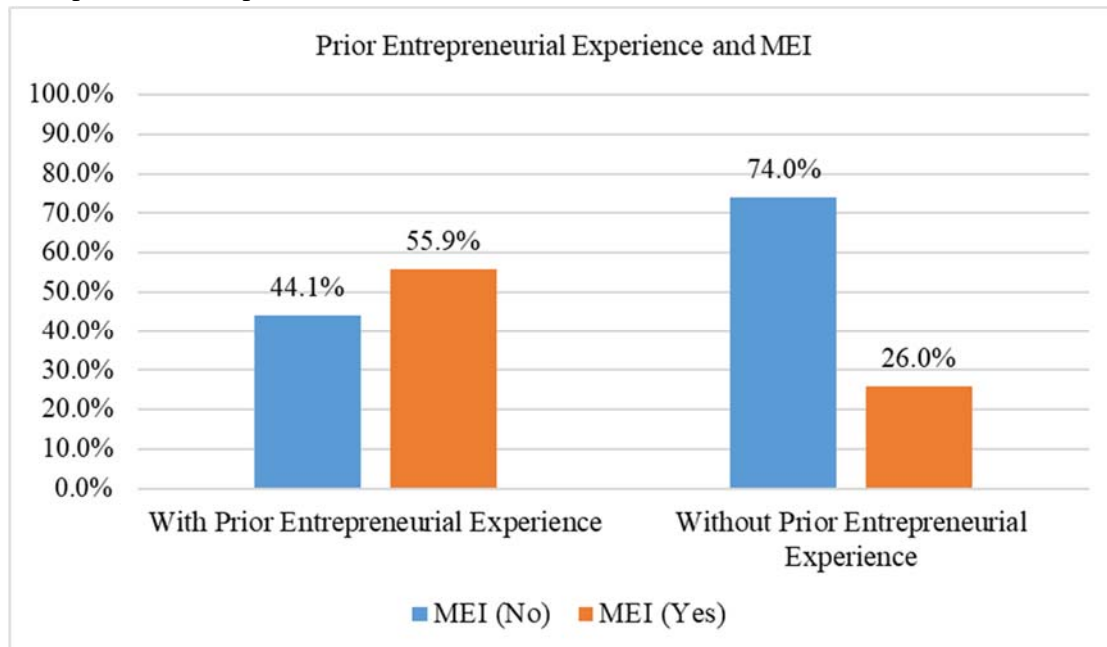
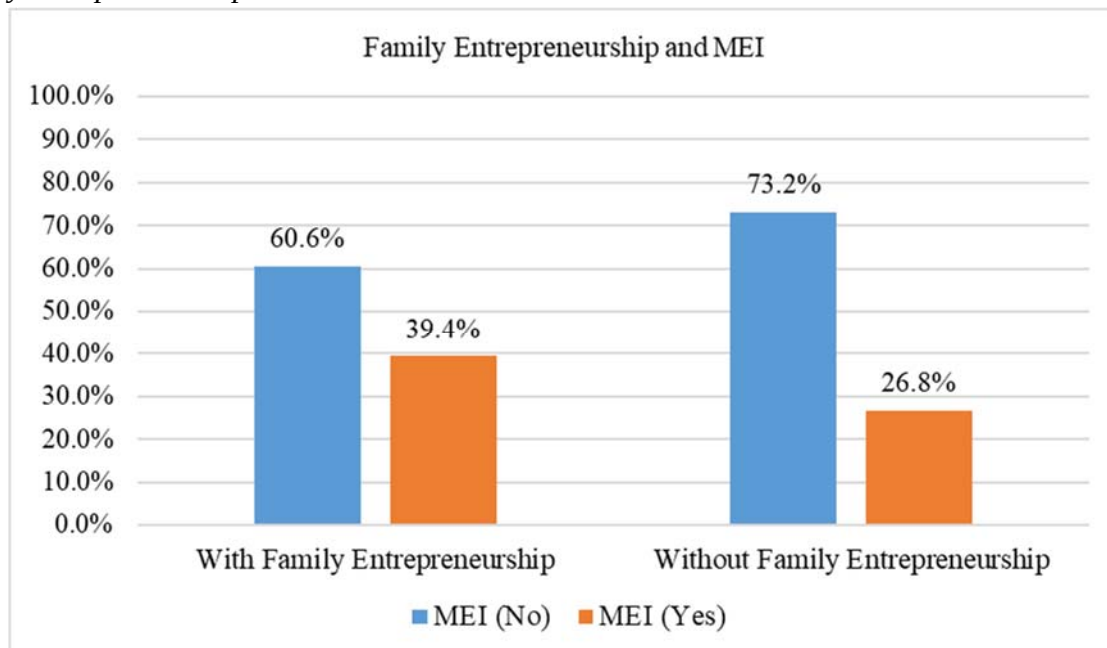
Figure 3.*Prior entrepreneurial experience and MEI***Figure 4.***Family entrepreneurship and MEI*

Table 4.
Binary logistic regression results

Hypotheses	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp (B)	95% C.I. for Exp(B)		Decision
						Lower	Upper	
H6	0.254	0.261	0.975	0.330	1.29	0.773	2.15	Not Supported
H7	0.445	0.244	1.823	0.068	1.56	0.967	2.517	Not Supported
H8	- 0.333	0.186	-1.796	0.073	0.717	0.498	1.031	Supported
H9	0.187	0.23	0.811	0.418	1.205	0.768	1.892	Not Supported
H10	0.121	0.226	0.538	0.591	1.129	0.725	1.757	Not Supported
H11	- 0.291	0.198	-1.472	0.141	0.747	0.507	1.101	Not Supported
H12	- 0.386	0.229	-1.687	0.092	0.68	0.434	1.064	Supported
H13	- 0.468	0.269	-1.736	0.083	0.626	0.37	1.062	Supported
H14	- 0.066	0.208	-0.318	0.750	0.936	0.623	1.407	Not Supported

Discussion

The results indicate that individuals with business-related majors are more likely to establish their businesses in GBA cities. This finding is consistent with previous studies that reveal higher MEI among Hong Kong residents majoring in management, business, and economics. Acquiring business knowledge can lead to a positive entrepreneurial attitude and perception of entrepreneurship opportunities (Dao et al., 2021). However, the non-significant relationship between educational levels and MEI contradicts the survey results showing that Hong Kong entrepreneurs are well-educated (HKTDC, 2021). Similarly, the non-significant effect of work experience is inconsistent with the findings of Brown and Mason (2014), who found that entrepreneurs with industry-specific knowledge gained from previous work experiences are better equipped to recognize business opportunities (Brown & Mason, 2014). The significant effect of prior entrepreneurial experience aligns with the finding by Davidsson and Honig (2003), who report a positive association between entrepreneurial experience and entrepreneurial intention.

Moreover, this study finds that individuals with family entrepreneurship backgrounds have higher intention to establish their businesses in GBA cities. This finding is consistent with previous studies that reported the positive impact of family entrepreneurship on children's entrepreneurial intention (Carr & Sequeira, 2007; Drennan et al., 2005). The qualitative research by Kang (2022) also reported that nascent entrepreneurs with family entrepreneurship backgrounds can easily access finance and mentoring.

The study's results partially confirm previous findings on the effects of environmental factors. The significant effect of business failure leading to poor credit indicates that potential entrepreneurs are concerned about the high costs associated with business failures. Recent research has shown that risk tolerance positively influences Hong Kong youths' entrepreneurial intention and business preparation (Zhuang et al., 2022). Additionally, the significant influence of concerns about raising

funds in GBA aligns with previous survey results (Ge et al., 2021; Wang & Zhang, 2021). Recent studies revealed that difficulties in obtaining funding for business startups in the mainland were due to high assessment criteria (Wang & Zhang, 2021), limited bank credit, and capital flow issues among regions (Ge et al., 2021).

However, this study reveals the non-significant effects of understanding GBA business laws and regulations, business competitions, lifestyles, and social security. These results contradict the recent findings (Ge et al., 2021; Li & Sheng, 2021; Lin, 2018). Existing studies and our findings suggest that individuals who migrate to GBA to live and work may be more influenced by diverse lifestyles and social security, while potential entrepreneurs are more likely to be driven to GBA cities with sufficient funding support, business failure support, and human support.

Theoretical implications

This study makes two significant contributions to the entrepreneurship literature. First, while entrepreneurial intention has been the focus of prior entrepreneurship research (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015), this study enriches the existing literature by examining migration entrepreneurial intention due to the unique geographical location of Hong Kong in the GBA. Additionally, we propose a conceptual model of MEI with personal and environmental factors (the perception of barriers in the GBA) for future researchers interested in Hong Kong youths and MEI.

Second, this study contributes to migration research by demonstrating that diverse factors can influence different migration purposes. Specifically, we found that migration entrepreneurial intention is influenced by finance, business failure, and human support (Lin, 2018), but not by lifestyles and social security in the GBA. However, these factors are influential for Hong Kong residents' migration to work and live (Ge et al., 2021; Mok & Zhu, 2021).

Practical implications

This study is relevant to policymakers and educators working on GBA business creation. Our findings highlight the importance of tailoring education and support practices to cater to diverse profiles of Hong Kong youths, emphasizing the need to enhance the MEI of individuals with non-business majors. Policymakers should consider launching activities to expose young people with non-business majors to entrepreneurial practices, while strong mentoring and financial resources should be supported by the government for those without family entrepreneurship backgrounds.

Moreover, the study identifies various barriers to GBA entrepreneurship. The significant effect of worries about business failure suggests that the Hong Kong government should collaborate with mainland counterparts to mitigate the personal impact of entrepreneurial failure, providing consultation services. The significant effects of concerns about maintaining good relationships with mainland bosses/employees indicate the need for Hong Kong residents to understand different working environments and employment management. To address this, the Hong Kong government can facilitate more learning exchange activities and support more Hong Kong college students to intern and work in enterprises in mainland cities.

Lastly, the significant effect of worries about the difficulty in raising funding in mainland cities highlights the need for cooperation between the Hong Kong government and financial institutions in the two places to ensure smooth funding application.

Limitations and future research

Certain limitations to this study help point the way for future studies. This study examines the influence of personal backgrounds and perceived barriers in the GBA environment among young Hong Kong residents. This work paves the way for future research to explore various topics and employ multiple ways of data collection. Researchers in the future may use qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews with aspiring potential entrepreneurs, failed business owners, and successful business owners to better understand the differences in overcoming these obstacles. Business owners in GBA can shed further light on the government's next steps by sharing their own stories about the challenges they have faced and the solutions that have worked for them.

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JZ: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

HS: Supervision, Funding acquisition.

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