



Exploring The Impact Of Job Security, Job Promotion And Working Environment On Students' Career Decision-Making At Hebei University, China

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of job security, job promotion, and working environment on the career decisionmaking process of undergraduate students at Hebei University, China. Career decision-making is a critical process for university students, significantly influencing their future professional trajectories and personal fulfillment. The research employs a quantitative methodology, utilizing structured questionnaires to collect data from a representative sample of 377 students. The findings reveal that job promotion opportunities exert the most substantial influence on students' career decisions, followed by job security and the working environment. Job security provides students with assurance of continued employment and financial stability, making it a pivotal factor in career choice. A positive working environment, characterized by supportive management and a healthy work-life balance, enhances job satisfaction and productivity, thereby influencing career decisions. The study underscores the necessity of tailored career guidance programs that address these key factors to better support students in making informed and satisfying career choices. This research fills a notable gap in the literature by focusing on the specific context of Chinese university students at Hebei University, offering both theoretical insights and practical implications for educators, policymakers, and employers. The enhanced understanding of these factors can lead to improved career guidance services, ultimately promoting better career outcomes and satisfaction among students.

Keywords: Job Security, Working environment, Job Promotion, student's career decision making, Hebei University

1.0 Introduction Background

Career decision-making is a critical process for university students as it significantly influences their future professional trajectories and personal fulfillment. In the context of higher education, students are often faced with numerous career options and factors that impact their decisions. These factors include job security, working environment, and job promotion opportunities, which are crucial in shaping students' career paths (Md. Roknuzzaman Siddiky & Shahanaz Akter, 2021).

Job security, defined as the assurance of continued employment without the risk of job loss, is a significant concern for many students when choosing a career (Aman, 2021). The importance of job security has been highlighted in various studies, indicating its influence on career satisfaction and long-term career commitment (Bashir, 2020). A stable job ensures financial stability and peace of mind, which are essential for personal and professional growth.

The working environment also plays a pivotal role in career decision-making. A positive working environment, characterized by supportive management, good interpersonal relationships, and a healthy work-life balance, can enhance job satisfaction and productivity (Jessice., 2023). On the other hand, a negative working environment can lead to job dissatisfaction, stress, and high turnover rates, making it a critical factor for students to consider when making career decisions (Kurniawaty, 2019).

Job promotion opportunities are another crucial factor influencing career decisions. The potential for career advancement within an organization can motivate students to choose careers that offer clear pathways for

growth and development (Okolie, 2020). Promotion opportunities not only provide financial benefits but also contribute to professional development and job satisfaction (Sahito, 2020).

Hebei University, located in China, serves as the context for this study. The university, like many others in China, plays a significant role in preparing students for the job market. Understanding the factors that influence students' career decisions at Hebei University can provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and employers to improve career guidance services and support students in making informed career choices.

Problem Statement

Despite the recognized importance of job security, working environment, and job promotion in career decisionmaking, there is a notable gap in the research specifically focused on Chinese university students, particularly those at Hebei University. Existing studies have explored these factors in various contexts globally but have not sufficiently addressed how these factors influence the career decisions of students within the unique cultural and economic environment of China (Zhai, 2019; Yao, 2020).

Students at Hebei University face a competitive job market and are influenced by the rapidly changing economic landscape in China (Hang, 2021). These dynamics necessitate a localized understanding of how job security, working environment, and job promotion opportunities impact their career decision-making processes. Without this understanding, career guidance programs may fail to address the specific needs and concerns of these students, potentially leading to suboptimal career choices and dissatisfaction (Heinrichs, 2021).

Furthermore, the transition from higher education to the workforce is a critical period for students (Akour, 2022). Misalignment between their career expectations and the realities of the job market can result in job dissatisfaction, increased turnover, and long-term career instability (Perryman, 2020). This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by providing an in-depth analysis of the impact of these key factors on the career decisions of students at Hebei University, offering both theoretical insights and practical implications.

Significance of the Study

Understanding the factors that influence career decision-making is essential for empowering students to make informed and satisfying career choices. For students at Hebei University, this knowledge can significantly enhance their ability to navigate the complexities of the job market. By recognizing the importance of job security, working environment, and job promotion, students can better align their career choices with their personal and professional goals (Newman, 2021).

This study aims to equip students with the insights needed to evaluate potential career paths critically. By understanding how job security influences long-term job satisfaction and stability, students can prioritize opportunities that offer greater employment certainty (Salim, 2022). Additionally, awareness of the working environment's impact on job satisfaction can help students seek out organizations that provide supportive and healthy work conditions, thus enhancing their overall well-being and productivity (Sunarsi, 2019).

Promotion opportunities are equally important, as they offer a pathway for career growth and development. By understanding how job promotion can influence their career trajectory, students can make strategic decisions that favor long-term career advancement and professional fulfillment (Greco, 2020). This knowledge empowers students to choose careers that not only meet their immediate needs but also support their longterm aspirations. Furthermore, this study contributes to the development of more effective career guidance programs at Hebei University. By tailoring these programs to address the specific factors that students consider most important, educators can provide more relevant and impactful support (Smith, 2023). This, in turn, can enhance students' readiness for the job market and increase their chances of securing fulfilling employment.

Ultimately, the findings of this study can lead to better career outcomes for students by providing them with the tools and knowledge to make well-informed decisions. This can reduce the likelihood of job dissatisfaction and career instability, promoting a more positive transition from university to the workforce. As such, this research not only addresses a critical gap in the literature but also has the potential to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students at Hebei University.

2.0 Research Objectives

RO1: To examine the impact of job security on student's career decision making in Hebei University.

RO2: To examine the impact of working environment on student's career decision making in Hebei University.

RO3: To examine the impact of Job Promotion on student's career decision making in Hebei University.

3.0 Research Questions

RQ1: What is the impact of job security on student's career decision making in Hebei University?

RO2: What is the impact of working environment on student's career decision making in Hebei University?

RO3: What is the impact of job promotion on student's career decision making in Hebei University?

4.0 Literature Review Job Security

Job security is a pivotal factor in career decision-making, offering assurance of continued employment without the immediate threat of job loss. Research indicates that job security is often prioritized by individuals to ensure financial stability and a secure future. For instance, a study by Gelinias (2005) defines job security as a condition

where employees feel protected from potential job loss, which significantly impacts their career satisfaction and long-term commitment. Probst (2003) further elaborates that job security involves an individual's perceived stability and continuity in their job, highlighting its importance in career decisions. Studies by Bashie (2020) also support the notion that job security is crucial for maintaining job satisfaction and organizational commitment, suggesting that students are likely to consider this factor heavily when choosing their careers.

Working Environment

The working environment encompasses the physical and psychological conditions under which employees work, significantly affecting their job satisfaction and productivity. According to Li (2019), a good working environment includes favorable physical settings, supportive management, and positive interpersonal relationships. Alam (2019) found that a positive working environment leads to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates. Similarly, Senek (2020) observed that poor working conditions often result in job dissatisfaction and increased intentions to quit. The importance of the working environment is further emphasized by studies showing that supportive and healthy work conditions can enhance employee performance and well-being, making it a critical consideration for students in their career decision-making process.

Job Promotion

Promotion opportunities play a crucial role in career planning and decision-making by providing pathways for professional growth and increased financial rewards. Jackson et al. (2020) found that students consider promotion prospects as a key factor when making career choices. The availability of career advancement opportunities not only offers financial benefits but also contributes to job satisfaction and professional development. Studies by Carrico (2019) support this view, indicating that the potential for career advancement motivates individuals to choose careers that offer clear growth pathways. The role of promotion in career decision-making is also highlighted by research showing that career advancement opportunities can significantly impact long-term career goals and professional fulfillment.

Students' Career Decision-Making

Career decision-making is a complex process influenced by a multitude of factors, including personal interests, job security, working environment, and promotion opportunities. According to the social environmental perspective, students' career choices are shaped by a combination of personal, social, cultural, and economic factors. For example, Chifamba (2019) noted that family influence, peers, and socio-economic status play significant roles in shaping students' career decisions. Al-Abri and Kooli (2017) found that financial benefits and personal interests are primary considerations for students when choosing their careers (Garriott, 2020). The interplay of these factors creates a multifaceted decision-making environment where individual aspirations and external influences converge.

Empirical studies have demonstrated that career decision-making is not solely determined by personal preferences. For instance, Siddiky (2021) argues that career choices are influenced by self-analysis and objective assessment of environmental factors. This view is supported by Osi (2015), who claims that socioeconomic status significantly impacts career decisions, although gender and school type do not. These findings suggest that students' career decisions are influenced by a complex interplay of individual, social, and environmental factors, making it essential to consider these dimensions in understanding their career decisionmaking processes.

Synthesis of Literature

The reviewed literature indicates that job security, working environment, and job promotion are significant factors influencing career decision-making. Students prioritize job security to ensure financial stability and long-term employment prospects. A positive working environment enhances job satisfaction and productivity, making it a critical consideration in career choices. Promotion opportunities motivate students to pursue careers that offer growth and development, contributing to professional fulfillment. These factors collectively shape students' career decisions by influencing their expectations, aspirations, and perceived opportunities. The interaction between individual preferences and external factors, such as family influence and social expectations, creates a complex decision-making process that requires comprehensive understanding.

5.0 Theoretical Framework Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

According to Adebusuyi (2022), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) posits that career decisions are influenced by the interplay of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks or behaviors. Outcome expectations are the anticipated results of performing particular behaviors, such as obtaining a desired job. Personal goals are the aspirations or aims that guide individuals' behavior. SCCT suggests that individuals are more likely to pursue careers in which they feel competent and expect positive outcomes (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Krumboltz and colleagues, emphasizes the role of learning experiences in career decision-making (Patton, 2021). According to SLT, career choices are influenced by

genetic endowments, environmental conditions, learning experiences, and task-approach skills. Learning experiences, which include both direct experiences and observations, shape individuals' beliefs about their capabilities and the desirability of different career options. Environmental conditions, such as labor market trends and cultural expectations, also play a significant role in shaping career decisions (Krumboltz, 1979).

6.0 Conceptual Framework

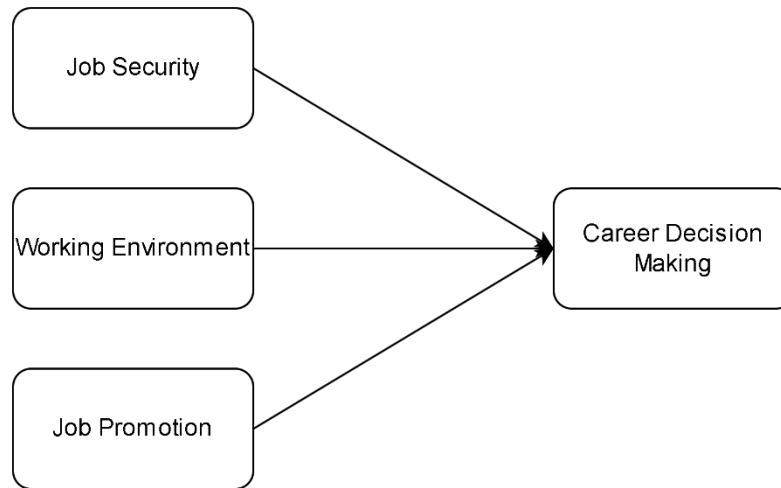


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

7.0 Hypothesis

H1: Job security has a significant impact on student's career decision making in Hebei University.

H2: Working environment has a significant impact on student's career decision making in Hebei University.

H3: Job promotion has a significant impact on student's career decision making in Hebei University.

8.0 Methodology

The methodology section outlines the research design, population and sample, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations for this study on the impact of job security, working environment, and job promotion on students' career decision-making at Hebei University.

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is quantitative, employing a structured survey methodology to rigorously assess the influence of job security, working environment, and job promotion on students' career decision-making at Hebei University. This approach is specifically tailored to measure quantifiable variables and analyze statistical relationships through the use of questionnaires, facilitating a clear, objective evaluation of how these factors impact students' career choices.

The quantitative framework is advantageous as it allows for precise, numerical analysis of data gathered from a large sample of respondents. This method ensures that findings are based on empirical evidence and statistical tests, providing a robust basis for conclusions drawn regarding the relationships between job security, working environment, job promotion, and career decision-making. The structured questionnaire, integral to this research, captures data on various aspects of these variables and their perceived impacts, enabling a comprehensive analysis of their influence on students' career decisions.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists around 26900 undergraduate students at Hebei University, who are in the process of making career decisions. A stratified random sampling technique will be used to ensure representation from various academic disciplines and years of study. The sample size will be determined based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula, which is suitable for estimating sample size for research activities. Given the total undergraduate population at Hebei University, a sample size of approximately 377 students will be targeted to ensure statistical validity and reliability. A stratified random sampling technique will be applied to ensure all segments of the student population are adequately represented in the sample. This method will help in handling the diversity within the population, categorizing subgroups based on academic year and field of study, and then randomly selecting individuals from each subgroup to be part of the sample.

Data Collection

The research will utilize a cross-sectional survey method to collect data from a diverse range of undergraduate students at Hebei University. This method is advantageous due to its efficiency in gathering a large amount of data within a limited timeframe, which is particularly useful for understanding phenomena at a specific point in time. Data will be collected through an online survey platform, which is a cost-effective and efficient method for administering surveys to many respondents dispersed across various academic disciplines. The survey link will be distributed via university communication channels to ensure a higher response rate and accurate targeting of the intended respondents. Participation in the survey will be voluntary, with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality to encourage honest and unbiased responses.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument for data collection in this study will be a structured questionnaire, meticulously designed to capture a comprehensive range of data relevant to the research objectives. To facilitate a nuanced analysis of respondents' perceptions and attitudes, each item within the questionnaire will be measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This scale enables a precise measurement of the intensity of respondents' reactions to each statement, providing valuable insights into their experiences and opinions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the survey will be analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics will provide a basic understanding of the data distribution and central tendencies, while inferential statistics, including regression analysis and multiple correlation analysis, will be used to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables.

Research Ethics

Informed consent will be obtained from all participants prior to their participation in the study. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any penalty. The confidentiality of participants' responses will be strictly maintained. Data will be anonymized, and individual responses will not be identifiable in any reports or publications resulting from this study. The study will adhere to the ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects.

9.0 Data Analysis 9.1 Reliability and Validity

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Constructs

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Career Decision Making	0.936	0.938	0.948	0.723
Job Promotion	0.716	0.748	0.842	0.643
Job Security	0.697	0.788	0.812	0.498
Working Environment	0.740	0.822	0.821	0.431

Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated high internal consistency with the Career Decision Making construct achieving an excellent score of 0.936, indicative of strong reliability among the items within this construct. The constructs for Job Promotion and Working Environment displayed acceptable reliability levels with scores of 0.716 and 0.740 respectively, while Job Security showed marginal acceptability at 0.697. Complementing these findings, the composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c) reinforced the internal consistency; Career Decision Making presented exceptionally high reliability (rho_a = 0.938, rho_c = 0.948). Job Promotion, Job Security, and Working Environment also showed good reliability, with rho_a values of 0.748, 0.788, and 0.822, and rho_c values of 0.842, 0.812, and 0.821 respectively. However, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results provided a nuanced view of construct validity. While Career Decision Making exhibited robust construct validity with an AVE of 0.723, indicating a significant capture of variance in its indicators relative to measurement error, Job Promotion showed a somewhat lower but acceptable AVE of 0.643. In contrast, Job Security and Working Environment recorded AVEs below the advisable threshold of 0.5 (0.498 and 0.431, respectively), suggesting that these constructs might not adequately capture the intended theoretical dimensions due to their closer variance due to measurement error. These findings imply that while the survey constructs generally demonstrate good reliability, the validity of certain constructs, particularly Job Security and Working Environment, may require further refinement to ensure their effectiveness in capturing the complex dynamics of students' career decision-making processes.

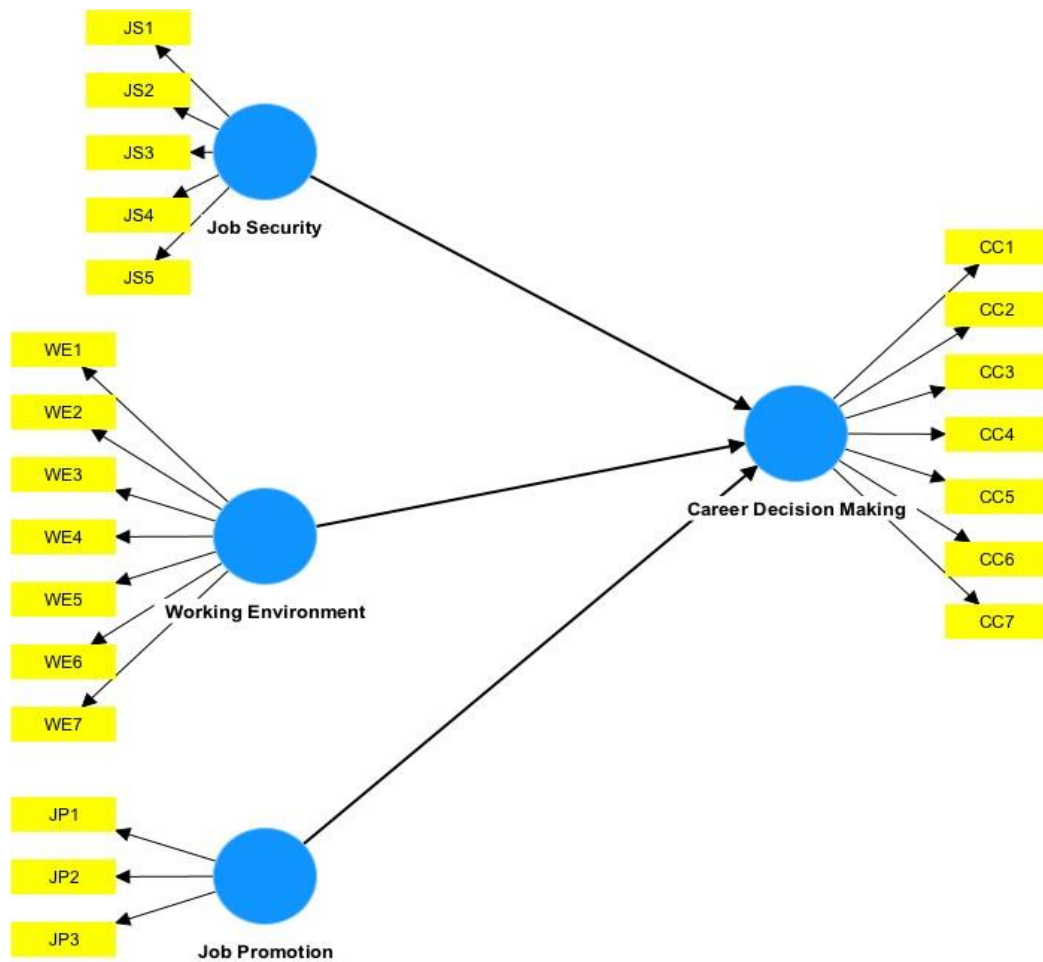


Figure 2: SEM Diagram

9.2 Discriminant Validity

	Career Decision Making	Job Promotion	Job Security	Working Environment
Career Decision Making				
Job Promotion	0.866			
Job Security	0.657	0.711		
Working Environment	0.571	0.648	0.700	

Table 2: Heterotrait - monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

The discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio matrix, a contemporary measure of the distinctiveness of different constructs. An HTMT value below 0.85 is generally indicative of good discriminant validity, affirming that the constructs are sufficiently distinct. The HTMT analysis revealed that most construct pairs demonstrated strong discriminant validity. Specifically, the pairings of Career Decision Making with Job Security (HTMT = 0.657) and Working Environment (HTMT = 0.571), as well as Job Promotion with Job Security (HTMT = 0.711) and Working Environment (HTMT = 0.648), and between Job Security and Working Environment (HTMT = 0.700), all exhibited values well below the 0.85 threshold, confirming their conceptual distinctiveness. However, the Career Decision Making and Job Promotion pair showed a ratio of 0.866, slightly exceeding the conservative threshold, suggesting a potential overlap that could warrant further scrutiny or refinement to ensure these constructs are conceptually distinct within the scope of the study.

9.3 Fornell-Larcker criterion

Table 3: Fornell Larcker Data

	Career Decision Making	Job Promotion	Job Security	Working Environment
Career Decision Making	0.850			
Job Promotion	0.715	0.802		
Job Security	0.560	0.514	0.705	
Working Environment	0.503	0.495	0.508	0.657

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was employed to assess discriminant validity among the constructs in this study, ensuring that each construct was distinctly measured. This criterion mandates that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should exceed the correlations between it and any other construct. The analysis revealed that the diagonal values, representing the square roots of the AVEs, were 0.850 for Career Decision Making, 0.802 for Job Promotion, 0.705 for Job Security, and 0.657 for Working Environment. These values all exceeded their respective inter-construct correlations, substantiating the discriminant validity of the constructs. Specifically, Career Decision Making exhibited a correlation of 0.715 with Job Promotion, 0.560 with Job Security, and 0.503 with Working Environment; Job Promotion correlated with Job Security and Working Environment at 0.514 and 0.495, respectively; and Job Security correlated with Working Environment at 0.508. Although the correlation between Career Decision Making and Job Promotion approached the threshold, indicating a modest overlap, all constructs adhered to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, affirming their distinctiveness and validating the discriminant validity of the model employed in this research.

9.3 Hypotheses Testing

Table 3: Path coefficient data

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Job Promotion -> Career Decision Making	0.540	0.539	0.048	11.251	0.000
Job Security -> Career Decision Making	0.219	0.219	0.046	4.808	0.000
Working Environment -> Career Decision Making	0.125	0.130	0.047	2.631	0.009

The analysis demonstrated that Job Promotion exerts the most substantial impact on Career Decision Making, evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.540, with a closely corresponding sample mean of 0.539 and a low standard deviation of 0.048. This relationship was statistically significant, with a high t-statistic of 11.251 and a p-value of 0.000, robustly supporting the hypothesis that Job Promotion is a crucial factor in influencing students' career decisions. Additionally, Job Security also showed a positive influence on Career Decision Making, albeit with a lesser magnitude, indicated by a path coefficient of 0.219 and a similar sample mean, alongside a t-statistic of 4.808 and a p-value of 0.000, affirming its significant yet moderate role. Lastly, the influence of Working Environment, though the weakest among the tested variables, was still significant with a path coefficient of 0.125, a sample mean of 0.130, and a t-statistic of 2.631 with a p-value of 0.009, confirming that a positive working environment modestly contributes to Career Decision Making. Collectively, these findings validate the proposed model and highlight the differential impacts of job-related factors on the career decisionmaking processes of university students, with Job Promotion emerging as the most influential factor.

10.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing career decisionmaking among students at Hebei University. By focusing on job security, working environment, and job promotion opportunities, this study have identified key elements that significantly impact students' career choices.

This research findings indicate that job promotion opportunities exert the most substantial influence on career decision-making. Students are motivated by clear pathways for career growth and the potential for professional advancement, highlighting the importance of organizations providing visible and attainable promotion prospects. Job security, while also significant, plays a moderate role, underscoring the need for stable

employment conditions to ensure financial stability and long-term job satisfaction. The working environment, though the least influential among the three factors, still contributes positively to career decisions, emphasizing the need for supportive and healthy workplace conditions.

These insights are crucial for educators, policymakers, and employers who aim to enhance career guidance services and support students in making informed career choices. By addressing the specific needs and concerns identified in this study, stakeholders can improve the alignment between students' career expectations and the realities of the job market, thereby promoting job satisfaction and reducing turnover rates.

Overall, this research fills a critical gap in the literature by providing localized insights into the career decisionmaking processes of Chinese university students, particularly those at Hebei University. The practical implications of these findings can lead to better career outcomes for students, supporting their transition from university to the workforce and contributing to their long-term professional fulfillment.

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