



Employment Motivation and Intentions of University Students in Guangxi

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Abstract

Background and Aim: With the development of the social economy and the popularization of higher education, the employment issues of university graduates in Guangxi have increasingly garnered attention. As an economically underdeveloped region, Guangxi faces a series of challenges and difficulties in the employment situation of its university graduates. Therefore, in-depth research on the employment motivation and intentions of Guangxi University graduates is of great significance for understanding their employment needs, formulating effective employment policies, and improving the quality of graduate employment. The research study on Employment Motivation and Intentions of University Students in Guangxi aimed to: 1) study the employment motivations and intentions of university students in Guangxi, 2) analyze the relationship between employment motivation and employment intentions, 3) compare the differences in employment motivation and intentions among students with different personal backgrounds

Materials and Methods: The study better than employs a questionnaire survey method, collecting data from 1,242 university students from 19 different types of universities in Guangxi. The students' academic backgrounds cover 13 disciplines, including education, engineering, and science, ranging from freshmen to postgraduate students, with educational levels spanning junior college, undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

Results: This research study has the following research results: 1) The data analysis results show that the employment motivations of university students in Guangxi are diverse, including economic, career development, and interest motivations; meanwhile, their employment intentions also show a trend of diverse and individualized career choices. 2) The findings indicate that personal abilities, market demand, social resources, and geographical location are the main factors influencing the employment decisions of university students in Guangxi, affecting their job choices and career paths to varying degrees. 3) improving the employment policy system, enhancing employment guidance and services, providing targeted employment support; promoting university-enterprise cooperation to enhance students' career adaptability; increasing the transparency and accessibility of employment information; encouraging and supporting diverse employment options to provide students with more flexible and varied career development paths.

Conclusions: In summary, this study provides valuable insights into understanding the employment motivations and intentions of university students in Guangxi and offers useful recommendations for optimizing university employment guidance and talent cultivation strategies. Future research can further explore multiple factors influencing employment motivations and intentions to provide more precise support for university students' employment decisions.

Keywords: University Student Employment; Motivation; Employment Intentions

Introduction

With the development of the social economy and the popularization of higher education, the employment issues of university graduates in Guangxi have increasingly garnered attention. As an economically underdeveloped region, Guangxi faces a series of challenges and difficulties in the employment situation of its university graduates. (Yang Yi. (2020) Therefore, in-depth research on the employment motivation and intentions of Guangxi University graduates is of great significance for understanding their employment needs, formulating effective employment policies, and improving the quality of graduate employment. (Winsor et al. 2024)

In the context of globalization and informatization, the employment issues of university graduates have attracted widespread attention. As a key province in southwest China, Guangxi faces both challenges and opportunities in university graduate employment due to its relatively lagging economic development. Located in southern China, Guangxi has a unique cultural background with a diverse ethnic population (Charkova and Somova, 2023) advantageous geographical location, and abundant natural resources, giving it potential for economic development (Zakiya Edens, 2024). However, compared to the eastern coastal areas, Guangxi's economic development still lags. In recent years,



Guangxi has made significant progress in transportation, energy, tourism, and other fields, but its overall economic level remains in the middle to lower range nationwide (Li Shasha, 2022). The limitations of economic development affect the capacity of the job market, particularly in the supply of high-value-added and technology-intensive industry positions. Regional development imbalances and the urbanization process have intensified competition in the job market, posing greater challenges for university graduate employment (Al Issa, H.-E., 2024).

University graduate employment not only concerns personal and family well-being but also directly impacts social stability (Huang Bo, 2021). Therefore, solving the employment problem of university graduates, especially in underdeveloped regions like Guangxi, has become a focus for government and educational institutions (Shanks, L. 2024). Employment motivation and intention are key psychological factors affecting university students' employment behavior (Zhang Bo, 2022). Employment motivation involves the goals and needs that individuals pursue in employment, including material needs, personal development, social recognition, and other internal demands; employment intention reflects the tendencies and plans individuals have in their employment choices (Tomlinson et al, 2022). In regions like Guangxi, the employment motivations and intentions of university students are influenced by various factors. Understanding these factors helps formulate more targeted employment policies, improve employment quality, reduce employment pressure, and provide a basis for universities to improve employment guidance services.

Research Objectives

1. To study the employment motivations and intentions of university students in Guangxi
2. To analyze the relationship between employment motivation and employment intentions
3. To compare the differences in employment motivation and intentions among students with different personal backgrounds

Literature Review

Employment Motivation

Employment motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain individuals' behaviors and efforts in the workplace. The concept is foundational in organizational behavior, aiming to explain why employees choose to exert effort and how they sustain it over time. Motivation theories seek to identify what drives individuals toward achieving personal and organizational goals. Understanding these drivers is crucial for managers seeking to enhance productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

1. Theoretical Foundations of Motivation

Several theories have been developed to explain employment motivation. Among the most influential is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which posits that individuals are motivated to fulfill basic needs before progressing to higher-level needs like self-actualization. Another prominent theory is Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors (e.g., salary, job security) that prevent dissatisfaction and motivators (e.g., recognition, achievement) that enhance satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) also plays a significant role, emphasizing intrinsic motivation and the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

2. Concept of Employment Intentions

Employment intentions refer to an individual's planned future actions in relation to their job, such as the intention to stay with or leave an organization. These intentions are considered strong predictors of actual behavior, especially in areas like turnover and job search behavior. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), intentions are shaped by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In an employment context, this implies that if an employee feels positively about their job and perceives support from peers and management, their intention to stay is likely to be stronger.

3. Linking Motivation to Employment Intentions

There is a significant relationship between motivation and employment intentions. High levels of motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, are associated with stronger intentions to remain in a job and contribute positively to organizational goals. Conversely, lack of motivation can lead to withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism, low performance, and turnover intentions. Research shows that motivational strategies—like providing meaningful work, recognition, and opportunities for development—can effectively reduce turnover intentions (Ramlall, 2004).

4. Organizational Implications

Understanding and leveraging the connection between motivation and employment intentions has strategic implications for organizations. Firms that actively invest in motivation-enhancing practices—such as leadership development, reward systems, and supportive work environments—tend to enjoy higher retention rates, better employee morale, and improved organizational performance. Moreover, accurate assessment of employees' motivational states and intentions can aid HR in tailoring interventions that prevent unwanted turnover and foster engagement (Latham & Pinder, 2005).

In summary, employment motivation and intentions are interrelated constructs that significantly impact employee behavior and organizational outcomes. By applying motivation theories and understanding the determinants of employment intentions, organizations can better manage human resources, reduce turnover, and increase productivity. Continued research and practical application of these concepts remain essential for sustainable workforce development in increasingly competitive and dynamic work environments.

Conceptual Framework

The concepts in this study were as follows:

Employment Motivation: Refers to the motives and reasons for an individual choosing employment. It can include intrinsic motivations, such as personal interests and career development needs, as well as extrinsic motivations, such as economic income and social status.

Employment Intentions: Refers to an individual's attitudes and intentions toward different types of employment opportunities. It involves choices and preferences regarding employment sectors, locations, salaries, and career development.

Employment Rate: A measure of the extent of labor force employment, represented as the percentage of employed individuals out of the total number of both employed and unemployed individuals.

Employment Market: Refers to the overall situation of labor supply and demand and employment opportunities. The state of the employment market may influence an individual's employment motivations and intentions.

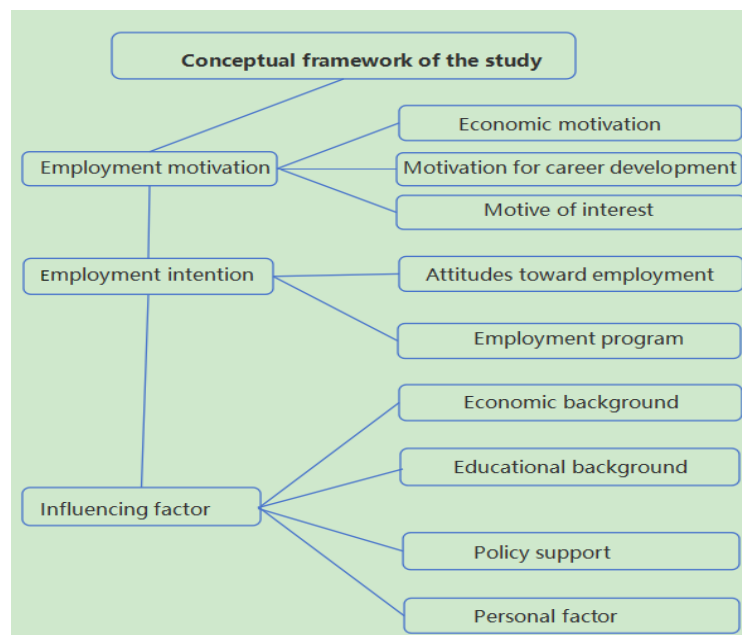


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study employed a literature analysis method to gather data from the Guangxi 2020-2023 Annual Employment Quality Report of Regular College Graduates, published by the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Department of Education. The analysis deeply explored the current status, characteristics, and influencing factors of the employment motivations and intentions of university students in Guangxi.

Population and Sample

The research targeted university students in Guangxi, using a stratified sampling method to randomly select students from different schools, grades, and majors. The final sample consisted of 1,242 university students from various universities in Guangxi, covering different types of institutions.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through the Wenjuanxing platform, where the survey questionnaire was distributed to students from different levels to gather relevant data. A total of 1,242 questionnaires were distributed, all of which were collected and deemed valid.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed using statistical software employing methods such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, factor analysis, and comparative analysis to deeply explore the employment motivations and intentions of university students in Guangxi.

Results

Demographic Information of the samples shows that among all respondents, 47.83% were male, and 52.17% were female. The survey participants were from various universities in Guangxi, with academic backgrounds covering multiple fields such as education, engineering, and science. Regarding degree distribution, undergraduates comprised 50% of the sample, junior college students 38%, and graduate students 12%. In terms of grade distribution, seniors had the highest proportion at 32%; freshmen, sophomores, and juniors accounted for 17%, 19%, and 21%, respectively; and graduate students accounted for 11%. Concerning the place of origin, 92.91% of participants were from within Guangxi, reflecting the significant regional characteristics of this survey.

Analysis of Influencing Factors

The study reveals that the employment decisions of university students in Guangxi are influenced by various factors, including personal abilities, market demand, social resources, and geographical location. These factors intertwine to form a complex influence mechanism. There is an interaction between students' professional abilities and market demand, while social resources such as family background and interpersonal networks significantly influence their decisions. Geographic location choices are also influenced by a combination of personal abilities and social resources. The interaction of these factors constitutes a multidimensional framework for students' employment decisions, requiring greater specificity and flexibility in employment guidance and policy formulation.

Table 1 Analysis of Factors Influencing Career Positioning Among University Students in Guangxi

Option	frequency	Percentage
Family background and expectations	747	60.14%
Personal interests and hobbies	849	68.36%
Social environment and job market demand	969	78.02%
Study experience and professional background	942	75.85%
Influence and advice from others	403	32.45%
Others	12	0.97%

The results show that university students in Guangxi consider a wide range of factors when positioning their careers. The main factors include personal interests and hobbies (68.36%), social environment and job market demand (78.02%), study experience and professional background (75.85%), family background and expectations (60.14%), and influence and advice from others (32.45%). Among these, the social environment and job market demand are the most important considerations, reflecting the students' emphasis on the current employment situation. Personal interests and study experience follow closely, highlighting the pursuit of applying personal interests and professional knowledge. Family background and external advice also play a supporting role, providing a balance in decision-making for students.

Multiple Regression Analysis and Influencing Factors

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The regression model analyzed the predictive effect of employment motivations on employment intentions, controlling for variables such as gender, major, grade, and educational level. The regression results indicate that employment motivations have a significant positive predictive effect on employment intentions ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). Other variables, such as gender, major, and grade, also have varying degrees of influence on employment intentions but are relatively small. This analysis provides



important insights for career guidance practices, suggesting that enhancing students' employment motivations may be an effective way to help them clarify their employment intentions.

Table 2 Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance (p-value)
Constant	-	2.34	0.02
Employment motivations	0.38**	5.67	0.01
Gender	0.07	1.03	0.3
Major	0.21**	3.25	0.01
Grade	0.14*	2.12	0.04
Educational level	0.09	1.41	0.16

*p < .05, **p < .01

The regression analysis results indicate that employment motivations have a significant positive predictive effect on employment intentions even after controlling for variables such as gender, major, grade, and educational level. This suggests that students' employment motivations are a key determinant of their employment intentions, while the impact of other control variables is relatively minor. These findings provide valuable insights for career guidance practices, suggesting that enhancing students' employment motivations may be an effective way to help them clarify their employment intentions.

Comparison of Employment Intentions among Students of Different Genders

Table 3 Comparison of Employment Intentions among Students of Different Genders

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance (p)
Male	4.20	0.70	2.30*	< 0.05
Female	4.00	0.60		

*p < .05

The independent samples t-test results show that male students have significantly higher employment intentions than female students ($t = 2.30$, $p < 0.05$). This may be related to the higher autonomy and proactivity exhibited by male students in career choice and development.

Comparison of Employment Motivations and Intentions among Students of Different Grades, using one-way ANOVA, we explored the differences in employment motivations and intentions among students of different grades, as shown in Table 3.

Table 4 Mean Comparison of Employment Motivations and Intentions among Students of Different Grades

Variable	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Graduate	F-value	Significance (p-value)
Employment motivations	3.85	4.00	3.95	4.10	4.20	3.20	0.01
Employment intentions	3.75	3.90	3.85	4.00	4.10	3.50	0.01

*p < .05, **p < .01

One-way ANOVA results show significant differences in employment motivations and intentions among students of different grades ($p < 0.05$). As the grade level increases, students' employment motivations and intentions show a rising trend, which may be related to the clarity of future career planning and the accumulation of professional experience among senior students.

Comparison of Employment Intentions among Students of Different Majors, using ANOVA, we further analyzed the differences in employment intentions among students of different majors, as shown in Table 4.



Table 5 Comparison of Employment Intentions among Students of Different Majors

Major	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-value	Significance (p)
Philosophy	3.70	0.80	4.30**	0.01
Economics	4.20	0.60		
Law	4.10	0.70		
Education	4.40	0.50		
Literature	3.80	0.70		
History	4.00	0.60		
Science	4.20	0.50		
Engineering	4.30	0.60		
Agriculture	4.0	0.70		
Medicine	4.50	0.6		

**p < .01

ANOVA results indicate significant differences in employment intentions among students of different majors ($F = 4.30$, $p < 0.01$). Students majoring in education and medicine exhibit the highest employment intentions, while those majoring in philosophy and literature have relatively lower intentions.

Comparison of Employment Intentions among Students of Different Educational Levels

To explore the differences in employment motivations and intentions among students of different educational levels, we conducted an ANOVA. Table 5 presents the mean comparison of employment intentions among students of different educational levels.

Table 6 Comparison of Employment Intentions among Students of Different Educational Levels

Educational Level	Number	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-value	Significance (p)
Junior College	476	38%	3.9	0.6	4.5	< 0.01
Undergraduate	625	50%	4.2	0.7		
Master's	131	11%	4.4	0.6		
Doctoral	10	1%	4.5	0.7		

The ANOVA results show significant differences in employment intentions among students of different educational levels ($F = 4.50$, $p < 0.01$). As educational levels increase, students' employment intentions gradually strengthen.

In conclusion, these findings provide valuable insights for career guidance and policy-making, suggesting that enhancing students' employment motivations and formulating specialized career guidance strategies tailored to individual needs are effective ways to help them clarify employment intentions and improve employment quality.

Discussion

In Guangxi, a less economically developed region, university students' employment motivations and intentions are influenced by multiple factors. Understanding these motivations and intentions in depth not only helps to identify the actual needs of students in the job search process but also provides a basis for the government to formulate more targeted employment policies. This can improve the quality of graduates' employment and reduce their confusion and pressure during job hunting. Moreover, studying employment motivations and intentions also aids universities in refining their career guidance services to better align with students' needs and market changes.

Current State of Employment Motivation and Intention: The employment motivations of university students in Guangxi are diverse, encompassing economic factors, career development, and



personal interests. Most students have a positive attitude towards employment, but some express concerns about the uncertainties and competitiveness of the job market.

Diversification of Employment Intentions: Students show a variety of choices in career paths. Direct employment remains the mainstream choice, but some students prefer further studies or taking civil service exams.

Positive Correlation between Employment Motivation and Intention: Students with stronger employment motivation generally have clearer and more positive employment intentions.

Differences in Gender, Major, and Grade: There are significant differences in employment motivations and intentions among students from different backgrounds (such as gender, major, grade, etc.). For example, students from certain majors exhibit different employment intentions due to the characteristics of their knowledge and career paths.

Multidimensional Impact on Employment Competitiveness: Students' employment competitiveness is affected by multiple factors, including personal abilities, market demand, social resources, and geographical location.

Impact of Internships and Part-time Work: Internships and part-time experiences significantly enhance students' employment competitiveness by helping them accumulate experience and improve their understanding and adaptability to the industry.

Understanding of Employment Situations and Policies: Some students lack sufficient understanding of employment situations and policies, which may affect their employment decisions. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen students' knowledge and grasp of employment-related information while they are still in school.

Recommendations

To further explore solutions for improving the employment motivations and intentions of university students in Guangxi, we can propose more specific and targeted suggestions from multiple perspectives, including the government, universities, society, and individual students.

Government Level: Increase policy support and guidance for the employment of university graduates. The government should strengthen research on university students' employment motivations and intentions and design differentiated employment policies tailored to the characteristics of different student groups. This would provide precise employment guidance and support. Additionally, the government should enhance policy support for enterprises, encouraging them to offer more positions suitable for university students, especially in relatively economically underdeveloped regions like Guangxi. Furthermore, the government could establish special funds and subsidies to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, thereby increasing employment diversity.

University Level: Strengthen personalized career guidance services and provide differentiated support. Universities should optimize their employment guidance service systems through methods such as job market research, career planning courses, and career guidance seminars. This would help students better understand employment situations and policies, enhancing the scientific basis of their employment decisions. Meanwhile, universities should strengthen cooperation with enterprises to increase internship and part-time opportunities, providing more pathways for students to accumulate practical work experience and improve their employability. Universities should also pay attention to students' mental health by offering psychological counseling and career planning consultations to help them cope with employment pressures.

Societal Level: Foster a positive employment atmosphere and advocate for the right employment outlook. All sectors of society should actively participate in creating a healthy and orderly employment environment. Industry associations and enterprises can collaborate closely with universities to jointly conduct university-enterprise cooperation projects and internship programs, providing more practical and employment opportunities for students. Additionally, the media should guide public opinion correctly by promoting a diversified view of employment. This would encourage students to choose career paths that suit them, rather than simply pursuing so-called "popular" professions or high-paying jobs.

Individual Students Level: Develop the right employment mindset and enhance overall qualities and competitiveness. University students should proactively improve their overall qualities and abilities, including professional skills, communication abilities, teamwork, and adaptability. They should also actively participate in internships and part-time jobs to accumulate practical work experience, understand industry trends, and enhance their employability. Moreover, students should strengthen their understanding of employment situations and policies and develop reasonable career plans to increase their proactivity and goal orientation in job seeking.

These recommendations can help university students in Guangxi better navigate the challenges of the job market, improve employment quality, and achieve their career aspirations. With concerted efforts from all parties, a broader employment landscape can be created for university students, promoting regional economic development.



Conclusion

This study, through an in-depth analysis of employment motivations and intentions of university students in Guangxi, reveals various factors influencing their employment decisions and provides several targeted policy recommendations. These findings not only offer valuable references for career guidance in universities but also provide a scientific basis for policymakers in formulating and optimizing employment policies. By understanding students' employment motivations and intentions more deeply, universities and policymakers can devise and implement more targeted interventions, helping students find suitable career paths in a complex and changing job market and smoothly achieve their career development goals.

Future research should continuously focus on the changing trends of employment motivations and intentions among university students, especially under rapidly changing economic and social environments, where these motivations and intentions may undergo significant adjustments. Researchers should constantly expand new research methods and perspectives, such as combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, to further explore the deeper factors behind university students' employment decisions. This approach will provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of students' employment needs and challenges. Such research will offer more complete and forward-looking suggestions for universities and policymakers, helping students better adapt to changes in the job market and achieve higher-quality career development and life planning.

Through these efforts, we hope that future research and policies will more effectively guide university students' employment, improve their employment quality and satisfaction, and contribute more outstanding talent to economic and social development.

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