



# The Affecting Factors of the Non-agricultural Employment of Returned Migrant Workers in China from the Perspective of Gender Differences

Peng Shen<sup>1</sup>, Yu Li<sup>1</sup>

*School of Management, Guizhou University, Guiyang 550025, Guizhou, People's Republic of China*

---

## ABSTRACT

---

Based on the survey data of returned migrant workers to six provinces and municipality, the paper uses the Probit regression model to explore the factors that affect the employment of returned migrant workers of different gender. The result shows that the following key factors influence the non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers, named as the age factor, the education degree, the times of training, the distance between hometown and the county town, the existing deposits. Meanwhile, the two factors which are “whether there are village cadres or not in lineal relatives” and “the channel to employment” have a significant impact on non-agricultural employment for male returned migrant workers; the four factors-the marital status, the number of family children, the relationship with the village cadres and the channel to employment-have a significant impact on the non-agricultural employment of female returned migrant workers. Therefore, the paper puts forward some concrete and targeted measures for the returned migrant workers of different genders.

**Keywords:** Gender Differences; Non-agricultural Employment; Returned Migrant Workers; Probit Regression Model

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, due to industrial gradient transfer and regional economic development, the central and western regions of China are working to “compete” for the rural labor force; furthermore, the first generation of migrant workers is in the critical stage of life. Under

such situations, there is the large numbers of migrant workers return home and realize employment, so it is the first choice for returned migrant workers to find an stable non-agricultural job in his hometown. Therefore, it is a new phenomenon and a new trend in the transfer of rural labor to achieve the stable non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers in their hometowns.

On the basis of the existing research results, this paper introduces the gender perspective into the study of non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers, and systematically analyzes the factors of affecting the non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers, which provides an inspiration for the formulating of public policy on the stability of employment of migrant workers.

---

Received: April 8, 2017; Reviewd: May 15, 2017; Accepted: May 25, 2017.

First Author: Peng Shen, Doctor, Professor of School of Management, Guizhou University, research direction: Management of agricultural economy.

Corresponding Author: Yu Li, Master Degree Candidate of School of Management, Guizhou University, research direction: management of agricultural economy. E-mail: 931047511@qq.com.

## 2. Methods

The data used in the paper is the survey data of the employment of returned migrant workers in the summer of 2016. Because the explanatory variables have discrete features, the paper selects the Probit probability model which is effective for the processing of multi-purpose discrete variable data, so the following linear measurement model is proposed:

$$Y^{o,m,f} = \sum_{i=1}^5 \alpha_i X_i + \sum_{j=1}^6 \beta_j Z_j + \sum_{k=1}^3 \delta_k W_k + \varepsilon$$

Here Y is the dependent variable; o / m / f represents the total of returned migrant workers, male returned migrant workers and female returned migrant workers respectively; X is the dimension of human capital factors, Z is the social capital factor dimension, W is the economy Capital factor dimension:  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\delta$  is the regression coefficient;  $\varepsilon$  is the random disturbance term.

According to the scholars' preliminary research, the paper holds that stable non-agricultural employment is a state, which refers to the stability of time, place, wages and other aspects of stability. Therefore, the explanatory variables of the employment stability in the model are selected from three aspects: wage income, labor contract and employment place. The explanatory variables of the

model include human capital factors, social capital factors and economic capital factors.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Summary statistics

The distribution of the questionnaire is male and married. Among them, male migrant workers have 807 people, accounting for 64.4% of the total sample; female migrant workers have 446 people, accounting for 35.6%. The age structure of returned migrant workers mainly distributes from 30-49 years old. The education level is mainly middle school degree, and female returned migrant workers are lower than male. 67.4% of returned migrant workers don't have a training experience, among which male returned migrant workers accounts for 69.3%, and female returned migrant workers accounts for 64.1%. 92.5% of returned migrant workers do not have any skill certificate, and the proportion of male returned migrant workers who have a skill certificate accounts for 8.7%, while the proportion of female accounts for only 5.4%. It can be seen that the skill of returned migrant workers is also generally low, which may be related to the low education of migrant workers, most of them can only engage in simple manual labor, so that their professional skills are not high.

### 3.2 Estimated results analysis

**Table 1. Regression results on influential factors of the stable non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers**

	Model one		Model two		Model three		Model one		Model two		Model three	
	male migrant workers						female migrant workers					
	Wage income		labor contract		employment place		Wage income		labor contract		employment place	
	coefficient	Marginal effect	coefficient	Marginal effect	coefficient	Marginal effect	coefficient	Marginal effect	coefficient	Marginal effect	coefficient	Marginal effect
Age	-0.005	0.929	-0.119* *	0.040	0.153* *	0.022	0.169* *	0.062	0.075	0.365	0.429* **	0.000
Marriage	-0.197	0.106	0.07	0.504	-0.012	0.927	-0.278	0.130	0.299*	0.088	0.134	0.549
Degree of Education	-0.156** *	0.003	0.199** *	0.000	-0.062	0.263	0.055	0.440	0.179* **	0.008	-0.148 *	0.079
Training times	-0.149** *	0.003	0.149** *	0.003	-0.047	0.396	-0.158* *	0.029	0.169* *	0.015	0.175*	0.065
Children under 16 years of age	-0.019	0.785	-0.125*	0.075	0.116	0.140	-0.184* **	0.044	0.014	0.867	0.036	0.757
Number of persons over 65 years old	0.019	0.795	0.005	0.941	-0.085	0.290	-0.058	0.576	-0.092	0.346	-0.080	0.541
Village cadres in relatives	0.282*	0.055	0.099	0.503	0.370* *	0.015	0.074	0.703	0.186	0.318	0.171	0.434
Relationship with village cadres	-0.048	0.319	-0.035	0.435	-0.049	0.326	-0.058	0.387	-0.14* *	0.022	-0.089	0.254
Work channel	-0.046	0.350	0.087*	0.063	-0.046	0.366	-0.113*	0.067	0.021	0.716	-0.002	0.971
Distance from county town	0.146** *	0.007	0.130** *	0.005	-0.188 ***	0.000	0.105	0.144	0.166* **	0.006	0.009	0.901
Current deposits	0.016	0.550	0.043*	0.099	-0.133 ***	0.000	-0.025	0.494	-0.009	0.801	-0.138 ***	0.003

Note: \*\*\*represents significant at the 1% level, \*\*stands at 5% level, \*stands at 10% level.

### (1) Human capital factors

It can be seen from the table 1 that the older of returned migrant workers choose the place of employment closer to home, the gap of wage income of female migrant workers between before and after the returning home is smaller, and the time of the labor contract signed between the male migrant workers and the labor unit is shorter. The marital status is positively correlated with the labor contract of female returned migrant workers but has no effect on male. It is not difficult to think that returned migrant workers who are mostly 30-49 years old, have adapted to the home life & environment and have to take care of their children and family. Because of that, they have lower requirements on the work environment, welfare and career prospects. Therefore, they would like to choose the employment place closer to their home. Coupled with their low level of skills, their employment is dominated by short-term work. Moreover, married women take on greater family responsibilities and face greater risks and costs when changing jobs, so the returned migrant workers who are married and women are more inclined to have a stable job to avoid the uncertainty risks coming from job. The employers are more willing to sign long-term contracts with them.

Education degree and training times are positively related to the signing of labor contracts for all returned migrant workers, and negatively related to wage income after returning home. There is a negative correlation between the educational degree of female returned migrant workers and the place of employment, and the training times is positively related to the place of employment. Due to the hometown environment and the limitations of enterprise, the employability of high education of migrant workers cannot be effectively exploited after returning home, resulting in changes in wage income. For female returned migrant workers, the higher the education which it is equivalent to the flow of labor to provide a pass, the greater the possibility of stabilizing non-agricultural employment. Moreover, with the increasing of training times, returned migrant workers have a certain amount of specific human capital, and they need to maintain the stability of employment in order to achieve the cumulative effect of human capital. Furthermore, the number of children is negatively correlated with the labor contract of male returned migrant workers, and there is a significant negative correlation with the wage income of female returned migrant workers. The number of elderly people had no effect.

### (2) Social capital factors

For male returned migrant workers, the more the number

of village cadres in the lineal relatives, the greater the change in the wage income. This may be related to the village cadres who advise male returned migrant workers to go out for employment. As for female returned migrant workers, they can get more employment information because of their close relationship with the village cadres, so the term of the labor contract is relatively longer. It can be seen that the traditional agricultural society is a “kinship society” and “acquaintance society” which can bring people to trust, mutual benefits and other benefits. The number of job opportunities of returned migrant workers depends, in part, on how much of their social capital.

The channel for returned migrant workers to find jobs is positively related to labor contracts, and negatively related to wage income. This shows that the wage gap of returned migrant workers who achieve employment through strong relational social capital is smaller before and after their return, but the time of labor contracts signed with the labor unit is shorter. It can be seen that strong interpersonal relationships can make returned migrant workers find a higher wage job after returning home, but there is no positive effect on the signing of the labor contract. Therefore, the own skill of returned migrant workers is a key factor affecting the stability of employment.

### (3) Economic capital factors

“The distance from the hometown to the county town” is positively related to the wages and the labor contract of the returned migrant workers, and negatively related to the employment place of returned migrant workers. This shows that the farther the work place far away from the county town, the smaller the change in the wage income of migrant workers after returning home, the longer the time of the labor contract. If the distance to the county town is relatively close and the transportation is convenient, the occupational mobility of returned migrant workers will tend to be centered on the hometown and spread to the surrounding areas, and the stability of employment is poor. The type of occupation of migrant workers before and after returning is also little difference, and the changes of wage income are relatively small. They are also more loyal to a job and have a longer term for a labor contract.

Furthermore, the more the number of existing deposits of returned migrant workers, the more they likely to choose the place of employment away from hometown. This is mainly due to the deposit balance of returned migrant workers, especially for male migrant workers. If they have more deposits, they have greater autonomy in the choice of employment place, and tend to go out to find their own career. Therefore, raising the minimum wage is still the main measure to reduce the frequent turnover of returned

migrant workers.

#### 4. Conclusions and Discussion

The results show that the age factor, the degree of education, the times of training, the distance from the hometown to county town and the existing deposit are always the key factors influencing the stable non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers. For male migrant workers, the lineal relatives of the village cadres and work channels have a significant impact. For female migrant workers, marriage, children under 16 years of age, relationship with village cadres, work channels also significantly affect their non-farm employment stability.

At the same time, we should pay attention to the following facts: (1) Marital status affects the signing of labor contracts for female migrant workers, but it has no effect for male migrant workers. (2) For female returned migrant workers, education degree and employment place are negatively correlated; the times of training and employment place are positively correlated. It shows that the higher degree of education can be help to sign long-term labor contracts with employers, but also make returned migrant workers have more choices for the future, which increases the mobility of employment. So training can accumulate special human capital and increase the stability of employment. (3) The number of children always affects the wages and labor contract of returned migrant workers, the impact of the number of the elderly is not. (4) "Whether there are village cadres or not in lineal relatives" affects the employment stability of male returned migrant workers, and the relationship with village cadres affects the employment stability of female returned migrant workers. (5) The distance between the hometown and county town is positively related to wage income and labor contract of returned migrant workers, and negative correlation with employment place.

So it can be seen that the factors that affect the stability of non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers are different. Firstly, it is necessary to increase the vocational skills of returned migrant workers, but also

pay attention to improve the minimum wage of migrant workers. Secondly, the organizational atmosphere of the non-agricultural employment of returned migrant workers should be improved to optimize employment environment. Thirdly, it is urgent to vigorously develop the county economy and promote the upgrading of local industries to create compatible conditions of stable employment for the returned migrant workers.

#### Acknowledgement

This paper is supported by the following fund project: State Social Science Fund Project (No.15BRK027).

#### References

- [1]Huang Q. *Employment stability and wage effects of urban migrant workers*[J]. *Population Research*, 2009, (3): 53-62.
- [2]Kou E H, Liu B H. *Employment stability and wage gap of migrant workers in the process of urbanization*[J]. *Quantitative, Economic, Technical and Economic Research*, 2013, (7): 3-19.
- [3]Zhou C. *Employment stability difference between migrant workers and urban workers*[J]. *Population and Economy*, 2014, (6): 69-78.
- [4]Li X M. *Study on the influencing factors of stable employment of migrant workers in the new urbanization process*[J]. *Rural Economy*, 2014, (12): 100-104.
- [5]Luo C L. *Study on employment stability and wage income gap*[J]. *Population Science of China*, 2008, (4): 1-21+95.
- [6]Lin L Y, Zhu N. *Income effects and gender differences of occupational mobility of floating population - An Empirical Study Based on Fujian*[J]. *Population and Economy*, 2014, (2): 726-732.
- [7]Song Y P. *Gender differences in social integration: An Empirical Analysis of job search time of floating population*[J]. *Population Research*, 2010, (6): 10-18.
- [8]Lv X L, Yao X G. *Gender differences in the types of occupational mobility and income effects of migrant workers*[J]. *Economist*, 2013, (6): 57-68.