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Original Research Article

## Survey and analysis on employment intention of ethnic students studying in other places-taking—Some universities in Anhui Province as an example

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**Abstract:** In the context of the new development pattern for western China in the new era, properly guiding ethnic students who studied elsewhere to return for employment can not only address the current employment challenges faced by college graduates but also promote the revitalization and development of ethnic regions. The study first constructs a model of influencing factors for returning employment among ethnic students who studied elsewhere based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the push-pull theory. Through chi-square analysis, it preliminarily identifies gender and major as the key factors affecting their willingness to return for employment. Subsequently, binary logistic regression analysis using SPSS 26.0 statistical software reveals that individual attitudes, media promotion, institutional guidance, and government talent policies significantly positively influence their return employment intentions. Finally, the study proposes countermeasures: universities should enhance students' adaptability through guidance, media should boost social penetration through publicity, and governments should improve policy attractiveness through coordinated efforts.

**Keywords:** study in different places; ethnic students; employment intention

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### 1. Introduction

Promoting high-quality and full employment is the new positioning and mission of employment work in the new era. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China emphasized the need to improve the employment support system for key groups such as college graduates, migrant workers, and veterans, and to focus on resolving structural employment contradictions. On September 25, 2024, China's State Council issued the "Opinions on Implementing the Employment Priority Strategy to Promote High-Quality and Full Employment," which proposed 24 measures, including expanding employment and talent development channels for college graduates and other young people, and ensuring equal employment rights.

Since China implemented the policy of expanding enrollment in higher education institutions in 1999, the country's higher education has embarked on a path of vigorous development, entering a new stage of popularization. The expansion of enrollment has cultivated a large number of high-quality talents for the nation and promoted the rapid development of the social economy. However, it has also given rise to an urgent practical challenge: how to properly address the employment issues of the increasingly large group of college graduates. According to the latest data released by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the number of graduates from Chinese universities in 2024 has exceeded the ten-million mark, with the total expected to reach 11.79 million. Against the complex backdrop of slowing economic growth, market demand approaching saturation, and relatively insufficient job supply, the employment path for college graduates has become particularly challenging. Among these, the difficulty in employment and career selection for ethnic students is a derivative issue under this broader context. For ethnic students, differences in language, culture, and geographical location often lead to more difficulties and challenges in the job-seeking process. On one hand, they may face challenges in language communication and cultural adaptation, affecting their competitiveness in the job market; on the other hand, some employers' insufficient understanding and recognition of ethnic students may result in unfair treatment during the recruitment process. As the backbone force in promoting economic development and ethnic unity in minority regions, how to effectively address the employment issues of ethnic college

students has become a hot topic in academic circles. Current research primarily focuses on ethnic students in the northwest minority regions. However, research on ethnic students pursuing education in other regions remains underexplored. This study focuses on five distinctive higher education institutions in Anhui Province: Anhui University of Science and Technology, Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Anhui Normal University, Anhui Agricultural University, and Bengbu Medical University. Through questionnaire surveys, we conduct an in-depth analysis of the root causes and influencing factors behind their employment challenges, based on comprehensive understanding of their career aspirations. The findings are complemented by actionable strategies and recommendations to enhance the employability of ethnic students in the job market.

## **2. Literature review**

As the new force of development in the ethnic minority areas, the employment intention of minority college students has become one of the hot topics in the academic circles.

First, the intrinsic influencing factors primarily include gender, age, grade level, individual attitudes toward returning to hometowns, and personal capabilities. Zhang Lina and Pu Juan (2024) employed a binary logistic model to analyze the impact on rural college students' employment intentions in Xinjiang, concluding that advancing age and grade level significantly influence their willingness to return home for employment. Ju Shaowei and Cai Meng (2024) developed a factor model based on structural theory, identifying skill-based human capital and attachment to hometown as positively significant determinants. Su Ling (2024) found that Party membership aspirants and high-achieving students are more inclined to choose hometown employment. Sun Jinghui et al.

Secondly, external influencing factors primarily include parental expectations, university guidance, and policy incentives. Wang Wenlu and Min Lanbin (2024) demonstrated through mediation analysis that talent cultivation models exert both direct and indirect positive impacts on ethnic minority students' employment intentions. Zhuang Qiang (2023) noted that college students' return-to-hometown employment is influenced by multiple factors, emphasizing the need for coordinated efforts by the government, universities, and social media to enhance awareness campaigns. Deng Zhiguang (2022) employed a Logistic regression model to analyze factors affecting ethnic minority students' employment expectations at University A, revealing that parental expectations and educational attainment significantly influence students' employment regions.

This study is grounded in the push-pull theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's theory provides a psychological framework for understanding individual motivations, proposing that human needs are organized into five ascending levels: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. For ethnic minority students studying abroad, their willingness to return home for employment may be influenced by these hierarchical needs. For example, regarding basic physiological and safety needs, they might evaluate whether their hometown offers sufficient job opportunities and living security. At the social needs level, they may consider whether their hometown has strong social networks and cultural identity; Regarding the needs for respect and self-actualization, individuals may evaluate whether their hometowns offer opportunities to realize personal value and pursue career development. The Push-Pull Theory, a sociological framework analyzing population mobility, posits that both push and pull factors collectively influence migration decisions. Push factors refer to elements compelling individuals to leave their original residences, such as employment challenges and high living costs, while pull factors attract them to new locations, offering better job prospects and improved quality of life. This study focuses on pull factors, specifically how local governments can develop effective policies to encourage college graduates to return to their hometowns and engage in local employment markets.

In conclusion, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provides insights into individuals' intrinsic motivation, while the push-pull theory offers an analytical framework for external environmental factors. This study also incorporates research by Ju Shaowei and Cai Meng (2024) and Li Ziheng (2023) on influencing factors of college students' return-to-hometown employment intentions. Based on theoretical analysis and practical research needs, we have ultimately established the impact factors of return-to-hometown employment for ethnic students studying away from their hometowns.

### 3. Tests

#### 3.1. Questionnaire design and variable measurement

##### 3.1.1. Study subjects

The research focused on ethnic minority students enrolled in five distinctive higher education institutions in Anhui Province: one finance and economics university, one science and engineering university, one teacher-training university, one agriculture university, and one medical university. Using random sampling, 214 questionnaires were distributed. After excluding 11 questionnaires with insufficient completion time or irregular responses, 203 valid responses were collected, yielding a 94.9% response rate.

##### 3.1.2. This refers to the mea

This study employs a questionnaire titled "Factors Influencing Employment Intentions of Ethnic Students Studying Abroad" as its research tool. The questionnaire consists of two sections: the first collects students' basic personal information through a combination of single-choice and multiple-choice questions, while the second examines factors affecting employment intentions of ethnic college students studying abroad. These factors are categorized into internal and external dimensions, measured across seven specific dimensions. All items utilize a 5-point Likert scale. The dependent variable in this study is the willingness of ethnic students studying abroad to return to their hometown for employment. The questionnaire asks: "Would you choose to return to your hometown for employment after graduation?" with binary options (yes or no). Those who choose to return are assigned a score of 1, while those who do not return are assigned a score of 0. Since the dependent variable is a binary variable, a binary Logistic regression model is selected for the regression analysis.

The independent variables in this study are categorized into two dimensions: internal and external factors, comprising seven dimensions in total. The internal factors encompass individual and family aspects. The five individual-level items, referencing "A Study on College Students' Return Entrepreneurship under the Perspective of Rural Revitalization," measure students' attitudes toward returning to their hometowns for employment, including "I would recommend jobs in my hometown," "I want to apply my knowledge to develop my hometown," and "Returning to work fulfills my self-worth." The four family-level items, based on Ju Shaowei's (2024) scale on vocational college students' return employment intentions, assess support from parents and relatives. External factors include school guidance, media promotion, and policy support. The seven items on school guidance and media promotion are adapted from Li Yanling's (2024) scale on influencing factors of rural college students' return employment intentions.

#### 3.2. Reliability and validity analysis of the questionnaire

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a commonly used method to measure the reliability of psychological or educational tests, estimating the internal consistency of a test according to a specific formula as an indicator of reliability. Using SPSS 23.0 software, reliability analysis was conducted on the 32 items of the questionnaire scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.925, which is greater than 0.7, meeting the basic reliability requirements of the questionnaire.

The KMO value of the questionnaire was 0.89, which is higher than 0.7, indicating that the data possess good validity. Meanwhile, the significance level was 0.000, far below the standard of 0.05. These results demonstrate that the structure and measurement indicators of the questionnaire are reliable and suitable for factor analysis.

#### 3.3. Empirical analysis

##### 3.3.1. Construction of model

The dependent variable in this study is whether respondents will choose to return to their hometown for employment, coded as 1 for those who do and 0 for those who do not. As this is a binary choice, we employ a binary Logistic model, where  $p$  represents the probability of returning to work in their hometown. The model is specified as follows:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \ln(p/1-p) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$$

##### 3.3.2. Regression results

The significance level of the family expectation dimension is 0.491, significantly higher than 0.05,

indicating that this dimension does not influence students' willingness to return to their hometowns for employment. In contrast, the six dimensions—Return attitude, media promotion, school guidance, settlement policies, entrepreneurship policies, and academic policies—All show significance levels below 0.05, meaning these dimensions significantly affect whether ethnic students studying away from home choose to return for employment. Among these, school guidance has the strongest impact on students' return-to-hometown employment willingness. For every one-unit increase in school guidance, the willingness to return for employment among ethnic students studying away from home increases by approximately 20.37 times. Government talent policies also exert varying influences, with settlement subsidies, entrepreneurship subsidies, and academic research policies contributing 6.43 times, 2.93 times, and 4.77 times, respectively.

The empirical analysis reveals that six key factors—Returning home attitudes, media promotion, school guidance, settlement policies, entrepreneurship policies, and academic policies—Significantly influence the decision of ethnic students studying away from home to return for employment. Notably, environmental, social, and personal factors show positive correlations with this choice, confirming the model's hypotheses.

## About the author

Hao Cui (2000-), male, from Hefei, Anhui Province, holds a bachelor's degree, and is currently employed at Anhui University of Finance and Economics, engaged in research on educational economics and management.

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