

# **FINAL THESIS**

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**2023**



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**Gödöllő Campus**

**Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences**

**Business administration and management**

**bachelor's education**

Factors influencing the employment choices of university students

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**Gödöllő**

**2023**

## **Abstract**

As a result of the outbreak and continuing impact of the New Crown epidemic, the global economy has been hit hard, with business bankruptcies, increased unemployment, and a continued weakening of consumer power. Even today, when global outbreak control measures have ended, economic recovery has been slow. China, as the last country in the world to be fully liberalized, has been affected by the epidemic for the longest time, and society has been under great pressure from all sides.

Prior to the epidemic, there was already an imbalance between supply and demand in the labor force market, which included but was not limited to low employment rates in universities, vacant jobs, and difficulties for companies to recruit. The impact of the new epidemic on the global economy is clear, with economic slowdown and even stagnation already occurring, and the labor force market has changed dramatically.

The employment of university students is one of the biggest problems in China's labor market. This thesis will collect valid data through questionnaires to analyze and study the impact of five aspects on university students' employment choices: gender, education, career stability, starting salary, and conditions in the city of employment. In this thesis, the Chi-Square Test of Independence is used to verify the correlation between gender and career choice, and the correlation between career stability and career choice. The author also used descriptive statistics to analyze the correlation between other aspects and employment choice.

**Key words: Labor force supply and demand; Employment; Data analysis**

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# 1. Introduction

It is well known that labor force is a determinant of production, a core element of modern economic development and one of the very most important economic resources. Labor supply and economic and social development are closely related, and the two interact and achieve each other. Since the twenty-first century, the rapid globalization of the economy and the rise of several countries since then have led to the formation of new labor force markets, as well as a trend towards more frequent and wider labor mobility.

In recent years, the employment problem has come to the fore, with supply and demand in China's labor market out of balance. On the demand side, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are struggling to survive under the impact of the epidemic, and many ordinary jobs have shrunk; industries that are still booming, such as the Internet, are in dire need of many professional and excellent research and development workers. On the supply side, the number of university graduates is increasing year by year, and competition for ordinary jobs is fierce; the epidemic has caused many highly skilled talents who have gone overseas to continue their studies to stay in their localities, resulting in a loss of domestic talents and a shortage of supply. This situation has been going on in China for several years, with the main problem being the inability of the current generation of young people to find jobs. And in recent Chinese financial news, a Chinese economist also raised the issue of the difficulty in finding employment for contemporary young people. This generation of university graduates has been studying seriously since childhood and has gone through many streaming examinations, step by step, until they graduate from university, whereas after finishing their studies, they enter society without a job, which has become a key issue of concern for the whole society.

It can be seen that, to solve this problem, we first need to know what the graduates of today think about employment, what they want and what limits their choices. The above is what this paper mainly explores.

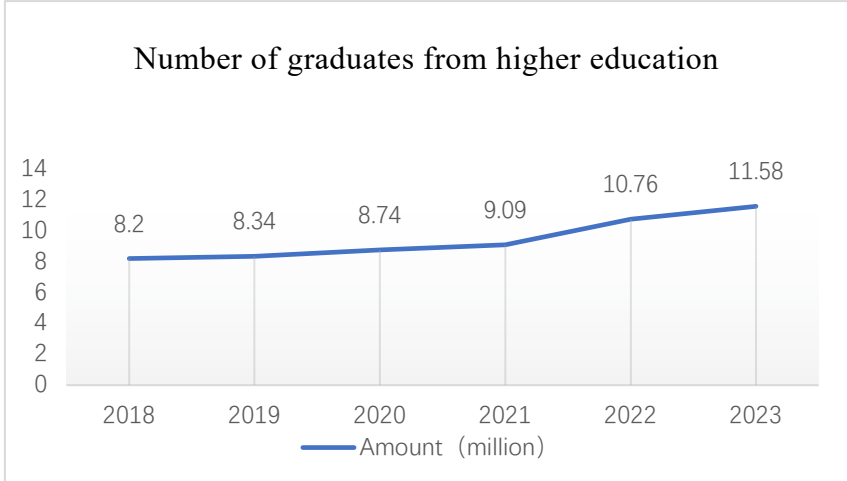
The labor force waiting for employment has become a surplus resource on the supply side of the labor market. We will look at understanding the demand on the supply side to determine

whether the difficulty in finding employment can be solved one by one through changes on the demand side of the labor market.

### 1.1 Research background

With the continuous expansion of universities and universities and the advancement of the massification of higher education, the number of university graduates is increasing year by year, and in 2023 the number of university graduates reached 11.58 million. But the number of jobs that society can offer to fresh university graduates each year is relatively limited.

Figure 1. Number of graduates  
(Source: PRC newspaper)



Even in 2017, the entrepreneurship rate of China's fresh university graduates has already reached 3 %<sup>2</sup> -- equivalent to nearly twice that of developed countries in Europe and the United States. Excluding those who choose to pursue higher education and start their own businesses after graduation, most university students still choose to seek employment and find jobs after graduation. But the fact is that higher education has transitioned from the elite education stage

<sup>1</sup> Jing Sun. Reporter of People's Daily Online (PRC newspaper). The size of the 2023 class of university graduates is expected to be 11.58 million, an increase of 820,000 from the same period last year. 2022.11.15. [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/xw\\_zt/moe\\_357/jjyzt\\_2022/2022\\_zt18/mtbd/202211/t20221116\\_992995.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_zt/moe_357/jjyzt_2022/2022_zt18/mtbd/202211/t20221116_992995.html)

<sup>2</sup> Wang, Hongru. (2017). College students' entrepreneurship is a mixed blessing. China Economic Weekly, (39), 58-59.

to the mass education stage, and the identity of fresh university graduates in the labor market has long since ceased to be the pride of the 1980s and 1990s.

Based on the reality, university students are more likely to choose self-employment after graduation, and there are many factors as to why there is a difficult employment situation at the present time. On the one hand, most university students choose to work in economically developed regions and cities with a higher degree of economic development, but such a choice is often accompanied by high living costs and fierce competition for jobs, which makes many people hesitate between reality and ideal. On the other hand, most of the fresh graduates are idealistic and more inclined to counterpart employment, but the choices that society can provide to fresh graduates are not large enough to satisfy most of them in counterpart employment. Another aspect, which is also very important, is that after the shock of the epidemic, people tend to be more inclined to industries with higher stability, such as civil servants, and working in government departments, even though the salary is not high, they will not lose their jobs easily. It is also because of this that the number of applicants for the civil service examination was astonishing. Central organs and their directly under the institutions of the 2023 annual examination for the recruitment of civil servants public subject written examination nearly 2.6 million people applied for and passed the audit, while the national examination plans to recruit 37,100 people, the number of people who passed the qualification examination and the number of recruitment plan ratio of about 70:1.<sup>3</sup> Even with all the competition, a large percentage of people choose to stay at home and prepare for the civil service exams.

Under the current social environment, the difficulty of youth employment has become the focus of attention, and everyone is looking forward to an effective solution to this problem and a new hope.

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<sup>3</sup> Xinhua (the official Chinese news network). 2023 annual national exam held today: 37,000 people to be recruited, nearly 2.6 million people apply for the exam. 2023.01.08. [http://www.news.cn/politics/2023-01/08/c\\_1129264303.htm](http://www.news.cn/politics/2023-01/08/c_1129264303.htm)

## **1.2 Research significance**

The employment of university students has received the attention of many scholars around the world even before the epidemic, and it is a very important social issue that is closely related to the labor market. And the epidemic has brought many great shocks and changes to the world. By studying the latest university students' ideas about their employment choices, and determining what are the factors that can really influence university students' employment choices the most, we can promote the government and universities as well as society as a whole to provide practical and effective help for university students' employment and youth employment, and to promote the supply and demand of the labor market to find a new equilibrium point to achieve full employment, so as to promote the society as a whole to continue to Prosperous development of society as a whole will be promoted.



## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Impact of gender on choice of employment**

Because the subject of this thesis are Chinese students, the author refers to more theoretical literature from China. In an article titled “Empirical Research on the Influential Factors of University Students”, the author obtained data from 260 randomly selected questionnaires and used ANOVA and cluster analysis on these data to get some conclusions. One of them is that from the selected sample, it was found that female students are more willing to participate in social practice during their school years, while male students are less willing to participate in social practice. However, this difference between male and female students needs to be followed up further to find out what kind of impact it will have in the future employment. The boys and girls have different perceptions on all factors, except for the agreement on "their efforts during school will affect their eventual employment". <sup>4</sup>This article will explore whether gender influences employment choices, for example, whether female students are more likely to favor more stable positions.

### **2.2 Impact of salary on choice of employment**

Schomburg Harald (2000) put forward the view that it takes longer and longer for university students to make the transition from being students to being members of society, and that most of the jobs found by newly graduated university students are generally low-paid and the contents of the jobs are not related to the specialties they have studied. <sup>5</sup>Anne Gesteen and John Houston (2007) considered the starting salary level of graduates to be the most important

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<sup>4</sup> Huang, Xianwei, Ren, Nan, & Shen, Xuemei. (2017). An empirical study on college students' employment influencing factors. *Modern Business Industry*, 38(11), 77-78.

<sup>5</sup> Schomburg, H. (2000). Higher education and graduate employment in Germany. *European Journal of Education*, 35(2), 189-200.

indicator of the quality of employment. <sup>6</sup>So, if it's because the salary is too low that university students are not willing to work on their own or not will be the one of the topics this thesis will discuss.

### **2.3 Impact of city on choice of employment**

Changjun Yue (2012) through the survey found that, according to the division of employment location, the most important place of employment of university graduates has been the first-tier cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and some medium-sized cities, and the number of university students willing to return to their hometowns and the grassroots of the community to work is not much.<sup>7</sup> However, while choosing the first-tier cities, they will also face a lot of survival problems, such as high property prices (including rent), very expensive basic living expenses, and very long commuting time, and so on. This is why some young people choose to go back to their hometowns (specifically second- and third-tier cities and towns). The conditions of the city of employment also have a great influence on the employment choices of young people today, so it is possible to study the thoughts of young people to see what the most attractive geographical advantages for young people's employment are, which will also help to promote the rational allocation of labor resources.

### **2.4 Impact of education level on choice of employment**

Education level of aspirant youth is supposed to have major impact on career choice. The entrance, expectation about deliberation and returns are the main concern for selection of careers by the educated youth. Achievement of required certificate in demandable programs is considered by almost all the respondents along with the expectation about utilization of

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<sup>6</sup> Gasteen, A., & Houston, J. (2007). Employability and earnings return to qualifications in Scotland. *Regional Studies*, 41(4), 443-452.

<sup>7</sup> Changjun Yue. (2012). Analysis of the employment situation of university graduates: 2003-2011[J]. *Peking University Education Review*, 2012(1): 33-47.

education and skill in the career and expected socio-economic returns from the careers. Thus, education influence the youths in preparation for career, in searching the utilization scope of talents and expected returns from the career with the limitation of malpractices in the employment in public jobs that create pessimistic attitudes about the entrance and continuation.

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<sup>8</sup> Latif, A., Abdul Aziz, M., & Ahmed, M. D. (2016). Influences of education on career choice: A study on Sylhet City, Bangladesh. *Management Studies and Economic Systems*, 54(3811), 1-7.

## 3. Material and Method

### 3.1 Material

The author conducted a questionnaire survey on university students in China and overseas Chinese students. A total of 230 questionnaires were returned, with 225 valid responses.

### 3.2 Method

Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and cross-sectional statistical analyses of the data were performed primarily using Microsoft excel.

#### 3.2.1 Descriptive statistics

Data mining often starts with descriptive statistics, which is the basic means to understand the characteristics of data distribution, grasp the strength of correlation between the data, but also the basis for subsequent model selection and in-depth analysis. Descriptive statistics were done for the corresponding group of data for almost every research topic.

#### 3.2.2 Chi-square test

The chi-square test is the degree of deviation between the actual observed value and the theoretical inferred value of the statistical sample, the actual observed value and the theoretical inferred value of the degree of deviation between the decision of the chi-square value of the size of the chi-square value, if the chi-square value of the larger the degree of deviation of the two the larger; conversely, the smaller the deviation of the two; if the two values are completely equal, the chi-square value of 0, indicating that the theoretical value of the full compliance. It was used in the article to test the correlation between gender and occupational stability, the correlation between occupational stability and choice of employment mode, and the correlation between educational qualifications and choice of employment mode and choice of city of employment.

#### 3.3.3 Cross-tabulation statistics

Using cross-tabulation analysis, we can set one or more independent variables, dependent variables, to get the differences in the data of the dependent variable at different levels of the independent variable, and present them in a data table or a line graph, bar chart, etc. In the

article the corresponding data were cross analyzed mainly in the study of the relationship between the city of employment and the choice of employment and the relationship between the conditions of the city of employment and the choice of the city of employment.

#### 3.3.4 Charting

Use Microsoft Excel to create charts of statistical results in articles, as well as Microsoft Word's own insert chart design.

## 4. Results and evaluation

### 4.1 Gender and choice of stable employment

Of the 225 valid questionnaires, 72 were from male and 153 were from female. The data was analyzed by chi-square test using Microsoft Excel for the specific data gender as well as for the choice of employment method.

The statement to be inferred is H1: "There is a significant relationship between gender and the choice of employment mode", and the test of independence is used to examine whether the two variables are related and to give a more precise degree of reliability of this judgement. This is done as follows:

#### 1. Original task:

Table 1. The choice of employment mode from Male and female

(Source: own work)

<b>f<sub>ij</sub></b>	<b>The choice of employment mode</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	Stable employment	Start own business	<b>Total</b>
Male	63	9	72
Female	145	8	153
<b>Total</b>	208	17	225

#### 2. Calculate the value of the test statistic from the sample data:

$$x^2 = \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^m \frac{(f_{ij} - f_{ij}^*)^2}{f_{ij}^*} = \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^m \frac{(\text{observed frequency} - \text{expected frequency})^2}{\text{expected frequency}}$$

<b>f<sub>ij</sub>*</b>	<b>The choice of employment mode</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	Stable employment	Start own business	<b>Total</b>
Male	66.56	5.44	72
Female	141.44	11.56	153
<b>Total</b>	208	17	225

<b>(f<sub>ij</sub>-f<sub>ij</sub>*) ^2/f<sub>ij</sub>*</b>	<b>The choice of employment mode</b>		
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Gender	Stable employment	Start own business	Total
Male	0.190408654	2.329705882	2.52011454
Female	0.089604072	1.09633218	1.18593625
<b>Total</b>	0.280012726	3.426038062	3.70605079

We finally get the result:  $\chi^2 = 3.70605079$ . ( $Chi^2$ )

3. Determine the critical value:

Finding the critical chi-square value:  $\chi_{\alpha, df=(k-1)*(m-1)}^2$

$$\chi_{0.05, df=(2-1)*(2-1)=1}^2 = 3.8$$

4. Making a statistical decision:

As we can see,  $3.706 < 3.8$ . Chi-square statistic < critical value.

There is no significant relationship between gender and the choice of employment mode.

In summary, these data do not prove that there is a necessary link between gender and the choice of employment mode.

According to some reports, the examination for public office and editorial office has become the most secure employment choice in people's mind, and other professions such as doctors and lawyers have become the second choice. Based on the data from the responses, 206 valid data remain after excluding those responses that have not yet decided on their future mode of employment. People chose their reasons for choosing this employment method, which included the perceived stability of the employment method, their preferred industry, etc. Accordingly, we analyzed the stability of the employment method to examine whether people are affected by the stability of the employment method when choosing the employment method, i.e., whether they choose this job because they perceive this employment method to be more stable. We have also summarized the data based on the questionnaires received, the chi-square test was also taken to analyze it as follows:

1. Original task:

Table 2. The choice of employment mode and stability

(Source: own work based on questionnaire)

Reason	The choice of employment mode			Total
	Public sector	General employment	Entrepreneurship	
Stable	49	72	0	121

Other	32	36	17	85
<b>Total</b>	81	108	17	206

Entrepreneurship was excluded from this round of data calculations due to the general perception that it is a precarious form of employment.

<b>fij</b>	<b>The choice of employment mode</b>		
<b>Reason</b>	Public sector	General employment	<b>Total</b>
Stable	49	72	121
Other	32	36	68
<b>Total</b>	81	108	189

2. Calculate the value of the test statistic from the sample data:

<b>fij*</b>	<b>The choice of employment mode</b>		
<b>Reason</b>	Public sector	General employment	<b>Total</b>
Stable	51.8571429	69.14285714	121
Other	36.4285714	48.57142857	68
<b>Total</b>	81	108	189

<b>(fij-fij*) ^2/fij*</b>	<b>The choice of employment mode</b>		
<b>Reason</b>	Public sector	General employment	<b>Total</b>
Stable	0.15741834	0.118063754	0.275482094
Other	0.53837535	3.253781513	3.792156863
<b>Total</b>	0.69579369	3.371845267	4.067638956

We finally get the result:  $x^2 = 4.067638956$ . ( $Chi^2$ )

3. Determine the critical value:

Finding the critical chi-square value:  $x_{\alpha, df=(k-1)*(m-1)}^2$

$$x_{0.05, df=(2-1)*(2-1)=1}^2 = 3.8$$

4. Making the statistical decision:

$$4.0676(\text{Chi-square statistic value}) > 3.8 (\text{Critical value})$$

There is a significant relationship between stability and the choice of employment mode.

5. Calculate the measure of association: Cramer's contingency coefficient.

$$Cramer's V = \sqrt{\frac{Chi^2}{n * (q - 1)}}$$

$$q = \min\{k, m\} = \text{minimum}\{\text{number of rows, number of columns}\}$$

According to the data from the calculation, we get:



$$Cramer's V = \sqrt{\frac{4.068}{189 * (2 - 1)}} = \sqrt{\frac{4.068}{189}} = \sqrt{0.02152} = 0.1467$$

Cramer's V varies from 0 (corresponding to no association between the variables) to 1 (complete association).

The values of Cramer's V of 0.1467 corresponding to a very weak association between stability and the choice of employment mode.

In summary, together with the results of the data analyses, we can see that:

1. Gender has no influence on the choice of a more stable form of employment. But it could be due to the number of elements in the sample. At the 5 per cent level of significance, gender will have a very small effect on the choice of employment mode, even in the context of broader data.
2. There is a correlation between career stability and the choice of employment mode, but the correlation is weak.

## 4.2 Conditions in the city of employment

In China, the city tier is classified into 4 levels.

1) First-tier cities comprising Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. Those are the most developed cities in economics and infrastructures as people have high purchasing power. All are large cities that have political and cultural influence over the country.

2) New first-tier cities comprising 15 cities; Chengdu, Hangzhou, Chongqing, Wuhan, Xi'an, Suzhou, Tianjin, Nanjing, Changsha, Zhengzhou, Dongguan, Qingdao, Shenyang, Hefei, and Foshan. All are big cities with high development in economics and infrastructures after the 4 First-tier cities. Consumers also have high purchasing power.

3) Tier 2 cities comprising 30 cities, and most are major county or on the east coast.

4) Tier 3 cities comprising 63-71 cities (depending on the ranking person) which are as prosperous as the district level and are considered economically developed cities.<sup>9</sup>

In the first decade or so of the 21st century, when China's economy was growing at a rapid pace, young Chinese people generally tended to go to first-tier megacities to seek a career or start a business, but now, with the economic growth rate declining and the downward pressure on the global economy increasing, many young people are beginning to choose second- and third-tier cities, such as some provincial capitals, or even choose to return to their hometowns to find employment. According to our questionnaire, the data shows that:

Table 3. The choice of employment mode and cities

(Source: own work based on questionnaire)

	First-tier city	Provincial capital	Hometown	Emigration	Total
General employment	37	59	15	10	121
Public sector	20	28	32	2	82
Entrepreneurship	3	3	6	4	16

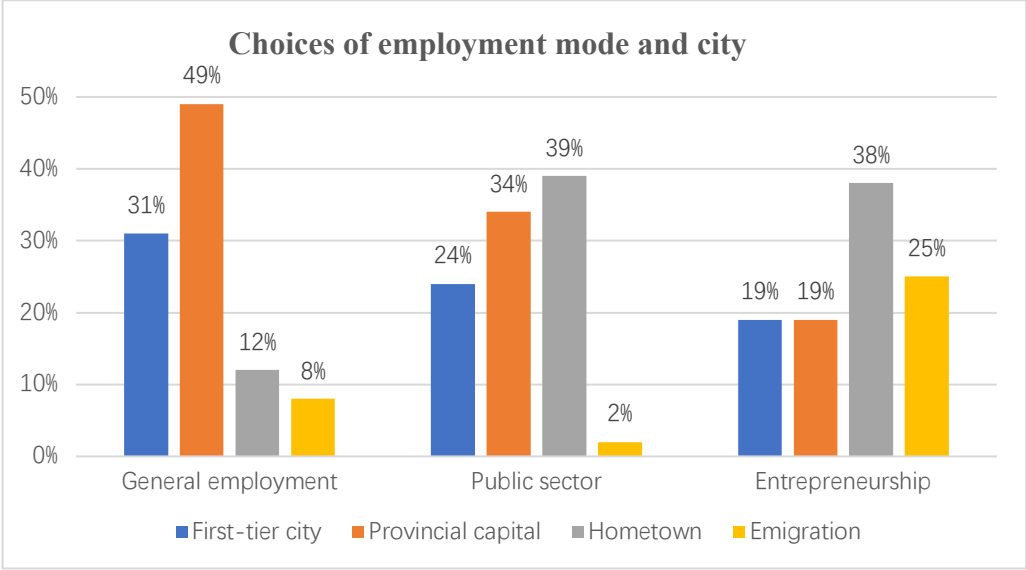
Currently, the new first-tier cities have not yet really matured, and most of the provincial capitals in the table are still second-tier cities, where returning to one's hometown also refers specifically to third-tier cities as well as villages.

<sup>9</sup> Siam Commercial Bank. Know City Tier Before penetrating Chinese market. <https://www.scb.co.th/en/personal-banking/stories/business-maker/china-city-tier.html>

Based on the analysis of the data collected from the forms:

Figure 2.Choices of employment mode and city

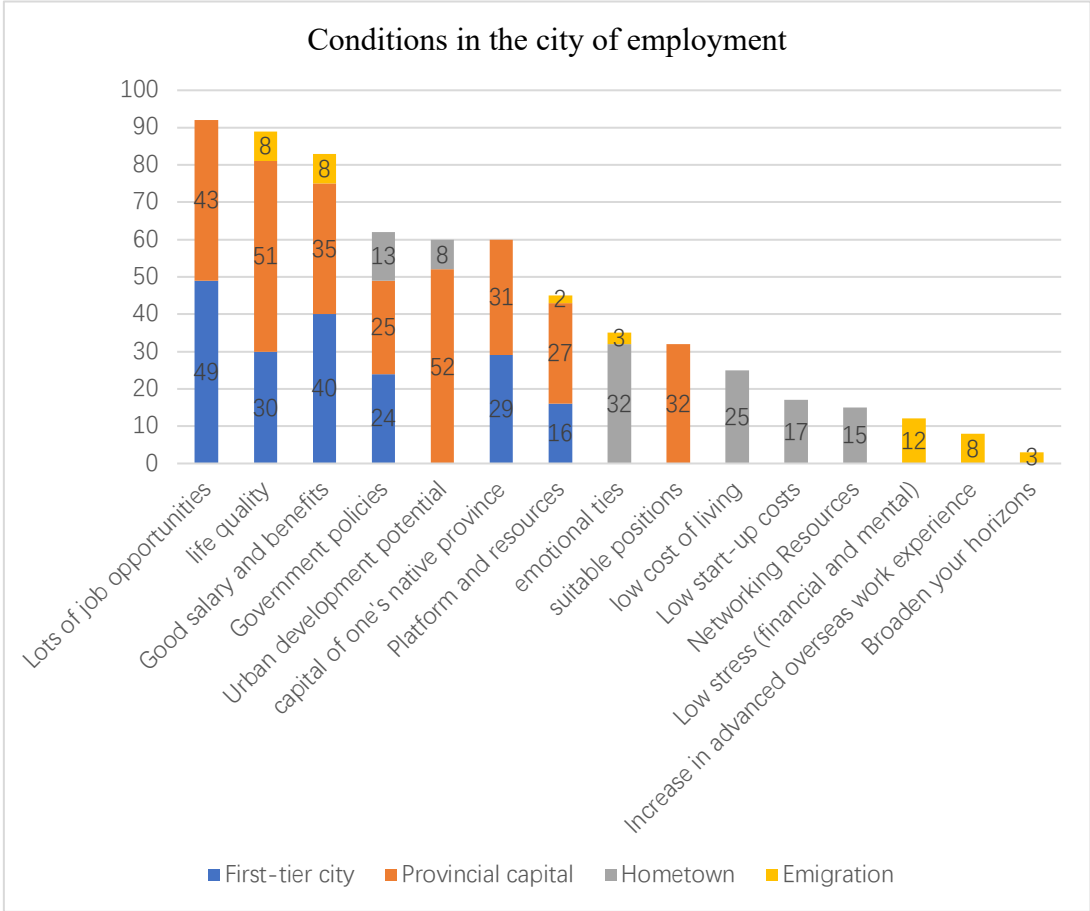
(Source: own work)



It can be seen that the preferred employment cities of university students who choose general employment have shifted from first-tier cities to other provincial capitals (new first-tier as well as second-tier cities). For those who choose to start their own business, their first choice is to return to their hometown to start their own business. People who want to engage in public service (civil service examination and career preparation) preferred is also to return to their hometown to participate in the post examination. But we can also draw a new conclusion from this, and that is, the number of people who choose to return to their hometowns for employment is still very small. The trend in labor mobility has changed, then what is causing this situation. Of the 225 valid responses returned, 10 had not yet decided on the city in which they would be employed, 60 chose first-tier cities for employment, 90 chose provincial capitals, 53 chose to return to their hometowns, and 12 chose to live and work in a foreign country. In the chart below are the statistics of the reasons why they chose their preferred city of employment.

Figure 3. Conditions in the city of employment

(Source: own work based on questionnaire)



Obviously, the availability of job opportunities is the most important condition for people to choose the city of employment. First-tier cities have a high cost of living due to unusually intense competition, saturation of talent resources and high cost of living, making it difficult for university students to live beyond their means and to achieve the goal of maximizing their benefits. Although first-tier cities can provide better development opportunities, working environment, quality of life and social security, on the whole, some university students who stay in these cities do not match their ideals with the reality, and often have to face the real problems of housing pressure (rent, location, commuting time), living pressure (daily consumption, difficult to save money) and lack of sense of belonging, which makes everyone's sense of well-being is not high.

On the provincial capital, first of all, the provincial capital city chosen by many people is the capital of their hometown, which greatly satisfies their sense of belonging. The fact that the provincial capital is not far from one's hometown also means that it is very close to one's family,

which is a great advantage in terms of emotional ties as well as the stress of life. Family members can help you with your employment and life, and networking resources are also a big advantage in employment. Provincial capital cities have many employment opportunities, the quality of life is relatively high, and the potential for urban development is still there, such as some of the new first-tier cities, the level of consumption is not high, the salary and benefits are sufficient, the degree of happiness in life is very high. As a result, provincial capitals have become the preferred cities for contemporary university students to graduate and find employment.

At the same time, returning to work in their hometowns has become a gradually accepted option for university students. According to a survey conducted by the China Youth Daily Social Survey Centre in 2014, 89.3 % of the interviewees had thought of returning to their hometowns (especially second-, third- and fourth-tier cities or counties) to work and live, and the younger the interviewees, the greater the willingness to return to their hometowns to take up employment: the post-1990s accounted for 39.2 %, the post-1980s accounted for 43.4 %, and the post-1970s accounted for 12.4 %. The 2019 survey shows that 87.9 % of the young people surveyed have considered returning to their hometowns for employment, and 56.5 % believe that the rapid development of their hometowns has pushed people to return to their hometowns for employment<sup>10</sup>. By 2022, on the other hand, the survey shows that 91.1 % are willing to use what they have learnt to give back to their hometowns, but most of the people who made the decision to go back to their hometowns chose to start their own businesses.<sup>11</sup> Many others are choosing to return to their hometowns to take the civil service and career exams. Because this industry was originally favored by everyone because of its stability and high social status and good welfare benefits, it has become a hot career for everyone despite the low salary, and the

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<sup>10</sup> Shan Sun, (2019) China Youth Daily Social Research Centre. 87.9% of young people surveyed have considered returning to their hometowns for employment. 2019.07.31. <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1640586682069836988&wfr=spider&for=pc>

<sup>11</sup> Shan Sun. reporter of China Youth Daily - China Youth Net Youth Times. 91.1% of the young people surveyed explicitly stated that they would like to use what they have learnt to give back to their hometowns (29 September 2022, 07 Edition)

competition is also very fierce. But back home, stable work, stable income, family around, such a life is what we look forward to.

There are also those who choose to live and work abroad, and most of these are Chinese students who are studying in foreign countries. Less stress was at the top of the list of reasons why people chose to stay abroad, and all those who chose to stay overseas chose this reason. This stress includes real stress as well as mental stress. In terms of practical pressure, Chinese people have a lot of preoccupations. For example, we all have a concept that a house is a home, every family should have a set of their own house, and therefore in the previous years China's real estate industry has developed rapidly, however, in fact, buying a house is not an easy thing. In cities like Beijing and Shanghai, the price of a house can even exceed 5 million HUF per square meter. In some provincial capitals, the price of a house is about HUF 1.8 million per square meter. Yet what are people's incomes? In the four cities of North, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, an average person usually earns between 250 thousand HUF and 400 thousand HUF per month. If it is an ordinary white-collar worker, the monthly income may reach 300 thousand HUF to 350 thousand HUF. If it is an ordinary person in some special industries, such as programmer, designer, etc., the monthly income may reach 500 thousand HUF to 1 million HUF. But this level of income is not very high in first-tier cities. One can only imagine what the average worker in other cities is paid. The most basic housing problems are not well solved, and life in a big city is very stressful. Mentally, people are under a lot of stress in their work and study environments. Everyone is desperately trying to be first. Ordinary people often work overtime at work, even day and night in some industries, and after work, they have to accompany their bosses to socialize and deal with clients. Students even seem to start working hard from birth, learning English in early childhood classes, going to Chinese and English bilingual schools in kindergarten, and at the same time learning all kinds of specialties, such as singing, dancing, playing piano, playing violin, painting, and so on. This is how they get accepted into a good primary school. In primary school, they start to work hard on the basic curriculum and participate in subject competitions such as the Olympiad. This is especially true in junior high school, where there are various competitions in physics, chemistry and biology,

and everyone works hard. High school is even crazier, from 7:00 a.m. to the school to start a day of study, until about 10:30 p.m. to leave the classroom to go home to rest, and even some students go home to continue to study until the early hours of the morning. When they go to university, they still have to take part in all kinds of cultural performances in exchange for credits, to participate in all kinds of clubs to increase their insights, and to participate in the student union to get commendations, so as to be conducive to finding a good job in the future, and then to enter the community and become an ordinary worker with an ordinary salary who cannot afford to buy an ordinary house. Such a life is far less easy and happy than life in a foreign country. Children play in kindergartens, students leave school early and go home happily or go to study something they are really interested in, and when they go to school, they enjoy their youth to the fullest, studying and having real fun at the same time.

To summarize, the conclusions we have reached are as follows:

1. People still have the idea of going to big cities for employment. However, this big city is no longer limited to first tier cities but has shifted to some provincial capitals and second-tier cities with development potential.
2. People's first choice for entrepreneurship is the home city, because of good government policies, support for university students to start a business policy benefits, and a wide range of human resources, start-up costs are relatively low.
3. Big cities have many employment opportunities, high quality of life, good salary and benefits are the advantages recognized by university students, but in reality, the quality of life and salary are often directly proportional to the high level of consumption in big cities is also a recognized fact, so the real life in the big city employment is still a lot of pressure for university students.

### 4.3 Impact of salary on choice of employment

Salary is the first condition of employment considered by the labor force, as the reward for people's labor, have always been a link to maintain social stability. Salary levels have an important impact on employment, and salary are closely related to supply and demand. When the supply of labor exceeds the demand, the salary level may fall. Conversely, when the demand for labor exceeds the supply, salary may rise. That is, the employment situation also has a profound impact on the salary level. Tightness in the job market shows an opposite trend to the salary level. But when people are under employment pressure, they may demand lower salary in exchange for job opportunities, while when the employment situation is optimistic, the labor force may choose higher-paying jobs on merit, making the salary level rise.

Based on the questionnaire, we got the starting salary that people expect from their future employment.

Table 4. Expected salary and employment cities.

(Source: own work based on questionnaire)

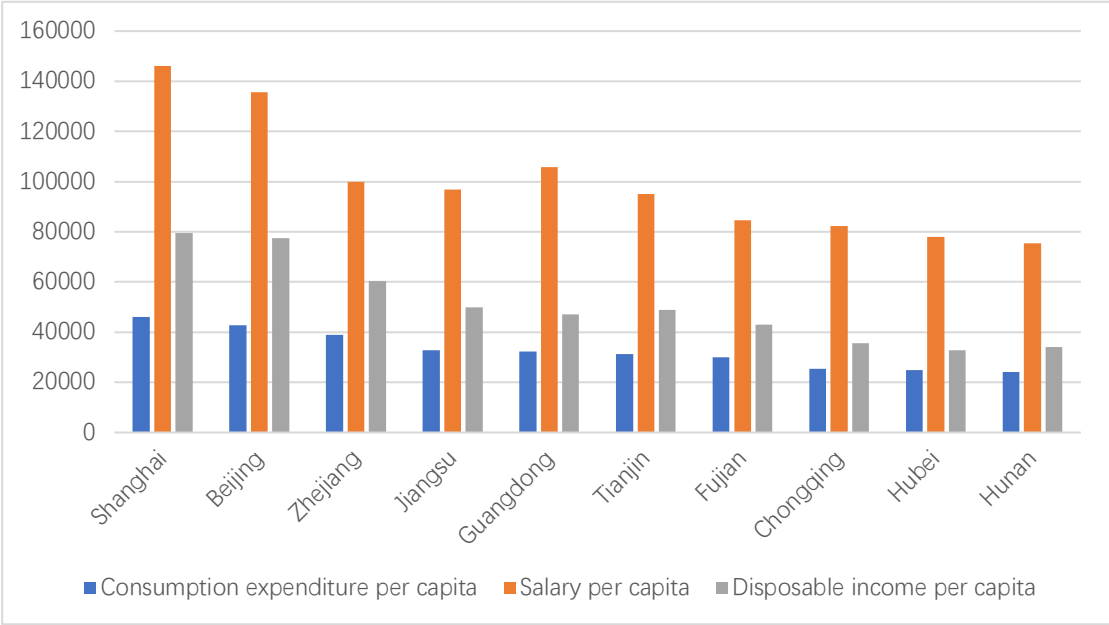
Expected salary. (Thousand CNY)	Amount of people	City of employment
3-5	22	Hometown
5-7	61	Provincial Capital Hometown
7-10	72	Provincial Capital Hometown
10-15	24	First tier cities Provincial Capital Foreigner cities
15-20	9	First tier cities Provincial Capital Foreigner cities
More than 20	16	First tier cities Provincial Capital Foreigner cities

It is easy to see that when people choose their salary, they accordingly consider the city where they will live and work in the future. The results of this data echo our earlier results on the



choice of city of employment, with people mostly choosing to work in provincial capitals and expecting a salary level of at least 5,000 RMB. This is also related to the corresponding level of consumption.

Figure 4. Salary and disposable income data of Top10 provinces and cities in per capita consumption. (Source: Own editing based on China National Bureau of Statistics)



The data in the table above shows the top ten provinces and cities in China in terms of per capita consumption in 2022, and the corresponding per capita salary, and per capita disposable income.

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What we can see is that a high level of salaries is accompanied by a correspondingly high level of per capita disposable income and consumption.

University students expect the salary level can be achieved mostly in the 5000-10000 between the starting salary want to more than 10000, university students own ability conditions are very important, such as academic qualifications, in the same position, graduate students will be basically higher than the undergraduate salary; for example, professional, special professional special needs talent salary will be higher than the ordinary job workers.

<sup>12</sup> (China) National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Data on disposable income per inhabitant in 2022.  
<sup>13</sup> (China) National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). List of average social salary in the country's provinces and municipalities.  
<sup>14</sup> Tudou Speaks Data. (2023). Consumption Levels of China's Cities: 2022 Rankings and Data Analysis. <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1777540817413770912&wfr=spider&for=pc>

There is a complex and interdependent relationship between salary and employment. Reasonable salary levels can contribute to increased employment opportunities, while job market conditions and other factors, among others, also have an impact on wage levels. Only based on a balance between employment and salary levels can economic stability and harmonious social development be achieved.

## 4.4 Impact of education level on choice of employment

Academic qualifications can affect an individual's competitiveness and range of options in the job market. Individuals with higher qualifications usually have a more competitive edge in the job search process. Employers tend to favor candidates with higher qualifications because they usually have a broader knowledge base and learning ability, are more adaptable to the work environment and provide innovative thinking. The level of education also has a direct impact on the range of career choices a person can make. Certain positions require specific academic backgrounds, such as the more specialized professions of doctors, lawyers, and engineers. Academic qualifications limit the types of industries and positions that an individual can pursue, and people with different academic qualifications will face different career choices.

In China, university students' qualifications are divided into four main categories, specialist degrees, undergraduate degrees, postgraduate degrees, and doctoral degrees. Correspondingly, a three-year college degree, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and a doctorate.

We performed descriptive statistics on educational qualifications and modes of employment, and the results are as follows:

Table 5. Education level and employment mode

(Source: own work based on questionnaire)

	Three-year college	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate
General employment	24	68	24	3
Public sector	21	44	14	1
Entrepreneurship	6	7	1	0

In addition, a chi-square test was used to see if the choice of employment mode was related to educational qualifications.

### 1. Original task:

<b>Fij</b>	Three-year college	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	<b>Total</b>
General employment	24	68	24	3	119
Public sector	21	44	14	1	80

Entrepreneurship	6	7	1	0	14
<b>Total</b>	51	119	39	4	213

2. Calculate the value of the test statistic from the sample data:

<b>Fij*</b>	Three-year college	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	<b>Total</b>
General employment	28.49295	66.48356	21.78873	2.23474	119
Public sector	19.15492	44.69484	14.64789	1.50234	80
Entrepreneurship	3.35211	7.82159	2.56338	0.26291	14
<b>Total</b>	51	119	39	4	213

<b>(Fij-Fij*) ^2/Fij*</b>	Three-year college	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	<b>Total</b>
General employment	0.70848	0.03459	0.22441	0.26205	1.22953
Public sector	0.17772	0.01080	0.02866	0.16797	0.38515
Entrepreneurship	2.09161	0.08630	0.95349	0.26291	3.39431
<b>Total</b>	2.97781	0.12169	1.20656	0.69093	5.00899

We finally get the result:  $x^2 = 5.00899$ . ( $Chi^2$ )

3. Determine the critical value:

Finding the critical chi-square value:  $x_{\alpha, df=(k-1)*(m-1)}^2$

$$x_{0.05, df=(4-1)*(3-1)=6}^2 = 12.592$$

4. Making the statistical decision:

5.00899 (Chi-square statistic value) < 12.592 (Critical value)

There is no significant relationship between the choice of employment mode and education level.

The data available so far do not prove that there is a relationship between the choice of mode of employment and educational qualifications. Chi-square is more than 5%, but only minimally, which could also be due to the number of elements in the sample, so there is no

correlation in this research, but since it is close to 5, I assume a minimal correlation in the case of a wider research.

I have also analyzed the data on educational qualifications and the choice of city of employment to see whether educational qualifications affect people's choice of city of employment.

Table 6. Education level and employment city  
(Source: own work based on questionnaire)

	College	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	Total
First-tier city	14	30	13	1	58
Provincial capital	18	35	15	0	68
Hometown	14	30	5	1	50
Emigration	0	7	5	2	14

After calculation, we get:

	College	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	Total
First-tier city	14.04210526	31.1368421	11.6	1.22105263	58
Provincial capital	16.46315789	36.5052632	13.6	1.43157895	68
Hometown	12.10526316	26.8421053	10	1.05263158	50
Emigration	3.389473684	7.51578947	2.8	0.29473684	14
Total	46	102	38	4	190

	College	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	Total
First-tier city	0.00012	0.04151	0.16897	0.04002	0.25062
Provincial capital	0.14346	0.06207	0.14412	1.43158	1.78123
Hometown	0.29657	0.37152	2.5	0.00263	3.17072

Emigration	3.38947	0.03540	1.72857	9.86617	15.01961
Total	3.82963	0.51049	4.54165	11.34039	20.22217

We finally get the result:  $\chi^2 = 20.22217$ . (*Chi*<sup>2</sup>)

Determine the critical value:

Finding the critical chi-square value:  $\chi_{\alpha, df=(k-1)*(m-1)}^2$

$$\chi_{0.05, df=(4-1)*(4-1)=9}^2 = 16.919$$

20.22217(Chi-square statistic value) > 16.919 (Critical value)

There is a significant relationship between the choice of employment city and education level.

$$Cramer's V = \sqrt{\frac{20.222}{190 * (4 - 1)}} = \sqrt{\frac{20.222}{570}} = \sqrt{0.035477} = 0.18835$$

The values of Cramer's V of 0.18835 corresponding to a very weak association between education level and the choice of employment city.

By analyzing the data obtained so far, I have concluded that there is no significant correlation between educational qualifications for the choice of employment method, but there is a weak relationship for the choice of the city of employment.

## 5. Conclusion

With the growth of the new generation, a new situation has emerged in labor force employment. Ordinary people are more inclined to choose their hometown capitals for employment, and more and more university students are willing to return to their hometowns (second- and third-tier cities and rural areas) to work and live, which is very conducive to the rational distribution of labor resources, helps to solve the problem of different supply and demand in the local labor market, and promotes the common development of all regions.

The article's findings suggest that at the 5 per cent level of significance, gender will have a very small effect on the choice of employment mode, even in the context of broader data. Career stability is also not a primary consideration for university students in choosing employment. Nowadays, college students consider more about the city of employment, as well as the salary level when choosing employment. The two are closely linked and are almost directly proportional to each other. It is also the salary level that affects the employment of college students. No one is willing to choose a job with a low salary, but a job with a high salary is not necessarily willing to accept some college students. This has to do with education level. The data also show that often, the higher the education level, the more they demand counterpart employment, and the more they tend to go to the big cities for employment because it is relatively easy for them to get a job with a good salary no matter where they are.

The impact of education level on a career is multifaceted, including competitiveness in employment, range of career choices, opportunities for advancement, work efficiency and adaptability, as well as social recognition and reputation. Thus, the importance of education lies not only in the acquisition of knowledge, but also in its impact on an individual's career development. Academic qualifications are closely related to an individual's professional knowledge and skills. Individuals with relevant qualifications usually have a deeper understanding and proficiency in the relevant fields and can perform their work tasks more efficiently. In addition, qualifications develop thinking, organizational and problem-solving skills, and enhance an individual's adaptability and potential for career development.

Individuals with higher qualifications usually receive more social recognition and respect, which is particularly important for occupations that require dealing with people or relying on networking resources.

There is another point of concern. If a job does not guarantee a young person's livelihood, there are other factors to be considered apart from salary, such as good career development prospects which may bring more opportunities and challenges to the young person. As well as is the working environment of this job good? Is the job content satisfying and rewarding? If the job can give young people a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment, they may consider it a job worth pursuing even if the salary is not high.

The employment situation for university students is one of supply exceeding demand. There is a serious imbalance between the number of jobs in society and the number of university graduates. As university students graduate and enter society, employment is first and foremost in front of them, and the limited number of jobs in society contrasts sharply with the number of graduates. Serious oversupply has become the root cause of their difficulties and employment, and this trend of oversupply of employment is expanding year by year.

To solve the employment problem of college graduates, it requires the joint efforts of students, colleges and universities and employers: Employers should formulate a reasonable talent cultivation mechanism within their organizations for long-term interests, and have to take into account the actual situation and give reasonable salary; Colleges and universities should try their best to arrange the contents of lectures in accordance with the actual situation of employment, and reasonably arrange practical courses of employment guidance, and equip the students with experienced employment Counsellors should effectively impart employment knowledge and job-seeking skills to students from both theoretical and practical perspectives; students in colleges and universities should actively learn employment knowledge and job-seeking skills, correct their attitude towards employment, continuously increase their job-seeking experience, and formulate reasonable job-seeking planning program in the process of job-seeking, and actively participate in internships and practical activities.



## **6. Deficiencies**

1. The data sample is not large enough. If more samples of responses could be obtained, perhaps the data analysis could be more accurate.
2. An analysis of the majors that student's study could be added to see the employment rate of the majors, which would also help high school students to choose a college major that would help to achieve better employment.

## 7. Appendix

### Survey on Employment Intention of university students and international students (Chinese)

Hello everyone! The purpose of this questionnaire is to study the main factors affecting the labor market by finding out your personal intentions about your future employment. The results of the survey will be used for academic research only, and the content of the information collected will be kept completely confidential. Thank you very much for your participation!

1. Age [Single choice] \*

- Under 18 years old
- 18-24 years old
- 25-30 years old
- 30-35 years old
- Over 35 years old

2. Educational attainment (including those currently enrolled) [Single-choice question] \*

- High school
- College
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate
- Doctorate

3. Gender [Single-choice question] \*

- Male
- Female

4. Major [Single choice] \*

- Literature
- Law
- Philosophy
- Education

- History
- Economics
- Management
- Medicine
- Agriculture
- Science
- Engineering

5. Whether you will work in a professionally related field [Single choice] \*

- Yes (I can't work in the same field)
- Yes (I prefer to be able to work in the same field)
- No (not a good match)
- No (do not want to work in the profession related industry)
- Unknown (depends on the situation)

6. Which of the following options meets your expectations [multiple choice] \*?

- Staying overseas to work and live
- Returning to your home country for employment
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. Reasons for choosing to stay overseas [Multiple Choice] \*

- Good salary and benefits
- Quality of life
- Less pressure (mental, family, education, etc.)
- Platform resources (network, medical care, environment, etc.)
- Accumulation of overseas work experience
- Emotional ties (family, love, friendship, etc.)
- Others \_\_\_\_\_\*

8. Future employment direction [Single-choice question] \*

- Self-employment
- Individual employment

Depends on the 1st option of Question 6

9. Expected salary (in RMB) [Single choice] \*

- 5,000 - 7,000
- 7,000 - 10,000
- 10,000 - 15,000
- 15,000 - 20,000
- More than 20,000

Depends on the 1st option of Question 6

10. Expected Salary [Single Choice] \*

- 3k-5k
- 5k-7k
- 7k-10k
- 10k-15k
- 15k-20k
- More than 20k

Depends on the 2nd option in Question 6.

11. Future direction of employment [multiple choice] \*

- Self-employment
- Public examination
- Self-employment

Depends on the second option of Question 6.

12. Why do you choose self-employment?

- To accumulate work experience and improve my ability
- To build up a network through the company's platform
- To have sufficient basic knowledge in the right field of specialization
- Relying on one's own skills to realize one's personal value
- Others \_\_\_\_\_\*

Depend on the first option of Question 11.

13. Why do you choose to work in the public sector [Multiple choice] \*?

- Relatively stable work within the system
- Relatively good benefits in the system
- Higher degree of professional matching
- Parents' expectations
- It is my passion to serve the people
- Life value and sense of achievement

Other \_\_\_\_\_ \*

Depends on the 2nd option of Question 11.

14. Why do you choose to start your own business [Multiple choice] \*?

- Higher freedom of work (time, money, etc.)
- Good long-term income
- Professional matching
- Government policies
- Accumulate social experience and improve personal ability
- No choice (no preferred job position, etc.)
- Life goal (realizing personal value, etc.)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ \*

Depends on the 3rd option of Question 11.

15. Choice of city [Multiple choice] \*

- North, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and other first-tier cities
- Other provincial capital cities
- Returning to hometown
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ \*

Depends on the 2nd option in Question 6.

16. Why do you choose first-tier cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen?

- More job opportunities
- Good salary and benefits

- Government policies
- Quality of life
- Suitable positions
- Platform resources (medical, ecological environment, network)

Depends on the 1st option of Question 15.

17. Why choose other provincial capital cities [Multiple Choice] \*

- More job opportunities
- Good salary and benefits
- City development potential
- Quality of life
- Suitable position
- Government Policies
- Hometown capital
- Platform resources (medical, ecological environment, network, etc.)

Depends on the 2nd option of Question 15.

18. Why do you choose to go back to your hometown [Multiple Choice] \*?

- Low cost of living
- Suitable employment opportunities (salary, position)
- Emotional ties (family ties, etc.)
- Low start-up costs
- Government policies
- Personal connections
- City development potential

Depends on the 3rd option in Question 15.

19. Why did you choose this city [Multiple Choice] \*

- Low cost of living
- Suitable employment opportunities (salary, positions)
- Emotional ties (family, etc.)

- Low start-up costs
- Government policies
- Personal connections
- City development potential

Depends on the 4th option in Question 15.

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Year of publication: 2023  
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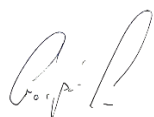
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