

Factors affecting the employment prospects of students majoring in fashion performance in universities in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province

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Abstract The employment prospects of fashion performance students are critical for the sustainable development of Guangzhou's fashion and cultural industries. Based on human capital theory, social capital theory, and career construction theory, this study establishes a tripartite framework comprising individual competencies, institutional support, and industrial environment. Using a questionnaire survey and stratified random sampling, 200 valid samples were collected and analyzed via reliability, validity, correlation, and multiple linear regression analyses. Results show that curriculum design, institutional resources, institutional reputation, and networking resources all have significant positive effects on employment prospects. Networking resources and curriculum design are the core driving factors, while institutional resources are the main constraint. Theoretical and practical implications are proposed to improve talent training and employment quality for fashion performance majors.

Keywords: Fashion performance major, Employment prospects, Human capital, Institutional support, Industrial environment, Career readiness.

1. INTRODUCTION

The employment of college graduates has long been a core issue in China's higher education development and global talent resource allocation (Li et al., 2023). The fundamental task of higher education talent cultivation is closely linked to the match between professional talent output and market demand, which directly determines a discipline's social survival and development, as well as universities' social reputation. Applied art majors such as fashion performance are closely connected with talent training and industrial development. Their employment orientation is not only tied to graduates' career planning but also to the quality upgrading of China's fashion industry. In the context of the national strategy to develop cultural and creative industries, the employment quality of fashion performance majors has become an important indicator of the industry's talent reserve capacity (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2022).

With the rapid digitalization of the global fashion industry, diversified consumer demands and intensified market competition have

drastically transformed the industry's talent requirements. Beyond strong stage performance capabilities, talents are expected to master complementary skills such as digital marketing, brand communication, and virtual show design (Wang & Zhao, 2024). This shift has widened the skill gap between traditional fashion performance graduates and market demands, making it imperative to re-examine the influencing factors of their employment prospects.

Guangzhou is a pivotal city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and a major hub for the fashion and apparel industry in southern China, with a robust industrial foundation and well-developed industrial chains. As one of the core cities in China's "fashion industry triangle", Guangzhou's fashion industry contributes over 300 billion yuan to the regional economy annually, creating a large demand for professional talents. Many Guangzhou universities have established fashion performance and related majors. Despite curriculum optimization and school-enterprise cooperation, students' employment prospects have not been effectively

Table 3.1 Population and Sample Distribution of Fashion Performance Majors in Guangzhou Universities.

Graduation Status	Population (Students)	Proportion (%)	Sample (Students)
Current Student (Junior/Senior)	164	40	80
Recent Graduate(≤ 1 year)	82	20	40
Current Student (Junior/Senior)	123	30	60
Recent Graduate(≤ 1 year)	41	10	20
Total	410	100	200

Sample size: 200 valid respondents (95% confidence level, 5% margin of error).

Sample distribution:

- Undergraduate current students: 80
- Undergraduate recent graduates: 40
- Vocational current students: 60
- Vocational recent graduates: 20

Inclusion criteria: Full-time students or recent graduates (within one year) in Guangzhou; at least two years of major study; voluntary participation and completed questionnaire.

6.3 Research Tools

A 5-point Likert scale was adapted from mature scales and revised by five experts. The questionnaire includes 28 items measuring five constructs:

- Curriculum design (6 items)
- Institutional resources (6 items)
- Institutional reputation (5 items)
- Networking resources (6 items)
- Employment prospects (5 items)

Validity and reliability: IOC=0.80-1.00; Cronbach's α =0.832-0.921; EFA and CFA were conducted to verify construct validity. Institutional resources and networking resources were set as distinct dimensions to avoid content overlap.

6.4 Data Analysis

This study employed quantitative statistical analysis using SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 24.0. Five analytical steps were conducted:

1. Item-level analysis: Assessed mean scores of each indicator to identify strengths and weaknesses.
2. Pearson correlation analysis: Examined relationships between independent variables and employment prospects.
3. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): Verified

construct validity, discriminant validity, and convergent validity.

4. Multicollinearity test (VIF): Ensured no serious collinearity among independent variables.

5. Multiple linear regression analysis: Tested the predictive effects and verified the research model.

Control variables: Gender, family background, academic performance.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive statistics show that the mean score of institutional reputation is the highest (3.78), followed by curriculum design (3.65), employment prospects (3.55), networking resources (3.51), and institutional resources (3.42), indicating that students have the highest recognition of the school's professional brand but the lowest satisfaction with practical resources.

EFA and CFA confirmed good construct validity. All factor loadings were above 0.70, AVE > 0.50, CR > 0.70, indicating good convergent and discriminant validity.

Multicollinearity test: VIF values ranged from 1.32 to 1.68, less than 5, indicating no serious multicollinearity.

Correlation analysis shows that all four independent variables are significantly positively correlated with employment prospects ($p < 0.01$). Networking resources have the strongest correlation ($r = 0.589$), followed by curriculum design ($r = 0.523$), institutional reputation ($r = 0.487$), and institutional resources ($r = 0.412$).

Regression analysis indicates that the model is statistically significant ($F = 206.829$, $p < 0.001$), with $R^2 = 0.677$, meaning the four factors can explain 67.7% of the variance in employment prospects. The standardized regression coefficients are: networking resources ($\beta = 0.345$), curriculum design ($\beta = 0.312$), institutional reputation ($\beta = 0.280$), and institutional resources ($\beta = 0.250$). All hypotheses are supported.

Item-level analysis shows that students have high recognition of the development potential of the major in Guangzhou and the school's management transparency. However, they have low satisfaction with internship opportunities, clear career development paths, and

professional exchange support. Excessive non-performance-related tasks and evaluation pressure also increase the training burden of students.

7.2 DISCUSSION

H1: Networking resources exert the strongest influence on employment prospects, consistent with the relationship-driven fashion industry. Alumni networks, industry connections, and referrals provide exclusive opportunities and significantly improve employment success (Lin, 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Weng & Hu, 2010).

H2: Curriculum design is a core determinant of employability. Industry-aligned, practice-oriented courses effectively reduce skill mismatches and enhance graduates' ability to adapt to market demands, especially under digital transformation (Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011; Zhang et al., 2023; Zhou & Chen, 2023).

H3: School reputation acts as a critical quality signal in recruitment. It helps graduates secure initial opportunities and employer recognition, though its effect diminishes over time as actual competence becomes more important (Brewer et al., 1999; Spence, 2022; Colquitt et al., 2013).

H4: School resources represent a key constraint. Insufficient internships, shallow school-enterprise cooperation, and limited practical facilities weaken hands-on ability and remain the weakest supportive factor for employment (Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018; Song & Zhao, 2022).

8. CONCLUSION

Curriculum design, institutional resources, institutional reputation, and networking resources all significantly and positively affect the employment prospects of fashion performance majors in Guangzhou. Networking resources and curriculum design are the core driving factors, while institutional resources represent the main constraint.

To improve employment prospects, universities should optimize industry-oriented curricula, build high-quality internship bases, deepen school-enterprise cooperation, expand alumni and industry networks, and strengthen career guidance services.

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