

# ***Research on the Current Situation, Difficulties, and Strategies of Graduates Staying in Shaanxi for Employment to Support Rural Development: A Case Study of Shaanxi University Students***

**Jia Tingting, He Hang**

*School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Shaanxi University of Science and Technology,  
Xi'an, Shaanxi, 710021, China*

**Keywords:** College student; returning home for employment; rural revitalization

**Abstract:** College students returning to their hometowns for employment can effectively fill the talent gap in rural economic development. In the context of the rural revitalization strategy, Shaanxi college students, as an important force of talent, returning to their hometowns for employment not only helps alleviate urban employment pressure, but also brings new technologies and concepts to rural areas, promoting rural economic and social development. This article is based on a survey of 505 college students from Shaanxi province who returned to their hometowns for employment to support rural revitalization. It was found that there is a gap between cognition and action in the employment of college students returning to their hometowns, an imbalance caused by gender differences, insufficient policy promotion and practical support, and constraints in rural environment and conditions. These have become the "last mile" problems affecting rural college students' entrepreneurship in their hometowns. We should provide assistance in strengthening precise propaganda, enhancing practical support, paying attention to gender differences, and improving rural environments to jointly promote Shaanxi college students to better serve the local rural revitalization cause.

## **1. Introduction**

College graduates returning to their hometowns for employment are important intellectual resources for the construction of rural talent pools, which can help promote high-quality local development. The Opinion on Accelerating the Revitalization of Rural Talents issued by the State Council in 2021 clearly proposes to build a team that understands agriculture, loves rural areas, and loves farmers, and provides talent support for rural revitalization construction[1]. Shaanxi college students not only have equal knowledge reserves, but also have a higher mission, deeper feelings, and more comprehensive understanding of Shaanxi. Attracting this group to return home for employment can fully release labor vitality, activate resources, and promote rural revitalization. When faced with the gap between college students' cognition and action, the imbalance caused by gender differences, the lack of policy promotion and practical support, and the constraints of rural environment and conditions, the coordination mechanism between society, government, universities, and families is

not sound enough, resulting in students being unclear and unwilling to go to grassroots employment. Based on this, the research team, while adhering to the principle of systematicity, randomly selected 505 graduates from five different types of universities in the province to conduct research, promoting mutual cooperation between the government, society, universities, and families. The government has introduced preferential policies for Shaanxi college students to return home for employment, and local governments have tailored their policies accordingly to create a combination of employment opportunities.

## **2. Basic research on Shaanxi college students returning to their hometowns for employment and supporting rural revitalization**

### **2.1. Research background**

In the context of fully implementing the rural revitalization strategy, strong talent support is crucial [2]. As a major agricultural province in western China, Shaanxi urgently needs the injection of high-quality talents for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. As an important link between urban and rural areas, knowledge and practice, Shaanxi college students' return to their hometowns for employment not only concerns their personal career development, but also has a profound impact on rural industrial upgrading, cultural revitalization, social governance, and other aspects. The theme of this survey is "Shaanxi University Students Returning Home to Assist Rural Revitalization". Through research interviews, the study systematically examined college students' understanding of rural revitalization policies, willingness to return home, career expectations, and influencing factors. The research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the role cognition and action dilemma of Shaanxi college students in rural revitalization, and provide empirical evidence for optimizing the education mechanism of universities, improving local talent introduction policies, and stimulating the endogenous motivation of young people to participate in rural revitalization. Guided by Marxist theory, it explores a talent development path for rural revitalization that is in line with the actual situation in Shaanxi.

### **2.2. Sample features**

Based on the five dimensions of gender structure, family background, registered residence attribute, educational level and professional distribution, the research team deconstructed the characteristics of the sample of Shaanxi college graduates who participated in the study of rural revitalization. The results revealed the internal relationship between multiple social factors and college students' willingness and practical ability to participate in rural revitalization.

Research data shows that the gender composition of the sample presents a significant uneven distribution (68.51% male, 31.49% female), which reflects the social disciplinary effect of traditional gender role cognition on career choice. In terms of family structure, non only children account for 66.53%, forming an overwhelming advantage over the only child group (33.47%). This intergenerational structural difference is transmitted through the differentiation of family capital accumulation and risk bearing ability, profoundly shaping the geographical selection logic and risk preference spectrum of participating subjects. The analysis of registered residence shows that rural students account for 67.92%. The rural registered residence college students' local cognitive schema formed by long-term life practice not only cultivates a strong emotional driving force for returning home, but also obtains the material capital needed for practice through family social network. This dual embedding mechanism of "emotion resource" makes it the most effective potential subject group in the implementation of rural revitalization strategy. The professional composition shows a clear dominance of engineering (70.3% overall, 80.92% male, 47.17% female), and the phenomenon of

gender segregation in disciplines and gender differentiation in graduate education reinforce each other, leading to a structural imbalance risk in the talent pool for rural revitalization. This supply-demand mismatch urgently requires the construction of a dynamic adjustment mechanism for talent cultivation based on the development needs of all factors of rural revitalization. The above analysis indicates that the distribution of socio-economic characteristics among college students is essentially the result of multiple social structural factors working together.

These structural characteristics not only affect the willingness and practical direction of college students to participate in rural revitalization, but also reveal the current gender imbalance and professional mismatch in the construction of rural revitalization talent teams, providing important empirical evidence for improving rural revitalization talent policies.

### **3. The basic situation of Shaanxi college students returning to their hometowns for employment and supporting rural revitalization**

#### **3.1. Research on the Perception of Shaanxi university students towards rural revitalization policies**

##### **3.1.1. The policy awareness and effectiveness of rural revitalization among college students from Shaanxi province have begun to show**

According to a survey of college students in Shaanxi Province, 53.66% of respondents are in a state of "understanding" or "very understanding" of the rural revitalization policy, which preliminarily confirms the effectiveness of the policy's dissemination among young people. However, 12.67% of students still expressed 'not understanding', and 33.66% are still in a state of cognitive confusion. This set of data reflects that although the rural revitalization strategy has formed a certain coverage in the promotion of universities in Shaanxi, policy details, implementation paths, and other content have not yet achieved deep penetration. Considering the uneven development of county-level economy and the urgent task of rural revitalization in Shaanxi Province, it is urgent to optimize publicity methods, enhance the effectiveness of policy interpretation, and lay a cognitive foundation for college students to engage in rural revitalization employment.

##### **3.1.2. There are gender differences in the policy awareness of rural revitalization among college students from Shaanxi province**

Data shows that the proportion of male respondents who are "very familiar" with rural revitalization policies is 12.43%, while the proportion of females is only 6.92%, and the proportion of females who are "not familiar" (18.23%) is 1.8 times that of males. This difference is related to the fact that men generally pay more attention to public affairs and have diversified information access channels, while reflecting the potential impact of social gender roles on knowledge construction. In the talent demand for rural revitalization in Shaanxi Province, there is an urgent need for gender balanced professionals in fields such as agricultural technology promotion and grassroots governance. Therefore, targeted female friendly publicity programs need to be designed to guide more female college students to pay attention to rural employment opportunities and help narrow the gender development gap between urban and rural areas.

##### **3.1.3. Differences in the influence of family structure of Shaanxi university students on their understanding of rural revitalization policies**

Research has found that the only child group exhibits a relative advantage in understanding rural revitalization policies, mainly due to the more concentrated allocation of educational resources and

information support networks in their family environment. However, the overall gap is relatively small, indicating that the impact of family structure on policy awareness is limited. Given the diverse characteristics of rural family structures in Shaanxi Province, policy promotion needs to balance universality and precision. Universities can carry out targeted lectures based on their professional characteristics, promote the linkage between rural revitalization policies and employment and entrepreneurship policies for college students, and encourage students from different family backgrounds to actively participate in rural revitalization. It is also possible to establish a linkage mechanism between rural revitalization policies and grassroots employment plans for college students, in order to effectively stimulate the participation and enthusiasm of students from different family backgrounds.

### **3.2. A Realistic Comparison between the Return Intention and Career Expectations of Shaanxi University Students**

#### **3.2.1. From the perspective of willingness to return home, there is a difference between ideal identification and practical choice**

Research shows that 67.33% of students hold a positive attitude towards rural revitalization practice education, but only 5.94% actually choose grassroots rural employment, showing a significant "willingness action" gap. It can be seen that although college students highly recognize the importance of the rural revitalization strategy in solving the problem of imbalanced urban-rural development at the value level, their employment decisions still tend to be conservative due to objective conditions such as weak rural infrastructure and limited career development space.

#### **3.2.2. From the perspective of expected salary, there is a deviation between interest orientation and talent incentive mechanism**

Research shows that 47.72% of respondents consider the ideal salary range of 5001-7000 yuan as the mainstream demand; The proportion of men choosing salaries above 7001 yuan (37.28%) is 1.85 times that of women (20.13%), and the proportion of only children who prefer high paying positions (35.5%) is also higher than that of non only children. This result not only reflects the rational cognition of college students towards the value of labor, but also confirms the driving role of the Marxist principle of material interests in career choices. Given the uneven level of county-level economic development in Shaanxi Province, it is necessary to establish a differentiated salary subsidy system and implement a tiered salary policy for the surrounding rural areas of the Shaanbei Energy Transformation Zone, Shaannan Ecological Economic Zone, and Guanzhong Urban Agglomeration. Through material incentives, talent can be attracted to root at the grassroots level, injecting lasting momentum into rural revitalization.

#### **3.2.3. From the perspective of career expectations, the alignment between professional empowerment and rural revitalization strategy needs to be improved**

More than 70% of respondents believe that they can play a key role in technology supported innovation (73.27%), education and training inheritance (72.28%), and creative planning and promotion (65.35%). This cognition is highly consistent with the Marxist statement that "science and technology are the primary productive forces", and also echoes the development direction of rural revitalization in Shaanxi Province, such as "promoting agriculture through science and technology" and "forging the soul through culture". The upgrading of the tea industry in southern Shaanxi urgently requires agricultural technical talents, the development of folk tourism in Guanzhong calls for creative design teams, and the energy revolution in northern Shaanxi requires green technology

innovation forces. In the future, we should establish training bases through school local cooperation, set up research projects for rural revitalization, and accurately connect the professional advantages of college students with the actual needs of rural areas, in order to achieve the dual empowerment of talent value and rural development.

### **3.3. Analysis of Family and Social Support for Shaanxi College Students Returning to Their Hometowns for Employment**

#### **3.3.1. From the perspective of family support, there exists an attitude differentiation under rational balance**

The attitude of families of college students from Shaanxi towards rural employment shows a neutral to positive characteristic, with 33.86% holding a neutral attitude, 46.34% supporting it, and 19.8% opposing it. The influence of gender and family structure differences is weak: the male support rate (47.69%) is slightly higher than that of females (43.4%), and there is no significant difference between only child and non only child. Reflecting the dual considerations of expecting children to realize their personal value and considering the risks of rural development when making family decisions. Combining the cultural characteristics of rural families in Shaanxi Province, which value practicality and stability, it is necessary to eliminate cognitive blind spots, strengthen families' recognition of rural revitalization and employment, and help build a collaborative support network of "family society individual" through typical case promotion, family policy interpretation meetings, and other forms.

#### **3.3.2. From the perspective of social cognition, there exists a game between traditional concepts and value reconstruction**

56.24% of the respondents denied the bias that "rural work representatives have low abilities", while only 22.57% agreed. However, the only child group (average score 2.65) is more inclined towards traditional occupational cognition than non only children (2.37). This difference reveals the intergenerational continuity of occupational attitudes under the urban-rural binary structure: only child families are influenced by mainstream urban values and pay more attention to occupational stability and social status. In response to the urgent need to break through the talent bottleneck in rural revitalization in Shaanxi Province, it is necessary to use exemplary forces such as "the most beautiful village officials" and "returning home to start businesses" as carriers, combined with the spirit of "pragmatic responsibility" in the Three Qin culture, reshape the value orientation of grassroots employment, break free from the shackles of "city centric theory", and cultivate the patriotism and professional mission of the youth group.

### **3.4. Rural environmental awareness and development challenges of Shaanxi college students returning to their hometowns for employment**

#### **3.4.1. From the perspective of environmental assessment, there is a dialectical evaluation of achievements and shortcomings**

More than 70% of the respondents gave a "fair" or "good" evaluation of the rural environment, but 16.6% still had negative feedback. Men's satisfaction with the environment (50.3% rated as "good+very good") is significantly higher than women's (40.9%), and only children have a more optimistic evaluation. This cognitive difference not only confirms the actual effectiveness of projects such as the "toilet revolution" and "road hardening" in rural revitalization in Shaanxi Province, but also exposes shortcomings in areas such as public service supply and beautification of living



environments. We need to dialectically view the differences in evaluation, and on the basis of consolidating achievements such as "village to village connectivity" and "e-commerce going to the countryside", we need to implement precise environmental improvement projects to address the needs of women's groups for convenient living and basic supporting facilities that are valued by non only child groups.

### **3.4.2. From the perspective of development challenges, existing contradictions and the phenomenon of development breaking through coexist**

More than 60% of the respondents listed "low salary and benefits", "poor infrastructure", and "limited career development" as core obstacles, and further refined the differences in gender and family structure. The focal point of the contradiction is that men are more concerned about career promotion, women focus on salary security, and non only children are more sensitive to resource scarcity. This is highly consistent with the concrete manifestation of the main contradiction in rural areas in the new era of Chinese society. Taking advantage of the construction of the "Rural Revitalization Demonstration Town" in Shaanxi Province, it is necessary to establish a three in one policy system of "salary incentives+platform construction+rights protection", such as setting up a special allowance for energy rural transformation in northern Shaanxi, an ecological industry talent apartment in southern Shaanxi, and a vocational skills training base in the Guanzhong Plain, to fundamentally resolve the problem of unbalanced and insufficient development and enhance the attractiveness of rural areas to young talents.

## **4. The realistic dilemma of Shaanxi college students returning to their hometowns for employment to support rural revitalization**

### **4.1. There is a gap between thinking, cognition, and action**

Although most students hold a positive attitude towards rural revitalization and are willing to engage in relevant practical education, the actual proportion of choosing grassroots rural employment is extremely low. The significant gap between ideals and reality reflects the significant gap between students' cognition and action. From the perspective of Marxist epistemology, knowledge is the precursor of practice, but the transformation of knowledge into practice requires certain conditions. Currently, there is a significant gap between rural areas and cities in terms of salary, career development, and living conditions, which have become the main factors hindering college students from translating their cognition into action. At the same time, college students lack sufficient understanding of the specific practical paths and opportunities for rural revitalization, and lack effective guidance and support, which also leads to a disconnect between cognition and action.

### **4.2. Uneven development caused by gender differences**

Men have significantly higher policy awareness, practical willingness, and salary expectations than women, which may lead to an imbalance in talent attraction for rural revitalization. Gender equality is an important symbol of social progress, and rural revitalization requires fully mobilizing women's enthusiasm and creativity. However, the influence of traditional gender concepts, the special difficulties faced by women in career development (such as childbirth, family care, etc.), and the insufficient career development support policies for women in rural areas have made it more difficult for female college students to return to their hometowns for employment. How to eliminate gender discrimination and provide equal development opportunities for women has become an urgent issue to be addressed in rural revitalization.

### **4.3. There is a lack of policy promotion and practical support**

Although the overall promotion of graduates returning to their hometowns for employment has been recognized, there are still some students who express a lack of understanding or insufficient understanding of the policies, especially for groups such as women and only children who have cognitive blind spots. At the same time, students' needs for practical support, such as organizing field trips to rural areas, establishing special scholarships, and building school enterprise cooperation platforms, have not been fully met. The imperfect practical education system has led to a lack of in-depth understanding of the actual situation in rural areas among college students, making it difficult to effectively combine professional knowledge with rural needs. This reflects the problem of formalism in the process of policy implementation, lacking pertinence and effectiveness. It is necessary to strengthen the precision of policy propaganda and the effectiveness of practical support from the perspective of Marxist practice, and promote the organic unity of theory and practice.

### **4.4. The constraints of rural environment and development conditions exist**

Low salary and benefits, inadequate infrastructure, and limited career development opportunities in rural areas have become the main factors restricting college students from returning to their hometowns for employment. These issues not only affect students' employment willingness, but also constrain the in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. From the perspective of Marxist theory that productive forces determine production relations, the relatively backward development level of productive forces in rural areas makes it difficult for production relations to meet the needs of talent development. To solve these problems, it is necessary to increase investment in rural areas, promote the upgrading of rural industries, improve infrastructure, optimize the employment environment, and enhance the productivity and attractiveness of rural areas.

## **5. The promotion path of Shaanxi college students returning to their hometowns for employment to help rural revitalization**

### **5.1. Strengthen precise publicity and enhance overall awareness**

One is to develop differentiated promotional strategies targeting key groups. In light of the cognitive characteristics and demands of key groups such as women and only children, relevant departments should formulate more targeted policy promotion strategies. Additionally, to address the concerns of female college students regarding the balance between family and career, successful cases of rural women in rural revitalization should be publicized to showcase their unique advantages in rural education, culture, and social governance; In response to the concern of only children for career development and social recognition, it emphasizes the broad space and social value provided by rural revitalization for personal growth. The second is to innovate publicity methods and enhance the attractiveness of going to grassroots employment. Relevant departments can utilize new media platforms, short videos, live streaming and other emerging communication methods to innovate policy promotion approaches, enhancing the appeal and effectiveness of the publicity. They can also invite college students who have successfully returned to their hometowns for employment to share their experiences, and organize lectures, forums, competitions and other activities on the theme of rural revitalization to increase the attractiveness and persuasiveness of the policies and stimulate the enthusiasm of college students to participate.

## **5.2. Strengthen practical support and promote the implementation of actions**

In line with the goal of "promoting talent to rural areas" in Shaanxi Province's 14th Five Year Plan, it is necessary to transform the ideal feelings of the youth group into practical actions to participate in the construction of the Three Qin land through measures such as improving grassroots employment subsidies, optimizing public service support, and establishing a special talent plan for rural revitalization. One is to improve the practical education system. According to the Marxist view of practice, practice is the foundation and purpose of understanding. It is necessary to strengthen the construction of the practical education system, organize students to conduct field investigations in rural areas, carry out internships and practical training related to rural revitalization, establish special projects for rural revitalization, etc., and provide students with more opportunities to contact and understand rural areas. Universities should cooperate with local governments and enterprises to establish rural revitalization practice bases, build school enterprise cooperation platforms, and provide students with practical training and employment opportunities. The second is to increase policy support. Schools can establish special scholarships or funding programs for rural revitalization to offer material rewards and financial support to students participating in rural revitalization practices. The government can introduce preferential policies for college students to return to their hometowns for employment and entrepreneurship, such as tax reductions, start-up subsidies, and housing guarantees, to lower the costs of starting a business and employment and encourage college students to turn their ideals into practical actions.

## **5.3. Pay attention to gender differences and implement differentiation strategies**

One is to safeguard women's equal development rights. The government and relevant units can formulate specific support policies for female college students, such as providing childbirth subsidies, flexible working systems, and career development training, to alleviate the dual burden on women in family and career development. They should also encourage women to participate in rural revitalization in fields like education, healthcare, and culture, leveraging their advantages in social services to offer more career development opportunities and promotion prospects for women. The second is to stimulate male innovation and entrepreneurship vitality. In response to the advantages and needs of male college students in technological innovation, industrial development, and other aspects, we will build an innovation and entrepreneurship platform, provide services such as entrepreneurship incubation, technical support, and market docking, and stimulate men's enthusiasm and creativity. The government and relevant departments guide people to pay attention to areas such as rural industrial upgrading and ecological protection, and combine personal career development with the rural revitalization strategy, so as to realize personal value in the process of rural revitalization.

## **5.4. Improving rural environment and enhancing job attractiveness**

One is to strengthen infrastructure construction. The government should increase investment in rural infrastructure such as transportation, communication, medical care and education, improve the production and living environment in rural areas, and enhance the level of public services in rural areas. It should also strengthen the protection and governance of the rural ecological environment, create beautiful and livable villages, enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural areas, and provide good living and working conditions for college students to return to their hometowns for employment. The second is to optimize salary incentives and career development policies. All employers should establish reasonable salary incentive mechanisms, set competitive salary standards based on the actual needs of rural revitalization and the professional abilities and contributions of



college students, and meet their material needs. Relevant departments can broaden career development channels, provide college students with promotion, training and exchange opportunities, so that they have clear career development expectations in rural revitalization and enhance their sense of professional identity and belonging.

## 6. Conclusion

As an important talent force for local rural revitalization, Shaanxi college students' return to their hometowns for employment is of great significance in promoting rural economic and social development[4]. However, in the actual implementation process, there are still problems such as the gap between cognition and action, gender imbalance, insufficient policy promotion and practical support, and constraints of rural environment and conditions. The existence of these problems is influenced by subjective factors such as social concepts and policy implementation, as well as objective factors such as rural development level and economic conditions, which need to be analyzed and solved from the perspective of Marxist theory. The implementation of targeted publicity, strengthened practical support, attention to gender differences, and improvement of rural environment and other response strategies can effectively promote the return of Shaanxi college students to their hometowns for employment and contribute to the deepening development of rural revitalization. We must adhere to the guidance of Marxist theory, deeply implement the strategy of rural revitalization, continuously optimize the policy environment, stimulate the endogenous motivation of college students, provide solid talent guarantee for rural revitalization, and promote the development goals of "prosperous industries, livable ecology, civilized rural culture, effective governance, and prosperous life" in Shaanxi's rural areas.

## Acknowledgement

The 2025 Annual Project of Shaanxi Province Philosophy and Social Sciences Research Special Project (General Project) (2025YB0038): "Research on the Path of Empowering Rural Revitalization by Shaanxi College Students from the Perspective of Promoting Employment and Stabilizing Growth"; The 2025 student affairs research project of Shaanxi University of Science and Technology: "Exploring the Generation Logic and Mechanism of Strong Willingness of Shaanxi Graduates to Stay and Seek Employment in Shaanxi from the Perspective of Proactive Willingness".

## References

- [1] Xu Wei. *Research on the Path of University Visual Communication Majors Supporting Beautiful Rural Construction under the Triple Helix Theory* [J]. *Rural Economy and Technology*, 2023, 34 (01): 137-140
- [2] Mo Guanggang. *Promoting comprehensive rural revitalization through the revitalization of rural talents* [J]. *Journal of Agronomy*, 2019, 9 (12): 87-91
- [3] Lisa. *A Brief Analysis of the Realistic Difficulties and Path Construction of Rural Cultural Revitalization* [J]. *Village Committee Director*, 2024, (03):206-208.
- [4] Zhang Lina, Chen Yi, Song Zhijian, etc. *Research on the Willingness of Rural College Students to Return to Their Hometowns for Employment under the Rural Revitalization Strategy: A Case Study of Xinjiang Universities* [J]. *Economic Research Guide*, 2024, (20):137-141.