

# Research on the Construction and Practice of a Participation System for Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Competitions in Hainan's Private Universities

ZhenYe Zengxiuyu<sup>(Corresponding author)</sup>

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Hainan Haikou, 571126;

**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of the nation's vigorous promotion of integrating innovation and entrepreneurship education reform with regional economic development strategies, college entrepreneurship competitions have become a vital link connecting university talent cultivation with market demands. As an integral part of higher education, the participation level of private undergraduate institutions in Hainan in such competitions directly impacts the quality of applied talent cultivation and the efficiency of talent supply for the construction of the Free Trade Port. This paper focuses on Hainan's private undergraduate institutions, systematically reviewing domestic universities' practices in organizing entrepreneurship competitions, building educational systems, and commercializing outcomes. It analyzes the current challenges these institutions face in competition participation—including inadequate resource allocation, insufficient faculty support, low project localization, and limited evaluation and incentive mechanisms—while considering their institutional positioning and regional characteristics. From four dimensions—policy alignment and resource integration, faculty development, project incubation and outcome transformation, and evaluation incentive optimization—it proposes strategies tailored to Hainan's private undergraduate institutions for building an entrepreneurial competition participation system. This aims to provide practical pathways for institutions to enhance their entrepreneurial education ecosystems and elevate students' innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities, thereby supporting the cultivation of localized innovation and entrepreneurship talent within the context of Hainan Free Trade Port development.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Competition; Talent Development System; Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education; Technology Transfer

**DOI:** 10.69979/3041-0843.25.04.020

## 1 Introduction

As the influence of competitions like the “Internet Plus” College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Contest and the “Challenge Cup” China College Student Entrepreneurship Plan Competition continues to grow, entrepreneurship contests have evolved from mere skill competitions into core vehicles and practical platforms for innovation and entrepreneurship education in higher education<sup>[1]</sup>. Research confirms that such contests effectively enhance students' creativity, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and awareness of seizing opportunities, while significantly promoting their academic advancement, employment, and independent entrepreneurship<sup>[2]</sup>. Research indicates that these competitions facilitate students' transition from “academic thinking” to “business thinking” by simulating commercial processes, building resource networks, providing brand endorsement, and fostering interdisciplinary knowledge integration<sup>[3]</sup>. Scholars focusing on regionally tailored educational systems for entrepreneurship competitions emphasize that policy support, university-enterprise collaboration, and faculty development are crucial for maximizing competition outcomes<sup>[4]</sup>.

The development of the Hainan Free Trade Port, as a major national strategy, has created an increasingly urgent demand for applied and innovative talent<sup>[5]</sup>. Private undergraduate institutions, serving as a vital supplement to Hainan's higher education system, are positioned to cultivate applied talents for local socio-economic development<sup>[6]</sup>. However, their

participation in entrepreneurship competitions faces unique challenges: on one hand, regional development disparities and resource constraints limit their investment in competition funding, incubation platform development, and faculty allocation compared to leading domestic universities; on the other hand, the low alignment between Hainan's local industrial characteristics and competition projects hinders the practical implementation of outcomes. Against this backdrop, this paper integrates mature domestic practices with Hainan's local needs to explore the establishment of an entrepreneurship competition participation system for Hainan's private undergraduate institutions. This initiative is not only an essential choice for enhancing institutional competitiveness and achieving differentiated development but also a practical necessity for serving the industrial upgrading of the Free Trade Port and cultivating localized innovation and entrepreneurship talent.

## **2 Review of Practical Experiences from Domestic University Entrepreneurship Competitions**

Through systematic analysis of award results from eight editions of the “Internet Plus” National College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, Shandong Province has established a competition organization model centered on “data-driven, tiered cultivation, and key breakthroughs,” providing valuable reference for private undergraduate institutions in Hainan.

Based on a survey of 157 college student startup teams in Beijing, scholars including Zhu found that Beijing universities have effectively addressed the issue of startup competitions prioritizing events over practical implementation by building a collaborative ecosystem integrating “competitions, campuses, capital, and industry.” Their experience holds significant reference value for private undergraduate institutions in Hainan.

Xu research on vocational colleges in Tibet focuses on establishing an entrepreneurship competition-based education system within the context of regional development lag. Their “policy support-industry-academia collaboration-faculty enhancement” model offers differentiated reference for private undergraduate institutions in Hainan.

## **3 Current Participation Status and Challenges in Entrepreneurship Competitions at Private Undergraduate Institutions in Hainan**

### **3.1 Insufficient resource allocation and weak event support capabilities**

Compared to the resource investments made by universities in Shandong, Beijing, Tibet, and other regions, private undergraduate institutions in Hainan lag significantly in establishing support systems for entrepreneurship competitions, creating a core bottleneck that constrains the effectiveness of competition participation.

Insufficient funding struggles to support full-cycle project development. While Shandong universities secure competition funds through institutional special funds and corporate sponsorships, and Tibet's vocational colleges leverage a 2 billion yuan government support fund, most private undergraduate institutions in Hainan lack dedicated competition budgets. Expenses for project R&D, pitch training, and material production primarily rely on student self-funding or minimal institutional subsidies. Taking the “Internet Plus” College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition as an example, a provincial gold award project requires investments in pitch video production, expert guidance fees, and market research costs. Limited funding causes most projects to remain at the “PPT stage,” unable to complete market validation and technical optimization.

Inadequate resource integration and scarce external support. Beijing universities leverage competitions to connect with industrial parks, capital, and industry resources. However, Hainan's private undergraduate institutions struggle to establish effective collaborations with local leading enterprises, investment institutions, and industrial parks due to geographical constraints and limited institutional influence. Most institutions can only engage external resources through “short-term lectures” or “one-off collaborations” for competitions, failing to build long-term, stable resource networks. This results in competition projects lacking market perspective and industry alignment capabilities.

### **3.2 Insufficient teaching resources and inadequate professional guidance quality**

Entrepreneurship competition coaching requires “dual-qualified” instructors with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. However, Hainan's private undergraduate institutions face a severe shortage of such faculty, resulting in

coaching quality that struggles to meet competition demands. This issue closely mirrors the challenges faced by vocational colleges in Tibet, characterized by “weak faculty and insufficient practical experience.”

Lack of practical experience among on-campus mentors. Entrepreneurship competition mentors at Hainan's private undergraduate institutions predominantly hold academic backgrounds in disciplines such as ideological and political education, business administration, and pedagogy. Over 80% lack hands-on experience in corporate operations, market analysis, or financing negotiations.

Absence of external mentor collaboration mechanisms. Although some institutions have signed cooperation agreements with local enterprises, external mentors' involvement in competition guidance primarily takes the form of “pre-competition evaluations” or “lecture sharing,” failing to establish a collaborative “academic mentor + industry mentor” guidance system. Compared to Beijing universities where external mentors participate throughout project development, Hainan's private undergraduate institutions see external mentors contributing less than 2 hours of guidance per month on average. This prevents comprehensive support spanning topic validation, plan refinement, and post-competition implementation, resulting in projects lacking market viability and practical feasibility.

### **3.3 Projects exhibit low levels of localization and insufficient conversion rates of research outcomes**

The development of Hainan Free Trade Port has spurred demand for distinctive industries such as tropical high-efficiency agriculture, cross-border e-commerce, international tourism consumption, and marine economy. However, projects submitted by Hainan's private undergraduate institutions show low integration with local industries, resulting in a “competition fever but implementation chill.” This issue stands in stark contrast to Shandong universities' practice of “specialized-innovation integration and achievement transformation.”

Project topics exhibit homogenization and lack regional distinctiveness. Scholars like Sun Yuan note that Shandong's vocational colleges develop competition projects based on specialized disciplines, whereas Hainan's private undergraduate institutions predominantly focus on generic fields such as “educational technology,” “cultural creativity,” and “general e-commerce.” Projects addressing Hainan's local needs — such as “tropical agricultural product traceability and live-streaming sales,” “cross-border e-commerce supply chain optimization,” “rural tourism IP development,” and “marine biological resource utilization” — account for less than 15% of entries.

## **4 Strategies for Establishing a Participation System in Entrepreneurship Competitions for Private Undergraduate Institutions in Hainan**

### **4.1 Strengthen resource integration and policy alignment to enhance the event support system**

Develop a diversified funding mechanism. Secure government policy and financial support: Proactively engage with Hainan Provincial Education Department, Human Resources and Social Security Department, and Free Trade Port Working Committee to apply for “Free Trade Port College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Special Subsidies” and “Provincial Matching Funds for Entrepreneurship Competitions,” prioritizing projects integrating with local industries. Establish a university-level competition special fund. Annually allocate 1%-2% of tuition revenue to the fund while expanding sources through “corporate-sponsored tracks” and “alumni donations.” Optimize funding efficiency. Following Shandong universities' “tiered cultivation” model, allocate funds into “idea incubation,” “growth optimization,” and “final push” categories for stage-specific investments.

Establish a Resource Matching Service Center. Create a dedicated “Entrepreneurship Competition Resource Matching Department” responsible for connecting government policies, corporate needs, park resources, and competing projects. For example: - Regularly organize “Policy Briefings” to help students understand Free Trade Port entrepreneurship support policies; - Host “Enterprise-Project Matching Sessions” to facilitate cooperation agreements between competing projects and local enterprises; - Assist winning projects in applying for industrial park residency to enjoy policies such as venue rent reductions and tax incentives.

### **4.2 Strengthen faculty development and establish a collaborative guidance mechanism**

Cultivate an internal “dual-qualified” mentor team. Enhance faculty practical skills through the “Faculty Entrepreneurship Capacity Enhancement Program,” annually dispatching 20%-30% of mentors to local Hainan enterprises for on-the-job training in business operations, market expansion, and project management to accumulate real-world experience. Invite domestic entrepreneurship education experts and competition judges to conduct “online + offline” training, focusing on improving faculty capabilities in business plan guidance, business model design, and pitch presentation techniques. Optimize faculty evaluation and incentives: Integrate competition guidance into faculty performance assessments, providing additional teaching hour subsidies to mentors. Award bonuses to faculty whose students win provincial-level or higher prizes, and prioritize them in professional title evaluations and excellence awards.

Establish a “long-term collaboration” mechanism for external mentors and conduct targeted recruitment: Select local successful entrepreneurs, heads of investment institutions, and industry experts as external mentors aligned with Hainan Free Trade Port's specialty industries, clearly defining mentor responsibilities and benefits. Implement a collaborative “1+1+1” guidance model, assigning dedicated teams to each key project. For example, the “Tropical Agricultural Products Live-Streaming E-commerce” project features on-campus marketing faculty for theoretical guidance, off-campus e-commerce executives for operational guidance, and agricultural experts for quality control, forming a comprehensive support system. Establish a “monthly meetings + quarterly reviews” system to ensure mentors' full participation throughout project development. Form specialized guidance teams for major competitions like “Internet Plus” and “Challenge Cup,” assembling interdisciplinary teams covering business administration, marketing, information technology, law, finance, and other fields to provide one-stop guidance for projects.

#### **4.3 Focus on local industry needs to enhance project quality and increase the rate of results conversion**

Establish an industry-driven project selection mechanism and publish local topic guidelines. Annually release the “Entrepreneurship Competition Local Topic Guide” aligned with Hainan Free Trade Port's industrial development plan, clearly defining priority support areas. Create an “Enterprise-Proposed Track” in collaboration with local Hainan enterprises, transforming their practical needs into competition topics. For instance, partnering with Hainan State Farms to establish the “Tropical Fruit Preservation Technology R&D” track, and collaborating with Sanya Tourism Group for the “Smart Tourism Service Platform Development” track. Enterprises provide topics, funding, and technical support, while institutions organize student participation. Winning projects receive priority for enterprise collaboration and implementation, achieving seamless integration from “competition topics → enterprise needs → project execution.”

Strengthening market research guidance involves organizing students to conduct in-depth investigations within Hainan's local markets to understand industry pain points and user needs. For instance, guiding students to research the Wanning coffee plantation base in Hainan revealed issues like “low brand recognition and limited sales channels,” leading to the design of the “Wanning Coffee IP Development and E-commerce Sales” project. Establishing long-term partnerships with local farmers and merchants ensures project topics are grounded in genuine market demands. Refine the “competition-industry” outcomes conversion mechanism by establishing an award-winning project repository and tracking system. Classify provincial-level and above award-winning projects into “Potential Project Pool” and “Incubation Project Pool,” assigning dedicated personnel to monitor progress and provide ongoing support.

### **5 Conclusion**

Hainan's private undergraduate institutions are establishing a scientific and effective system for participating in entrepreneurship competitions. This initiative serves as both a strategic response to the talent demands of Hainan Free Trade Port development and an intrinsic requirement for the institutions' own transformation and enhancement of core competitiveness. By drawing on proven approaches—Shandong universities' “data-driven, tiered cultivation,” Beijing institutions' “market-oriented, resource-collaborative” models, and Tibet's vocational colleges' “policy-driven, industry-academia partnerships”—and integrating Hainan's regional characteristics with the positioning of private undergraduate institutions, efforts focused on four dimensions—resource integration, faculty development, project incubation, and evaluation incentives—can elevate entrepreneurship competitions from “isolated events” to “full-cycle educational platforms.” The establishment of this system will not only enhance students' innovation and entrepreneurship

capabilities, cultivating a cohort of applied talents who “understand local contexts, innovate effectively, and excel in entrepreneurship,” but also propel Hainan's private undergraduate institutions toward achieving educational objectives of “using competitions to enhance teaching, promote learning, and foster innovation.” This initiative will inject fresh youthful energy into the development of Hainan Free Trade Port.

## References

- [1] Lu G , Zhu Q , Zhao C , et al. Systematic Analysis of Characteristics in College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competitions: Application and Implications of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition Index [J]. Research on Higher Engineering Education, 2025, (05): 188-194.
- [2] Sun Y , Xin H , Wei C , et al. Research and Practice on Enhancing College Students' Comprehensive Quality through the “Internet Plus” Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition: A Case Study of Multiple Universities in Shandong [J]. Journal of Multimedia and Network Teaching (Mid-Month Edition), 2023, (02): 145-148. DOI: CNKI:SUN:DMWJ. 0. 2023-02-036.
- [3] Zhu J , Ning J , Li X . From Competition to Market: Impact and Transformation of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competitions on College Student Entrepreneurs [J]. Beijing Education (Higher Education), 2025, (06): 67-70. DOI: CNKI:SUN:BJYG. 0. 2025-06-018.
- [4] Xu X , Sun H , Wu T , et al. Design and Exploration of an Educational System for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competitions Among Vocational College Students in Tibet [J]. Footwear Technology and Design, 2025, 5 (03): 104-106. DOI: CNKI:SUN:ZWXE. 0. 2025-03-035.
- [5]Chen Y ,Chen Z ,Chen C .Construction of the “Professional + Innovation Entrepreneurship and Innovation” Education Integration Model in Higher Vocational Colleges of the Hainan Free Trade Port from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration[J].Scientific Innovation in Asia,2025,3(4):DOI:10.12410/SIA0304001.
- [6]Jun H ,Bangkheow P ,Bangkheow P , et al.The Development of Sustainable Educational Management Strategies for Enhancing Subjective Well-being of Private University Students[J].Higher Education Studies,2025,15(3):391-391. DOI:10.5539/HES.V15N3P391.