

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING STYLE AND EMPLOYABILITY EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS IN HECHI UNIVERSITY*

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the learning style of Hechi University students, 2) to study students' employment expectations at Hechi University, and 3) to study the relationship between students' learning style and employment expectations of Hechi University. This study adopts a quantitative method to explore the relationship between learning style and employability expectations of students in Hechi University. The purposive random sampling was 354 students at Hechi University, selected according to Krejcie and Morgan table (1970). The research instrument was a self-designed questionnaire. The statistics used were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

The research results were:

1. Learning styles in Hechi University students in 4 aspects were at a high level ($\bar{x}$ =4.25, S.D.=0.74). Considering the results of these 4 research aspects were as follows: the highest rank was "Converging Learning Style", indicates a high level ($\bar{x}$ =4.36, S.D.=0.68). Followed by "Diverging Learning Style" ($\bar{x}$ =4.30, S.D.=0.66), whereas "Accommodating Learning Style" was the lowest rank ($\bar{x}$ =4.15, S.D.=0.82).

2. Students' employment expectations at Hechi University in 4 aspects were at a high level ($\bar{x}$ =4.16, S.D.=0.76). Considering the results of these 4 research aspects were as follows: the highest rank was "Career Aspirations", indicates a high level ($\bar{x}$ =4.25, S.D.=0.72). Followed by "Skill Development

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Expectations" ($\bar{x}$ =4.23, S.D.=0.70), whereas "Job Market Readiness" was the lowest rank ($\bar{x}$ =4.06, S.D.=0.81).

3. It was found that the correlation between learning style and students' employability expectations has a positive correlation at the high level with statistical significance level at .01 (r =0.82).

Keywords: Learning Style; Students' Employability Expectations; Hechi University

Introduction

With the rapid development of China's economy and the continuous upgrading of its industrial structure, higher education has transitioned from an elite model to mass education. The number of university graduates has been increasing annually, making the job market more competitive. According to the Ministry of Education, the number of university graduates in China reached a record high of 12.22 million in 2025. Employment is no longer merely the outcome of obtaining a job, but rather a long-term "process of career development and capability building" (Healy, M. J. 2022).

Existing research confirms the significant role of learning styles in shaping students' employment expectations. Farhang et al. (2020) found that learning styles influence career decision-making self-efficacy through their effects on learning strategies and competence formation. Salm and Golab et al. (2024) emphasized their impact on skill development pathways and career orientation, while İlçin and Tomruk et al. (2018) highlighted the role of cognitive processing patterns in academic achievement and competence construction. Together, these studies show that learning styles serve as a key link between educational processes and employment outcomes.

As an important undergraduate institution in the northwest of Guangxi, Hechi University shoulders the mission of cultivating applied talents for the regional economic and social development. This positioning directly affects the employment direction and background of its graduates. Under such an educational goal, the university places more emphasis on enhancing employment services and improving employment quality, especially in the fields

of teacher education, basic education, and regional public services, where it has a strong agglomeration effect.

Studying the relationship between learning styles and employment expectations helps in multiple ways. First, it provides a better understanding of how students' learning approaches influence their career aspirations. Second, it offers universities valuable data to refine teaching strategies and career counseling services to better align with both student needs and labor market demands. Additionally, as China undergoes industrial transformation, businesses increasingly seek employees with problem-solving skills, teamwork abilities, and self-regulated learning capabilities. Thus, analyzing the impact of learning styles on employability is essential for ensuring effective talent development in higher education. (Daming, H. et to all. 2023, Peihao, X. et to all., 2023, Xiang Hui, J. et to all., 2023, Yanting, C. et to all., 2023)

This study takes Hechi University as a case, aiming to fill the gap in the research on the relationship between learning styles and employment expectations. By classifying students using Kolb's learning style theory and the research instrument was a self-designed questionnaire, it systematically examines the current status of different learning style characteristics, students' employment expectations, and the correlation mechanism between them. The study strives to deepen the understanding of how learning styles influence students' employability and career development at the theoretical level, provide empirical evidence for universities to optimize teaching methods and career guidance at the practical level, and offer reference suggestions for the effective connection between higher education and the labor market at the policy level. This research aims to promote the improvement of educational and teaching practices, help students make more rational career choices, and thereby enhance their employment competitiveness and long-term career satisfaction.

Objectives

1. To study the learning style of Hechi University students.
2. To study students' employment expectations at Hechi University.
3. To study the relationship between students' learning style and employment expectations of Hechi University.

Literature Review

The literature review explores two keys relevant to the research areas.

1. Students' learning style

As a learner-centered teaching approach, the Kolb's learning style model reveals the differences in an individual's perception of experiences and information processing methods during the learning process, providing an important theoretical basis for understanding students' learning preferences and matching teaching strategies (Kolb, 2007). Rooted in experiential learning theory, Kolb's model classifies learners into distinct types based on the dimensions of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Learning style-oriented instructional design emphasizes breaking away from the traditional teacher-dominated, single-mode classroom structure and focuses on aligning teaching strategies with students' learning preferences to enhance learning outcomes and engagement (Bazán-Perkins and Sant Ibáñez-Salgado, 2025). Multiple empirical studies have verified the close relationship between learning styles and learning outcomes in various contexts. From the perspective of learning behavior, visual and kinesthetic learning styles can significantly predict math learning procrastination, with a kinesthetic preference helping to reduce procrastination, highlighting the connection between learning styles and self-regulated learning (Wan Hussin and Mohd Matore, 2023). In terms of academic performance, students with different learning styles show significant differences in grades (Matei, 2024); active learners have the highest academic performance, while avoidant learners have a significant negative correlation with grades (İlçin et al., 2018); visual learners achieve higher grades in educational science. These results further demonstrate that classroom engagement and style matching are important paths to improving academic performance (Lincă, 2024). From the perspective of instructional design and technology application, Azzeh, Altamimi, and Albashayreh (2023) proved through modeling research that understanding learning styles in a "probabilistic, hybrid" way is more conducive to personalized instructional design. Rahadian and Budiningsih (2023) verified the practical value of a learning style database in matching teaching media and optimizing classroom management. Meanwhile, Samaddar and Sikdar (2023)

pointed out from the perspective of the evolution of teaching styles that contemporary classrooms are shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered, and diverse, participatory, and inquiry-based teaching methods are highly consistent with the concept of learning style-oriented teaching. Learning style-oriented teaching emphasizes a student-centered approach, promoting classroom engagement, learning outcomes, and the development of self-regulation skills by matching teaching strategies with individual learning preferences, which is of great significance for achieving personalized and high-quality teaching.

In summary, learning style-oriented teaching, based on Kolb's experiential learning theory, offers a solid conceptual foundation and is supported by recent empirical studies. However, it should be applied critically and flexibly to avoid deterministic interpretations and ensure evidence-informed practice in higher education.

2. Employability expectations

Students' employment expectations constitute a multi-dimensional structure that integrates learning orientation, career development factors, and psychological resources, which is of great significance to their academic engagement, career preparation, and smooth entry into the labor market (Noori & Azmi, 2021). Its core components include future-oriented learning (measured by goal setting and planning behavior), problem-oriented learning (assessed by problem-solving and task engagement), career development learning (measured by participation in career-related activities), and academic and cultural capital (measured by learning engagement and educational experience) (Chen et al., 2023; Ho et al., 2022). Additionally, individual-level factors such as academic engagement, stress regulation, career aspirations, and academic motivation also play a crucial role in the formation of students' perceived employability (Ma & Bennett, 2021; Khaola, Ramabu & Sefotho, 2020). This concept is rooted in the perspectives of learning-oriented development and career construction, emphasizing that through systematic learning and development processes, students can identify their own strengths, adapt to the demands of the labor market, and proactively prepare for future careers (Zhang et al, 2022). Although existing research has confirmed a significant positive correlation between

educational experience and the development of students' employability, in-depth studies in specific university contexts and disciplinary fields remain insufficient, which is precisely the gap this research aims to fill (Noori & Azmi, 2021).

It is important to clarify the link between learning styles and employability. Learning styles shape how students plan, solve problems, and engage in career preparation. Active learners may perform better in practice and skill development, while reflective learners may excel in planning and self-assessment. Therefore, learning styles function as a cognitive-behavioral mechanism influencing employment expectations.

3. Research Framework

In this study about the relationship between learning style and employability expectations of students in Hechi University, the independent variable refers to learning style, which include Converging Learning Style, Diverging Learning Style, Assimilating Learning Style, and Accommodating Learning Style (Kolb, 2007). The dependent variable is students' employability expectations, encompassing 1) career aspirations, 2) perceived employability, 3) job market readiness, 4) skill development expectations (Noori & Azmi, 2021). Several educational theories provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between these variables.

The research framework can be described as the figure following.

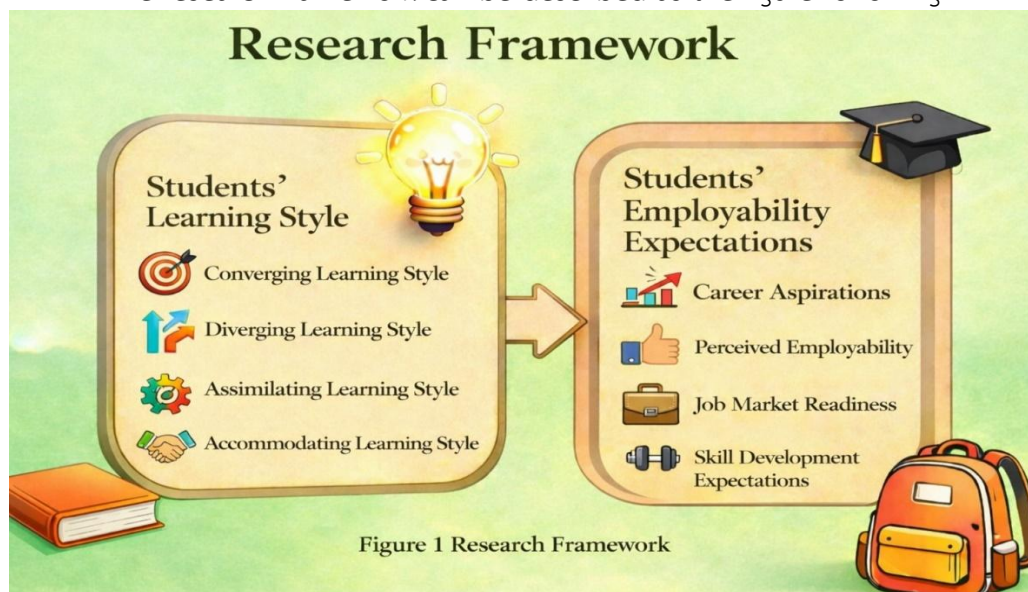


Figure 1 Research Framework

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research method to systematically explore the relationship between students' learning style and employment expectations of Hechi University. The research process includes population and sample determination, research instrument design, data collection, and data analysis.

1. Population and the Sample Group

Population

The research population is 4360 students from Hechi University.

Sample

The sample group of this study is 354 students in Hechi University. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), and purposive random sampling was employed to recruit participants who were readily available across academic departments.

2. Research Instrument

The research instrument is a questionnaire with 3 parts:

Part 1: General Information. This section has 4 questions to gather background information on the respondent's gender, year of study, Major, Internship Experience, Career Planning.

Part 2: Learning Style: it is 4 rating Scales. This main section has Learning Style statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "the least agree" to "the most agree". It is organized into 4 dimensions: 1) Accommodating Learning Style; 2) Converging Learning Style; 3) Diverging Learning Style; 4) Assimilating Learning Style Planning.

Part 3: Employability Expectations: it is 4 rating Scales. This main section has Employability Expectations statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "the least agree" to "the most agree". It is organized into 4 dimensions: 1) Career aspirations; 2) Perceived employability; 3) Job market readiness; 4) Skill development expectations.

All statements display consistency with the measurement target as evidenced by an average score of 0.67 to 1.00 on the acceptable consistency index (IOC). The reliability of a pilot test of questionnaires assessed using

Cronbach's α , a statistic measuring internal consistency, with α value of 0.988, indicating excellent internal consistency.

3. Data Collection

To ensure the systematic collection of data, the researcher implemented the following procedures:

Distribution: The online questionnaires were distributed to students at Hechi University via digital channels. Each respondent was informed of the research objectives, confidentiality, and their voluntary participation.

Platform Utilization: Data were collected through the "Questionnaire Star" (Wenjuanxing) online platform, which facilitated efficient data gathering and management.

Data Screening: Upon completion of the collection period, the raw data were screened. Invalid responses, such as incomplete forms or patterned answers, were excluded to ensure the integrity of the results.

Preparation for Analysis: The final valid datasets were coded and organized for statistical processing and analysis.

4. Data analysis

Part 1 To study learning styles in Hechi University, data analysis uses mean and stand deviation.

Part 2 To study students' employment expectations in Hechi University, data analysis uses mean and stand deviation.

Part 3 The relationship between learning styles and students' employment expectations was analyzed by using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r).

Results

Part 1: Learning styles

Table 1 The mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) of learning styles in Hechi University in 4 aspects

Students' Learning Style	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Ranking
1. Converging Learning Style	4.36	0.68	High	1
2. Diverging Learning Style	4.30	0.66	High	2
3. Assimilating Learning Style	4.17	0.79	High	3

Students' Learning Style	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level	Ranking
4. Accommodating Learning Style	4.15	0.82	High	4
Total	4.25	0.74	High	

From Table 1 considering, the overall average of learning styles in Hechi University were at a high level ($\bar{X}$ =4.25, S.D.=0.74). Considering the results of these 4 research aspects were as follows: the highest rank was “converging learning style” ($\bar{X}$ =4.36, S.D.=0.68), indicates a high level. Followed by “diverging learning style” ($\bar{X}$ =4.30, S.D.=0.66), whereas “accommodating learning style” was the lowest rank ($\bar{X}$ =4.15, S.D.=0.82).

Part 2: Students' employment expectations

Table 2 The mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) of students' employment expectations in 4 aspects.

Students' Employability Expectations	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Ranking
1. Career Aspirations	4.25	0.72	High	1
2. Perceived Employability	4.12	0.79	High	3
3. Job Market Readiness	4.06	0.81	High	4
4. Skill Development Expectations	4.23	0.70	High	2
Total	4.16	0.76	High	

From Table 2 consideration, the overall average students' employment expectations in Hechi University in 4 aspects, were at a high level ($\bar{X}$ =4.16, S.D.=0.76). Considering the results of these 4 research aspects were as follows: the highest rank was “career aspirations” ($\bar{X}$ =4.25, S.D.=0.72), indicates a high level. Followed by “Skill Development Expectations” ($\bar{X}$ =4.23, S.D.=0.70), whereas “Job Market Readiness” was the lowest rank ($\bar{X}$ =4.06, S.D.=0.81).

Part 3: The relationship between learning styles and students' employment expectations in Hechi University.

Table 3 The relationship between learning style and students' employability expectations.

Employability expectations	Students' learning styles (X_{tt})				
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X_{tt}

(Y _{tt})					
Y1	0.67**	0.72**	0.68**	0.75**	0.80**
Y2	0.58**	0.60**	0.69**	0.67**	0.73**
Y3	0.54**	0.55**	0.69**	0.70**	0.71**
Y4	0.62**	0.66**	0.68**	0.73**	0.77**
Y _{tt}	0.65**	0.69**	0.71**	0.78**	0.82**

** refers to statistical significance level at .01

From table 3, it is shown that the overall relationship between learning style and students' employability expectations has a positive correlation at the high level with statistical significance level at .01 ($r=0.82^{**}$).

Discussion

1. Learning styles of Hechi University students is at a high level. Considering the results of this research aspect were as follows: the highest rank was "Converging Learning Style", followed by "Diverging Learning Style", whereas "Accommodating Learning Style" was the lowest ranking. The reasons are that: First, teaching at Hechi University emphasizes theoretical knowledge and analytical thinking, which supports converging and diverging styles. Second, lecture-based instruction and exam-oriented assessment limit experiential learning opportunities. Third, students are encouraged to be cautious and reflective, reducing trial-and-error exploration. Finally, assessment systems prioritize cognitive achievement over practical performance, reinforcing thinking-oriented rather than action-oriented learning preferences. The results of this study are consistent with those of Kolb (1984) research result who pointed out that in academic environments dominated by cognitive and theoretical tasks, students are more likely to develop thinking-oriented learning styles, while action-oriented accommodating styles tend to be less prominent. The same as Papanikolaou and Grigoriadou (2004), similar to this study also recognizes the key role of the Accommodating learning style in experiential learning and adaptive educational technology frameworks, as it emphasizes action, experience, and exploration to support knowledge construction, learner engagement, and problem-solving ability.

2. Studying students' employment expectations at Hechi University is at a high level. Considering the results of these research aspects were as follows: the

highest rank was "Career aspirations", which indicates a high level. Followed by "Skill Development Expectations", whereas "Job Market Readiness" was the lowest ranking. The reasons are that: Insufficient practical opportunities, limited access to employment information, and inadequate career guidance services reduce students' job market readiness. In addition, although students show strong career aspirations and skill development expectations, relatively weak self-efficacy and limited realistic self-assessment of job-person fit further constrain their employment confidence. The results of this study are consistent with Forrier et al. (2015), who proposed that "movement capital" (e.g., skills and adaptability) and perceived employability interact to determine individuals' competitiveness in the labor market. Similarly, Clarke (2018) emphasized that graduate employability is a multidimensional system integrating human capital, social capital, personal traits, behaviors, perceived employability, and labor market context. Both perspectives highlight the close relationship between employment preparation, practical experience, and subjective expectations.

3. Learning styles have a significant high positive correlation with students' employability expectations, proving their effectiveness in promoting holistic development. Correlation Between the Two Variables: A high positive correlation ($r=0.82$, $p<0.01$) confirms learning styles with employability expectations was a high level. The research conclusion of Mupinga, Nora & Yaw (2006) is consistent research result pointed out that college students with different learning styles have significant differences in learning expectations, learning needs, and future development orientations. Among them, experiential and adaptive learning styles are more conducive to students' formation of clear learning goals and career planning awareness. The same as Sumanasiri, Yajid & Khatibi (2015) also hold that students' learning styles are closely related to their perception of employability and career expectations. Learning styles that are practice-oriented and reflective are more likely to enhance students' career self-efficacy and employability readiness.

Recommendation

The implementation of the research results is as follows.

1. Policy level: Support the establishment of internship and industrial practice platforms, promoting the coordinated development of the curriculum system and employment goals at the institutional level.

2. School level: Strengthen the integration of courses and practice, enhancing students' practical application abilities and their readiness for the job market.

3. Student level: Guide students to formulate personalized employment preparation plans, helping them achieve an effective match between their personal abilities and job requirements.

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