

# Why Do Graduates Turn Away from Private Firms? Examining the Roles of Perceived Job Security, Perceived Management Compliance, Perceived Humanistic Care, and Organisational Attractiveness in the Chinese Context

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**Abstract:** At a time when private enterprises have become the principal absorbers of university graduates in China, an increasing number of young people continue to place their career aspirations in the public sector. This contrast has emerged as a salient contradiction within China's employment structure. Focusing on the question of why graduates avoid private enterprises, this study develops a research model grounded in signalling theory, incorporating perceived humanistic care, perceived management compliance, perceived job security, organisational attractiveness, and intention to seek employment in private enterprises. The model is empirically tested using data collected from 446 Chinese final-year university students and recent graduates within two years of graduation. The findings indicate that all three forms of perception significantly enhance graduates' intentions to pursue employment in private enterprises, and that each exerts its influence through organisational attractiveness as a mediating mechanism. Among them, perceived job security has the strongest effect, followed by perceived management compliance, while perceived humanistic care also plays a meaningful role and should not be overlooked. The results suggest that graduates are not inherently resistant to private enterprises; rather, what they seek to avoid is a career starting point characterised by uncertainty, disorder, and a lack of respect. This study not only sheds light on the formation mechanism of employment intentions towards private enterprises in the Chinese context, but also offers a more targeted explanatory framework and practical guidance for enhancing the attractiveness of private firms to young talent.

**Keywords:** Intention to Seek Employment in Private Enterprises; Recent Graduates; Signalling Theory; Corporate Humanistic Care; Job Security

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## Preface

This paper is dedicated to all university students in China who continue to smile despite struggling within an intensely

competitive and exhausting job market.

You are hardworking and self-assured, though at times the accelerating pace of the era may leave you feeling overwhelmed and breathless. Even so, I hope you will continue to believe in yourselves and trust that life will, in time, reward wisdom with the happiness it deserves. There is no need to take off Kong Yiji's long gown; it is your own battle robe.

This paper is written for you, with the hope that one day it may, in some way, serve you.

## 1. Research Background

Private enterprises in China have become one of the largest sources of employment for young people. According to publicly available data released by the National Development and Reform Commission, by the end of May 2025, the number of registered private economic entities in China had reached 185 million, accounting for 96.76% of all market entities nationwide. The private sector contributes more than 50% of national tax revenue, over 60% of gross domestic product, more than 70% of technological innovation outcomes, and over 80% of urban employment, while also encompassing more than 92% of the country's national high-tech enterprises (National Development and Reform Commission [NDRC], 2025). In addition, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce noted in its 2025 report on the "Hundred Cities, Thousand Schools, Ten Thousand Enterprises" employment promotion initiative that, over the past five years, graduates entering private enterprises have accounted for more than half of those whose employment destinations had been confirmed across various localities (All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce [ACFIC], 2025). These figures indicate that private enterprises are not merely a supplementary component of China's employment system; rather, they constitute one of the most important employment destinations for university graduates. The difficulty, however, is that their capacity to absorb labour in quantitative terms has not naturally translated into a preferred career option in the minds of graduates. For many young job seekers, private enterprises are often associated with fast-paced work routines, relatively small organisational scale, greater flexibility in rule implementation, and uncertain prospects for job retention. As a result, although private firms offer a large number of vacancies, they do not necessarily possess a level of talent attractiveness commensurate with the volume of positions available.

The continued expansion in the supply of university graduates has made this divergence in employment preferences increasingly visible. The Ministry of Education disclosed that the number of university graduates in the Class of 2025 was expected to reach 12.22 million, an increase of 430,000 over the previous year, marking the continuation of a multi-year trend in which graduate numbers have remained above the ten-million threshold (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China [MOE], 2024a, 2024b). As the graduate population continues to grow, employment choices have not dispersed evenly across different types of organisations; instead, a pronounced preference for the public sector has emerged. An analytical article published in 2026 by the Beijing Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, drawing on Zhaopin's 2024 annual survey, reported that the proportion of fresh graduates aspiring to enter state-owned organisations had risen from 47.9% in 2018 to 73.1% in 2024, whereas the proportion choosing private enterprises had fallen from 20.9% to 12.5% over the same period (Beijing Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, 2026). In its deployment plan for graduate employment for the Class of 2025, the Ministry of Education called for greater efforts to expand market-oriented and socially driven employment channels, to deepen the implementation of the "Hundred Cities, Thousand Schools, Ten Thousand Enterprises" initiative, and to increase job opportunities in private enterprises and small and medium-sized firms (MOE, 2024b). This policy expression indirectly suggests a substantial gap between the distribution of graduate destinations and the distribution of employment opportunities in the labour market. Put differently, what stands before fresh graduates is not simply the question of whether jobs exist, but whether they are willing to place the starting point of their careers in private enterprises.

## 2. Research Background

This study seeks to address the relatively weak willingness of Chinese fresh graduates to pursue employment in private enterprises by identifying the specific factors that influence whether private firms are considered a viable starting point for their careers, and by further examining how these factors enter graduates' job choice evaluations through organisational

attractiveness. In its employment deployment plan for the Class of 2025, the Ministry of Education explicitly called for stronger support for small and medium-sized enterprises in absorbing employment, the implementation of targeted recruitment initiatives encouraging private enterprises to hire university graduates, and the encouragement of higher education institutions across different regions to proactively align with the talent needs of leading technology firms, gazelle firms, and specialised and sophisticated SMEs that produce novel and unique products (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China [MOE], 2024). Subsequently, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Finance jointly issued a notice calling for the expansion of enterprises as the primary channel for employment and for the continued organisation of initiatives such as Private Enterprise Recruitment Month, city-level joint recruitment programmes, and online campus recruitment activities, with the aim of promoting a fuller transition of university graduates into market-oriented positions (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China et al., 2025). Against this policy backdrop, the present study aims to identify, through empirical investigation, the conditions under which fresh graduates' acceptance of and willingness to choose private enterprises may be strengthened, thereby providing evidence to help alleviate the excessive concentration of graduate destinations in public-sector institutions and to promote a more balanced distribution of employment choices.

### 3. Hypotheses Development

For fresh graduates, whether a private enterprise is considered a viable employment option often depends first on how they imagine they would be treated after entering the organisation. Signalling theory in recruitment research suggests that job seekers do not have direct access to the internal workings of an organisation and therefore rely on external cues released by the employer to infer what their future work experience may be like. Among these cues, expectations regarding whether employees will be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness are especially influential in shaping applicants' willingness to move closer to an organisation (Jones et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2016). This line of reasoning closely corresponds to the psychological judgment captured by perceived humanistic care. If fresh graduates believe that a private enterprise places greater value on individual feelings in its organisational climate, employee treatment, and day-to-day management practices, and is more inclined to treat newcomers with respect rather than in a draining or instrumental manner, they are more likely to regard that enterprise as an appropriate place to begin their careers. Research on Generation Z job seekers likewise shows that young applicants are concerned not only with pay and benefits, but also with workplace atmosphere, the sincerity of interpersonal relations, and whether the organisation conveys an ethical and humane way of treating people. Such non-material attributes enter directly into the formation of employment intentions (Nguyen Ngoc et al., 2022). On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Perceived humanistic care positively influences Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises.

Beyond whether an organisation appears caring, fresh graduates also assess whether a private enterprise operates according to clear and acceptable rules. Applicant reaction research has long indicated that job seekers form an overall evaluation of organisational fairness on the basis of procedures used in recruitment, selection, and management. Procedural justice, information transparency, and consistency in rule implementation all enter into their assessment of organisational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions (Gilliland, 1993). Subsequent studies have further shown a stable relationship between perceptions of organisational justice and applicants' attractiveness evaluations, with procedural fairness in particular being clearly associated with whether job seekers are willing to approach a given organisation (Bustaman et al., 2020). In the context of job seeking in Chinese private enterprises, perceived management compliance should not be understood narrowly as legal compliance alone. Rather, it refers to graduates' overall judgment regarding whether the enterprise manages people in a standardised manner, whether institutional boundaries are clear, and whether managerial behaviour is applied consistently. For fresh graduates who are only beginning to enter the labour market, a private enterprise that is seen as having clear systems, non-arbitrary management, and recruitment and employment practices that are less dependent on personal preference is likely to be regarded as more credible and, therefore, more likely to be included in their set of preferred

employment options. On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Perceived management compliance positively influences Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises.

The choice of a career starting point is also closely related to applicants' assessment of job retention risk and their sense of occupational stability. Research on employer attractiveness and job choice preferences has repeatedly noted that organisational stability, job security, and confidence in continued employment are among the organisational attributes frequently considered by job seekers, particularly those entering the labour market for the first time (Jain & Bhatt, 2015; Mauger & Bryant-Lees, 2022). Studies focusing on university students and young job seekers further indicate that job security, together with benefits, career development, and organisational reputation, is commonly treated as one of the key criteria for judging whether an employer is worth joining (Kumari & Saini, 2018). In the context of Chinese fresh graduates considering employment in private enterprises, perceived job security extends beyond a narrow concern about layoffs. It also encompasses whether the position is likely to be interrupted, whether the beginning of one's career is likely to be marked by repeated job-hopping, and whether entry into the enterprise can provide a relatively stable occupational foothold. If graduates believe that a private enterprise can offer a reassuring expectation of continued employment, their resistance towards such firms is likely to decline, while their willingness to apply for and accept employment is more likely to increase. On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived job security positively influences Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises.

Organisational attractiveness provides a psychological transmission mechanism through which the above three forms of perception are translated into employment intentions. Recruitment research generally suggests that job seekers do not immediately decide whether to apply to or join an organisation upon receiving cues about its attributes. Rather, they first develop an overall judgment as to whether the organisation is worth approaching, and this general evaluation is commonly conceptualised as organisational attractiveness. Relevant studies indicate that applicants' interpretations of organisational signals concerning respect, fairness, values, and working conditions first shape their evaluation of organisational attractiveness, which then further influences job pursuit intentions and application behaviour (Ahamad et al., 2023; Khan & Muktar, 2020). In other words, fresh graduates may become more willing to choose a particular private enterprise not simply because they perceive one isolated positive characteristic, but because these favourable attributes accumulate into an overall sense of liking and willingness to approach the organisation, which is then converted into a clearer employment preference. Following this logic, perceived humanistic care, perceived management compliance, and perceived job security are expected not only to enhance graduates' perceptions of organisational attractiveness towards private enterprises, but also for organisational attractiveness itself to increase their intention to seek employment in such firms and to mediate the relationships between the three perceptions and employment intention. On this basis, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Perceived humanistic care positively influences organisational attractiveness.

H5: Perceived management compliance positively influences organisational attractiveness.

H6: Perceived job security positively influences organisational attractiveness.

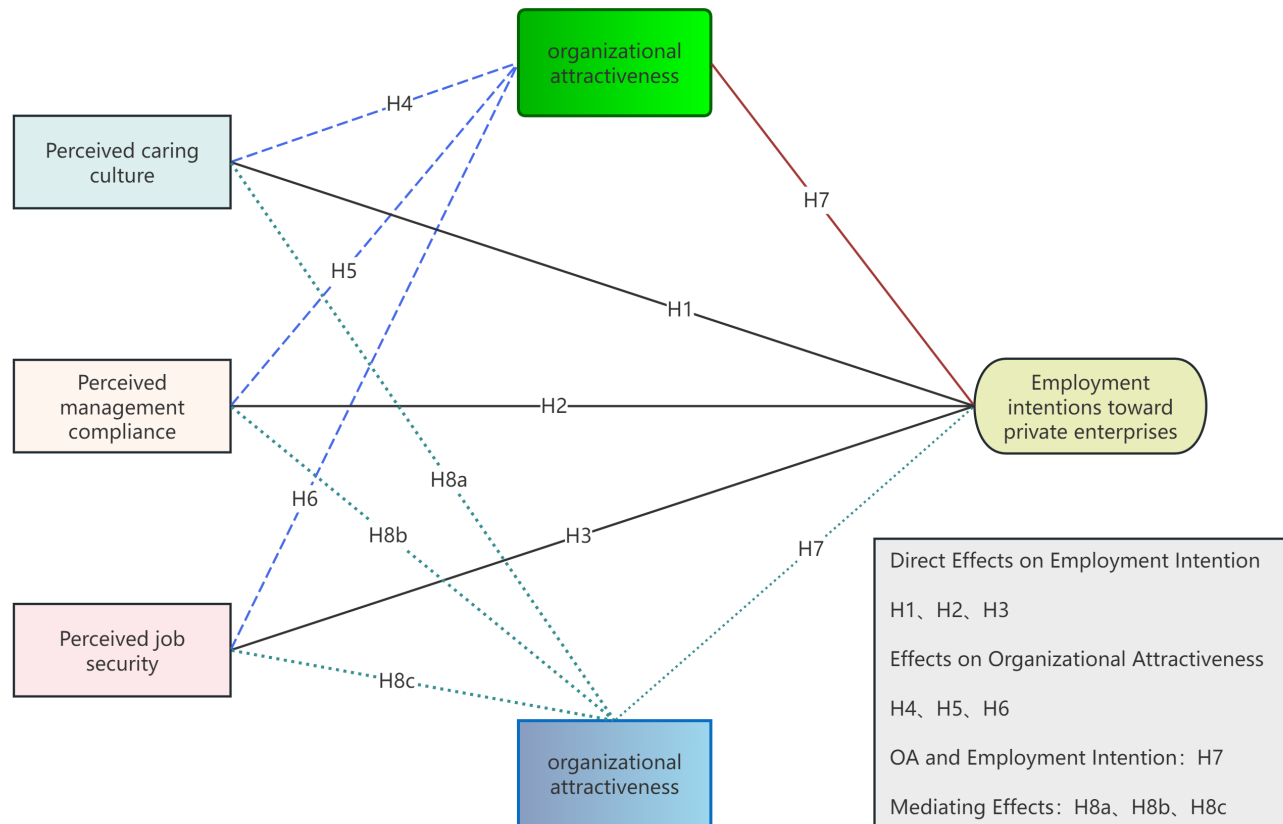
H7: Organisational attractiveness positively influences Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises.

H8a: Organisational attractiveness mediates the relationship between perceived humanistic care and Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises.

H8b: Organisational attractiveness mediates the relationship between perceived management compliance and Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises.

H8c: Organisational attractiveness mediates the relationship between perceived job security and Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises.

Graphic 1. Conceptual Framework



#### 4. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative approach and is conducted within a deductive research design. This choice is warranted because the core constructs examined in this study, namely perceived humanistic care, perceived management compliance, perceived job security, organisational attractiveness, and intention to seek employment in private enterprises, all pertain to psychological cognition and attitudinal judgment. Unlike demographic characteristics such as age, income, or educational attainment, these constructs cannot be directly observed. They can only be captured indirectly through multiple measurement items designed to reflect the underlying latent variables, after which statistical modelling can be employed to test the structural relationships among them. Research on job seekers' evaluations of organisations and their employment intentions has long relied on questionnaire-based methods to collect latent construct data and on structural equation modelling to examine multivariate relationships, precisely because such constructs are fundamentally grounded in individuals' subjective perceptions and psychological representations (Highhouse et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2016). The theoretical propositions and chain of hypotheses guiding this study have already been established in the preceding sections. Accordingly, the purpose of the present research is not to generate concepts inductively from field data, but to subject theoretically derived propositions to empirical testing on the basis of existing literature. Given that the proposed model incorporates multiple latent constructs, several direct paths, and mediating relationships, the subsequent data analysis will be carried out using structural equation modelling. Methodological studies have shown that PLS-SEM is comparatively less restrictive with respect to sample size and distributional assumptions, making it particularly suitable for analysing path models composed of multiple latent variables (Dash & Paul, 2021; Hair et al., 2021). For this reason, PLS-SEM is adopted in the present study.

The questionnaire design is grounded in construct dimensions rather than being developed intuitively or item by item without theoretical structure. Perceived humanistic care is conceptualised from three interrelated aspects: respectful treatment, caring support, and a sense of dignity in everyday interactions. Its theoretical foundation draws, first, on research concerning workplace dignity and respectful interaction, which emphasises equality, respect, being valued, and being recognised in the work experience, and second, on studies of perceived organisational support, which focus on whether the organisation

is concerned with members' well-being and needs (Thomas & Lucas, 2019; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Perceived management compliance is measured through several dimensions, including procedural consistency, information transparency, rule clarity, and perceived managerial fairness, primarily based on applicant reaction and organisational justice research addressing procedural fairness, adequacy of explanation, and the predictability of organisational rules (Gilliland, 1993; Truxillo et al., 2004). Perceived job security is designed around expected continuity of employment, confidence in job retention, clarity of the employment relationship, and perceived risk of unemployment, drawing on studies of employment security rights and employer attractiveness (Roehling et al., 2000; Vogel & Satzger, 2024). Organisational attractiveness is measured following the tradition established by Highhouse et al., with an emphasis on respondents' overall evaluations of whether the enterprise is worth approaching, whether it could be regarded as an ideal employer, and whether they would be willing to learn more about it or move closer to it as a career option (Highhouse et al., 2003). The dependent variable, intention to seek employment in private enterprises, is developed with reference to research on job pursuit intentions and application intentions, with items covering willingness to submit an application, willingness to continue in the recruitment process, willingness to accept an offer, and willingness to include the enterprise among one's preferred employment options (Khan & Muktar, 2020; Nguyen Ngoc et al., 2022). At the operational level, each construct is measured using four to five items on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 5 indicates "strongly agree". The item development process begins with the extraction of relevant wording from established scales, followed by bilingual adaptation and semantic condensation to fit the specific context of Chinese fresh graduates seeking employment in private enterprises. The resulting items are then reviewed by experts in management and human resource research to ensure content relevance and clarity of expression.

Table 1. Basis for Determining the Construct Dimensions of Each Variable

Variable	Construct Dimension	References
Perceived Humanistic Care (PHC)	Respectful Treatment	Thomas and Lucas (2019) Kurtessis et al. (2017)
	Caring Support	
	Sense of Dignity in Daily Interactions	
Perceived Management Compliance (PMC)	Procedural Consistency	Gilliland (1993) Truxillo et al. (2004)
	Information Transparency	
	Rule Clarity	
	Perceived Managerial Fairness	
Perceived Employment Security (PES)	Expected Job Continuity	Roehling et al. (2000) Vogel and Satzger (2024)
	Confidence in Retention	
	Clarity of Employment Relationship	
	Perceived Risk of Job Loss	
Organisational Attractiveness (OA)	Overall Evaluation of Worth Approaching	1. Highhouse et al. (2003)
	Ideal Employer Judgement	
	Willingness to Approach and Learn More	
Employment Intention towards Private Enterprises (EIPE)	Willingness to Apply	Khan and Muktar (2020) Nguyen Ngoc et al. (2022)
	Willingness to Continue the Job-Seeking Process	
	Willingness to Accept an Offer	
	Priority Choice Tendency	

The target respondents for this study were Chinese fresh graduates and university graduates within two years of graduation. To be eligible, respondents were required to have entered the stage of actively seeking employment, preparing to seek employment, or seriously considering their post-graduation career direction within the past year, and their primary employment target had to be the labour market in mainland China. This criterion was adopted because the present study examines graduates' cognitive evaluations of private-enterprise employment and their intention to seek such employment.

Only individuals who have already entered the actual career decision-making stage and possess a basic capacity to evaluate different types of employers can provide responses that are meaningfully aligned with the research question. The determination of sample size followed the minimum sample size logic commonly applied in PLS-SEM research. On the one hand, according to the "10 times rule", the minimum sample size should be no less than ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at any single endogenous construct. In the present study, organisational attractiveness is predicted by three exogenous paths, while intention to seek employment in private enterprises is predicted by four paths. Based on the larger of the two, the minimum sample size should therefore not be lower than 40. On the other hand, given that this rule is relatively lenient and that the formal model includes multiple latent constructs and mediating paths, the present study adopted a sample size far exceeding the minimum threshold in order to enhance the credibility of parameter estimation and the stability of model testing. Data for the formal survey were collected between 13 December 2025 and 18 January 2026. The questionnaire was distributed online to eligible members of the target population, and after collection, the responses were screened on the basis of eligibility criteria, completeness of response, and overall answer quality. Only valid samples were retained for the subsequent empirical analysis.

*Table 2. Summary of Reliability Analysis (Pilot Test N=45)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Item Codes</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
PHC	PHC1–PHC5	5	0.842
PMC	PMC1–PMC5	5	0.861
PES	PES1–PES5	5	0.803
OA	OA1–OA5	5	0.879
EIPE	EIPE1–EIPE5	5	0.891
Full instrument	PHC1–EIPE5	25	0.934

*Table 3. Summary of Reliability Analysis (Items Test)*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</b>	<b>Decision</b>
PHC1	0.621	0.812	Retain
PHC2	0.657	0.804	Retain
PHC3	0.603	0.817	Retain
PHC4	0.548	0.829	Retain
PHC5	0.689	0.798	Retain
PMC1	0.644	0.835	Retain
PMC2	0.672	0.829	Retain
PMC3	0.618	0.841	Retain
PMC4	0.701	0.823	Retain
PMC5	0.687	0.826	Retain
PES1	0.533	0.781	Retain
PES2	0.589	0.769	Retain
PES3	0.648	0.755	Retain
PES4	0.617	0.762	Retain
PES5	0.664	0.751	Retain
OA1	0.713	0.847	Retain
OA2	0.738	0.841	Retain
OA3	0.691	0.852	Retain
OA4	0.655	0.860	Retain
OA5	0.724	0.844	Retain

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Decision
EIPE1	0.746	0.869	Retain
EIPE2	0.781	0.861	Retain
EIPE3	0.719	0.873	Retain
EIPE4	0.688	0.880	Retain
EIPE5	0.754	0.867	Retain

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test for the Pilot Test

Test	Value
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.861
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Approx. Chi-square	1248.372
df	300
Sig.	< 0.001

Table 5. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Item	Factor Loading	Communality	Decision
PHC1	0.731	0.566	Retain
PHC2	0.768	0.603	Retain
PHC3	0.715	0.548	Retain
PHC4	0.681	0.501	Retain
PHC5	0.782	0.618	Retain
PMC1	0.744	0.577	Retain
PMC2	0.771	0.611	Retain
PMC3	0.706	0.539	Retain
PMC4	0.793	0.634	Retain
PMC5	0.759	0.592	Retain
PES1	0.662	0.474	Retain
PES2	0.703	0.521	Retain
PES3	0.748	0.579	Retain
PES4	0.721	0.548	Retain
PES5	0.756	0.587	Retain
OA1	0.801	0.649	Retain
OA2	0.826	0.688	Retain
OA3	0.774	0.619	Retain
OA4	0.741	0.571	Retain
OA5	0.813	0.667	Retain
EIPE1	0.834	0.701	Retain
EIPE2	0.861	0.734	Retain
EIPE3	0.809	0.662	Retain
EIPE4	0.773	0.618	Retain
EIPE5	0.842	0.709	Retain

The pre-test results indicate that the questionnaire developed in this study demonstrates satisfactory measurement quality and structural stability overall, and is therefore capable of capturing the underlying meanings of the latent constructs with reasonable effectiveness. First, in terms of reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the five core dimensions were 0.842, 0.861, 0.803, 0.879, and 0.891, respectively, all exceeding the threshold of 0.80. The overall scale achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.934, indicating strong internal consistency and suggesting that the questionnaire items exhibited a high degree of coherence and stability. Further item analysis showed that the corrected item–total correlations for all items were above 0.50, and the deletion of any individual item did not produce a meaningful increase in Cronbach's alpha. This suggests that all items were effective in reflecting their respective constructs and that no obviously weak or problematic items required deletion or revision. Accordingly, all items were retained for the formal survey.

With regard to validity, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin value was 0.861, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant, indicating that the sample data were suitable for factor analysis. In addition, the results of the exploratory factor analysis showed that all items loaded above 0.662 on their respective factors, while all communalities exceeded 0.40. These findings suggest that the measurement items were strongly associated with their corresponding latent factors and were able to explain the structural content of the constructs effectively. Overall, the questionnaire exhibited desirable reliability and initial structural validity at the pre-test stage, indicating that the instrument was well designed, that the wording of the items was sufficiently clear, and that the allocation of items to constructs was appropriately specified. This provides a sound measurement foundation for the subsequent administration of the formal survey and the empirical analysis that follows.

## 5. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

A total of 446 valid responses were obtained in this study. All respondents met the screening criteria, meaning that they were either fresh graduates or individuals within two years of graduation, had seriously considered employment issues during the past year, and identified the labour market in mainland China as their primary employment target. This indicates a high degree of correspondence between the sample and the target population. In terms of basic demographic characteristics, the gender distribution was relatively balanced, with male respondents accounting for 49.55% and female respondents accounting for 48.65%. With regard to graduation status, respondents graduating in the current year constituted the largest group, representing 50.00% of the sample, followed by those who had graduated within one year at 30.72%, and those who had graduated between one and two years earlier at 19.28%. In terms of educational attainment, bachelor's degree holders formed the majority, accounting for 61.66% of the sample, followed by junior college diploma holders at 19.51%, master's degree holders at 16.59%, and doctoral degree holders at 2.24%. The sample also showed diversity in institutional background. The largest proportion came from ordinary second-tier undergraduate institutions, accounting for 22.42%, followed by higher vocational colleges at 17.26% and ordinary first-tier undergraduate institutions at 16.59%. In terms of disciplinary background, engineering was the most represented field, accounting for 27.58%, followed by science, management, economics and finance, and medicine. Overall, the sample provides reasonably broad coverage of the educational and disciplinary structure commonly found among contemporary university graduates in China.

With regard to respondents' developmental background and employment preparation, most participants came from prefecture-level urban areas, county-level towns, and provincial capitals or sub-provincial cities, while respondents from townships and rural areas also accounted for a certain proportion, suggesting a satisfactory degree of regional diversity within the sample. In terms of preferred long-term employment location, most respondents indicated a preference for new first-tier cities, second-tier cities, and first-tier cities, reflecting a general inclination towards urban platforms offering stronger development opportunities. Regarding family background, annual household income was concentrated primarily in the RMB 100,000 to RMB 200,000 range, followed by households earning below RMB 100,000, indicating that the sample was mainly drawn from lower-middle- to middle-income families. In terms of internship experience, most respondents had undertaken at least one internship, and more than half had previously interned or worked part-time in private enterprises. This suggests that the majority had already acquired some degree of direct exposure to, and practical understanding of, the employment market, particularly the private sector. At the same time, with regard to preferred types of employing organisations, state-owned enterprises, private enterprises, and government agencies or public institutions all accounted for relatively substantial

proportions. This indicates a certain degree of diversity in current graduate employment preferences, although such preferences continue to be shaped in important ways by considerations of stability, development opportunities, and the institutional environment.

Table 6. Demographic Analysis Results (N = 446)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	221	49.55
	Female	217	48.65
	Other / Prefer not to say	8	1.79
Graduation status	Graduating this year	223	50
	Graduated within 1 year	137	30.72
	Graduated within 1–2 years	86	19.28
Highest educational qualification	Diploma / Junior college	87	19.51
	Bachelor's degree	275	61.66
	Master's degree	74	16.59
	Doctoral degree	10	2.24
Type of graduating institution	Regular second-tier undergraduate university	100	22.42
	Higher vocational / junior college institution	77	17.26
	Regular first-tier undergraduate university	74	16.59
	Other institution types (combined)	195	43.72
Field of study	Engineering	123	27.58
	Science	55	12.33
	Management	52	11.66
	Economics / Finance	36	8.07
	Medicine	34	7.62
	Other fields (combined)	146	32.74
Place of origin	Prefecture-level city urban area	123	27.58
	County town	96	21.52
	Provincial capital / sub-provincial city	75	16.82
	Township	66	14.8
	Rural area	62	13.9
	Municipality directly under the central government	24	5.38
Intended long-term job location	New first-tier city	126	28.25
	Second-tier city	113	25.34
	First-tier city	90	20.18
	Other city tiers / Undecided	117	26.23

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Willingness to work in a different province	Very willing	98	21.97
	Quite willing	130	29.15
	Neutral	106	23.77
	Not very willing / Not willing at all	112	25.11
Family's permanent residence region	Eastern China	171	38.34
	Central China	121	27.13
	Western China	122	27.35
	Northeastern China	32	7.17
Annual household income	Below RMB 100,000	99	22.2
	RMB 100,000–200,000	142	31.84
	Other income levels / Prefer not to say	205	45.96
Family members working in the public sector	Yes	143	32.06
	No	253	56.73
	Not sure	50	11.21
Internship experience	None	74	16.59
	One internship	141	31.61
	Two internships	127	28.48
	Three or more internships	104	23.32
Internship / part-time experience in private enterprises	Yes	236	52.91
	No	210	47.09
Priority employer type in job search	State-owned enterprise	107	23.99
	Private enterprise	95	21.3
	Government agency / public institution	88	19.73
	Undecided	86	19.28
	Other types	70	15.7
Preparation for civil service / public institution / teacher recruitment / SOE examinations	Currently preparing	144	32.29
	Have taken such examinations	116	26.01
	Have not prepared	186	41.7
Perception of the current employment situation	Relatively difficult	181	40.58
	Very difficult	108	24.22
	Other evaluations	157	35.2
Most important factor in job choice	Career development	99	22.2
	Job stability	92	20.63
	Salary and benefits	83	18.61
	Other factors	172	38.56

## 6. SEM Results

The results for both the direct and indirect effects show that the core paths proposed in this study are statistically supported overall. This indicates that perceived job security, perceived humanistic care, and perceived management compliance not only exert direct effects on fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises, but also operate indirectly through the mediating role of organisational attractiveness. More specifically, among the direct effects, perceived job security exerts the strongest influence on intention to seek employment in private enterprises ( $\beta = 0.270$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), followed by perceived management compliance ( $\beta = 0.262$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Organisational attractiveness itself also has a significant positive effect on employment intention ( $\beta = 0.208$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Although the coefficient for perceived humanistic care is comparatively smaller, it remains statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.118$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ). With respect to organisational attractiveness, perceived job security again shows the strongest effect ( $\beta = 0.338$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), followed by perceived humanistic care ( $\beta = 0.295$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and perceived management compliance ( $\beta = 0.186$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). These findings suggest that when graduates evaluate whether a private enterprise is worth approaching and whether it is attractive as a potential employer, their primary concern is whether the organisation can provide a stable, predictable, and low-risk employment environment. At the same time, they also attach considerable importance to whether the firm demonstrates humanistic care and standardised management practices. Turning to the indirect effects, the indirect influences of perceived job security, perceived humanistic care, and perceived management compliance on intention to seek employment in private enterprises through organisational attractiveness are 0.070, 0.061, and 0.039, respectively, and all are statistically significant. This indicates that organisational attractiveness plays a stable mediating role between the three antecedent variables and employment intention, with the mediating effect of perceived job security being the most pronounced. In other words, graduates do not decide whether to choose a private enterprise on the basis of a single condition alone. Rather, they first form an overall evaluation of the organisation's attractiveness, which is then translated into a more concrete employment preference.

The results for explanatory power, effect sizes, and collinearity diagnostics further suggest that the overall model demonstrates satisfactory explanatory capacity and statistical robustness. The  $R^2$  value for employment intention is 0.537, with an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.533, indicating that the model explains 53.7% of the variance in intention to seek employment in private enterprises. The  $R^2$  value for organisational attractiveness is 0.517, with an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.513, suggesting that the three antecedent variables also provide substantial explanatory power for organisational attractiveness. Taken together, these results indicate that the model possesses a reasonably strong predictive capability. In terms of effect sizes, most paths fall within the small to moderate range. Among them, perceived job security has the largest effect size on organisational attractiveness ( $f^2 = 0.120$ ), suggesting that this path is not only statistically significant but also substantively important in practical explanatory terms. Perceived management compliance and perceived job security have identical effect sizes on employment intention ( $f^2 = 0.071$ ), while perceived humanistic care shows an effect size of 0.086 on organisational attractiveness, which also indicates meaningful practical relevance. By comparison, the effect size of organisational attractiveness on employment intention is 0.045, that of perceived management compliance on organisational attractiveness is 0.036, and that of perceived humanistic care on employment intention is 0.013. Although these may be classified as relatively small effects, their statistical significance suggests that they remain important components of the overall mechanism. At the same time, the VIF values for all outer-model items range approximately from 1.089 to 1.278, while the VIF values for the inner-model paths range from 1.970 to 2.287. All of these values are well below commonly accepted thresholds, indicating that there are no serious multicollinearity concerns at either the measurement or the structural level. Accordingly, the path estimates among the variables may be regarded as sufficiently independent and reliable. Overall, the empirical results not only support the main theoretical hypotheses, but also demonstrate that when fresh graduates evaluate private enterprises, job security constitutes the most central basis of judgment, while management compliance and humanistic care jointly shape their perceptions of organisational attractiveness and their eventual employment intention through both direct and indirect pathways.

Table 7. Path Coefficient Results

	(O)	(M)	(STDEV)	( O/STDEV )	P
Organisational Attractiveness -> Employment Intention towards_Private Enterprises	0.208	0.207	0.051	4.065	0.000
Perceived Employment Security -> Employment Intention towards_Private Enterprises	0.270	0.270	0.050	5.372	0.000
Perceived Employment Security -> Organisational Attractiveness	0.338	0.339	0.044	7.643	0.000
Perceived Humanistic Care -> Employment Intention towards_Private Enterprises	0.118	0.121	0.047	2.496	0.013
Perceived Humanistic Care -> Organisational Attractiveness	0.295	0.297	0.048	6.098	0.000
Perceived Management Compliance -> Employment Intention towards_Private Enterprises	0.262	0.262	0.047	5.620	0.000
Perceived Management Compliance -> Organisational Attractiveness	0.186	0.186	0.047	3.984	0.000

Table 8. Path Coefficient Results (Indirect Path)

	(O)	(M)	(STDEV)	( O/STDEV )	P
Perceived Employment Security -> Employment Intention towards_Private Enterprises	0.070	0.070	0.019	3.610	0.000
Perceived Humanistic Care -> Employment Intention towards_Private Enterprises	0.061	0.061	0.018	3.403	0.001
Perceived Management Compliance -> Employment Intention towards_Private Enterprises	0.039	0.039	0.015	2.655	0.008

Table 9. Summary of R<sup>2</sup>, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, and f<sup>2</sup> Results

Indicator	Path / Construct	O	M	STDEV	t	p
R <sup>2</sup>	Employment Intention towards Private Enterprises	0.537	0.545	0.03	18.161	0.000
	Organisational Attractiveness	0.517	0.523	0.032	16.352	0.000
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Employment Intention towards Private Enterprises	0.533	0.54	0.03	17.857	0.000
	Organisational Attractiveness	0.513	0.52	0.032	16.139	0.000
f <sup>2</sup>	Organisational Attractiveness → Employment Intention towards Private Enterprises	0.045	0.048	0.023	1.967	0.007
	Perceived Employment Security → Employment Intention towards Private Enterprises	0.071	0.075	0.029	2.474	0.013
	Perceived Employment Security → Organisational Attractiveness	0.12	0.124	0.034	3.485	0.000
	Perceived Humanistic Care → Employment Intention towards Private Enterprises	0.013	0.016	0.011	1.153	0.009
	Perceived Humanistic Care → Organisational Attractiveness	0.086	0.09	0.031	2.781	0.005
	Perceived Management Compliance → Employment Intention towards Private Enterprises	0.071	0.075	0.027	2.613	0.009
	Perceived Management Compliance → Organisational Attractiveness	0.036	0.039	0.019	1.867	0.006

Table 10. Summary of Outer and Inner Model VIF Results

Model	Indicator / Path	O	M	2.50%	97.50%
Outer	EIPE1	1.105	1.115	1.059	1.184
	EIPE2	1.149	1.159	1.09	1.244
	EIPE3	1.089	1.1	1.047	1.167
	EIPE4	1.161	1.172	1.099	1.264
	EIPE5	1.2	1.211	1.127	1.314
	OA1	1.155	1.167	1.092	1.264
	OA2	1.256	1.268	1.174	1.379
	OA3	1.225	1.237	1.146	1.345
	OA4	1.19	1.201	1.12	1.3
	OA5	1.265	1.277	1.183	1.391
	PES1	1.143	1.155	1.086	1.237
	PES2	1.117	1.127	1.066	1.205
	PES3	1.258	1.27	1.177	1.383
	PES4	1.278	1.291	1.192	1.405
	PES5	1.246	1.259	1.167	1.372
	PHC1	1.259	1.271	1.178	1.379
	PHC2	1.15	1.161	1.095	1.244
	PHC3	1.14	1.15	1.087	1.228
	PHC4	1.162	1.175	1.099	1.269
	PHC5	1.105	1.116	1.062	1.182
	PMC1	1.154	1.167	1.094	1.257
	PMC2	1.181	1.194	1.115	1.29
	PMC3	1.143	1.154	1.085	1.24
	PMC4	1.185	1.196	1.119	1.287
	PMC5	1.129	1.14	1.073	1.222
Inner	OA → EIPE	2.069	2.107	1.846	2.402
	PES → EIPE	2.206	2.239	1.934	2.577
	PES → OA	1.97	1.991	1.748	2.261
	PHC → EIPE	2.287	2.316	2.048	2.629
	PHC → OA	2.107	2.126	1.876	2.41
	PMC → EIPE	2.069	2.093	1.834	2.381
	PMC → OA	1.997	2.016	1.769	2.293

Graphic 2. SEM output

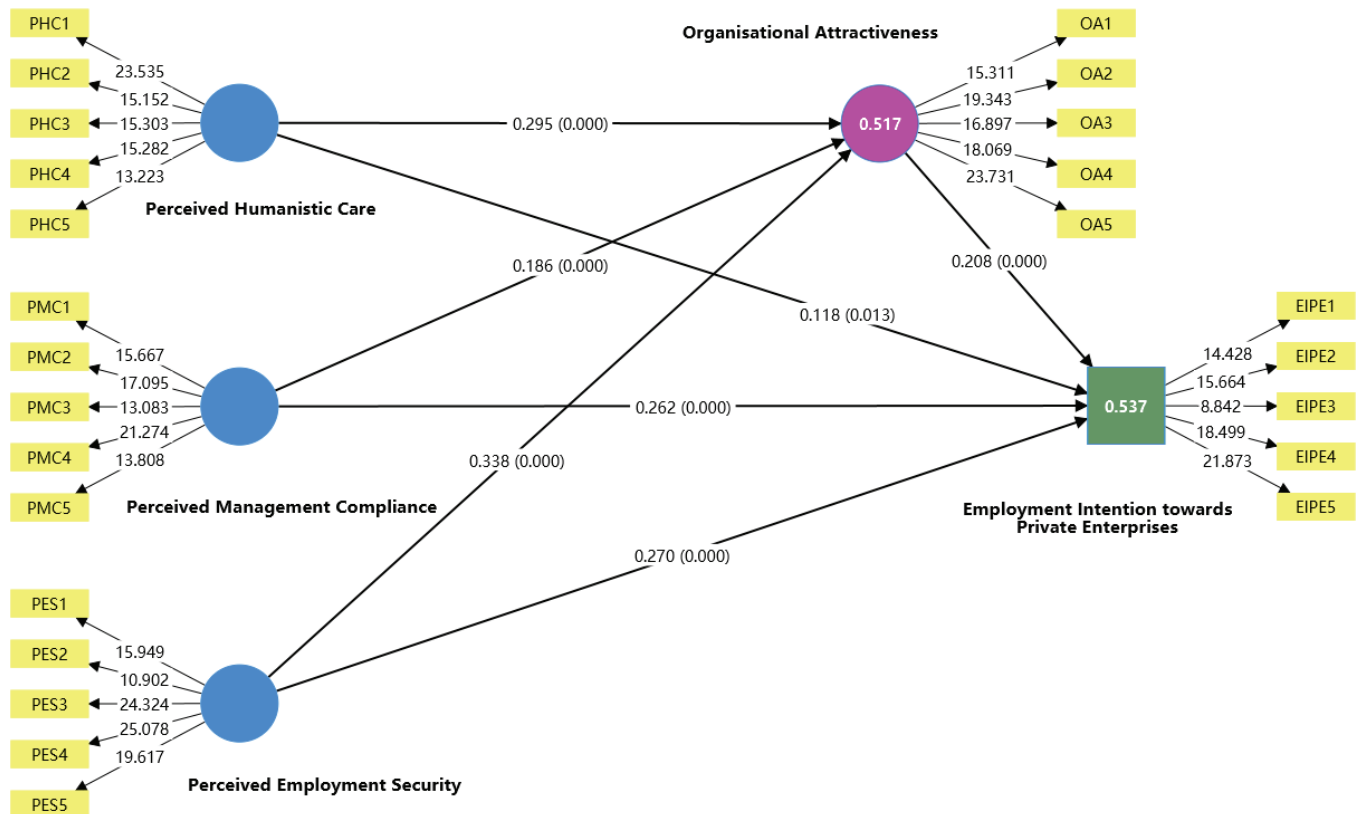


Table 11. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	PHC → EIPE	0.118	2.496	0.013	Supported
H2	PMC → EIPE	0.262	5.62	0.000	Supported
H3	PES → EIPE	0.27	5.372	0.000	Supported
H4	PHC → OA	0.295	6.098	0.000	Supported
H5	PMC → OA	0.186	3.984	0.000	Supported
H6	PES → OA	0.338	7.643	0.000	Supported
H7	OA → EIPE	0.208	4.065	0.000	Supported
H8a	PHC → OA → EIPE	0.061	3.403	0.001	Supported
H8b	PMC → OA → EIPE	0.039	2.655	0.008	Supported
H8c	PES → OA → EIPE	0.07	3.61	0.000	Supported

According to the empirical findings, all hypotheses proposed in this study are supported. Perceived humanistic care, perceived management compliance, and perceived job security all exert significant positive effects on Chinese fresh graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises. Among these factors, perceived job security shows the strongest direct effect, followed by perceived management compliance, while perceived humanistic care has a relatively weaker, though still statistically significant, influence. This suggests that in the context of seeking employment in private enterprises, fresh graduates are concerned not only with whether an organisation demonstrates human warmth and consideration, but also with whether its management practices are well regulated and whether the employment environment is stable and predictable. At

the same time, perceived humanistic care, perceived management compliance, and perceived job security all significantly enhance organisational attractiveness, with perceived job security again exerting the strongest effect. This indicates that when graduates form an overall attractiveness evaluation of a private enterprise, the most important consideration remains whether the organisation can offer a reassuring and stable starting point for their careers. Furthermore, organisational attractiveness has a significant positive effect on intention to seek employment in private enterprises and serves as a significant mediator in the relationships between perceived humanistic care, perceived management compliance, perceived job security, and intention to seek employment in private enterprises. These findings suggest that graduates do not form employment intentions immediately upon perceiving a single favourable organisational attribute. Rather, they first translate such positive perceptions into an overall judgment of organisational attractiveness, which then develops into a more definite intention to pursue employment in private enterprises.

## 7. Conclusion and Implications

The reason why fresh graduates today generally display a stronger preference for public-sector positions while remaining cautious about, or even avoiding, private enterprises cannot be reduced simply to a generic "preference for stability". More fundamentally, within their real-world employment perceptions, public-sector organisations are typically associated with stronger expectations of security, clearer rules and institutional order, and lower career risk. For graduates who are only beginning to enter the labour market, occupational capital remains limited and tolerance for uncertainty is relatively low. As a result, they are inclined to prioritise organisational settings characterised by clear boundaries, formalised systems, stronger protection, and a more predictable future trajectory. By contrast, the insufficient attractiveness of many private enterprises does not stem solely from salary levels. Rather, graduates commonly worry that such firms may offer inadequate employment security, weak managerial standardisation, and an organisational environment marked by excessive arbitrariness. They may also anticipate unstable positions, ambiguous performance criteria, opaque promotion mechanisms, normalised overtime, insufficient protection of rights and interests, and even a lack of basic respect after entry. In other words, what private enterprises truly lack when competing with the public sector is neither recruitment rhetoric nor the superficial packaging of benefits, but a form of security, order, and trust that graduates can clearly perceive. The findings of this study confirm precisely this point: perceived job security is the most critical factor shaping graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises, followed by perceived management compliance and then perceived humanistic care, and all three further influence final choice through organisational attractiveness. This suggests that graduates are not inherently resistant to private enterprises. Rather, under prevailing labour market perceptions, many private firms have not yet developed sufficiently strong organisational competitiveness to offset the institutional advantages associated with the public sector.

Accordingly, if private enterprises wish to establish genuine competitiveness under the current pattern in which graduates cluster towards the public sector, they must shift from merely "offering jobs" to "offering a trustworthy career starting point". First, employment security must be translated from an abstract promise into concrete institutional arrangements. This includes clearly defined labour contracts, reduced arbitrariness in job reassignment and dismissal, timely and full payment of wages and statutory social insurance contributions, as well as transparent career development paths and relatively stable expectations regarding job continuity. Graduates need to feel that entering a private enterprise is not a high-risk trial-and-error decision. Second, private firms must improve the level of management compliance by establishing open and transparent recruitment procedures, clear and consistent performance evaluation systems, lawful and standardised employment practices, and predictable reward and sanction mechanisms. Such measures are essential to dispel graduates' negative impressions that private firms are characterised by arbitrary management, blurred rules, and governance driven by personal discretion rather than institutional procedures. Third, private enterprises must address a long-neglected humanistic deficit by demonstrating respect for young employees throughout recruitment, onboarding, mentoring, communication, and developmental support. Fresh graduates need to feel that they are not replaceable low-cost labour, but formal organisational members worthy of investment and cultivation. Ultimately, if private enterprises intend to attract talent away from the public sector, they cannot rely solely on competing in terms of pay, pace, or slogans. They must instead build, at the organisational level, a comprehensive form of attractiveness capable of standing against the appeal of public-sector institutions. Graduates must

genuinely believe that such jobs are not only available, but also stable, developmental, and fair. Only when private enterprises establish clear, consistent, and perceptible competitive advantages in security, standardisation, and humanistic care will the balance of graduate job choice begin to shift from risk-avoidant entry into the public sector towards an active preference for private-enterprise employment.

## 8. Research Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. First, in terms of research design, the study relies on a one-shot cross-sectional survey and self-reported data to measure perceived humanistic care, perceived management compliance, perceived job security, organisational attractiveness, and intention to seek employment in private enterprises. Although the pre-test, reliability and validity assessments, and structural model results all indicate satisfactory scale quality and model robustness, such a design is more suitable for identifying statistical associations among variables than for making stronger causal inferences. It is also limited in its ability to capture the dynamic adjustments in fresh graduates' job choice judgments over time, across different employment stages, and under changing external conditions. Second, with regard to sample scope, although the study includes 446 valid responses and covers graduates with different educational levels, institutional backgrounds, disciplinary fields, places of origin, and family conditions, the sample was still collected primarily through an online questionnaire and largely consisted of fresh graduates and individuals within two years of graduation who had already entered the job-seeking stage and were mainly oriented towards the labour market in mainland China. Accordingly, caution is still required when extending the findings to broader youth populations, different regional labour markets, private enterprises in different industries, or young people who are not university graduates.

Third, in terms of variable specification, this study focuses on three forms of organisational perception, namely perceived job security, perceived management compliance, and perceived humanistic care, and explains their effects on intention to seek employment in private enterprises through organisational attractiveness. Although this framework responds well to the current reality of public-sector preference and relatively weak intention towards private-enterprise employment among graduates, it does not incorporate into the same model a number of other potentially important factors, such as salary and benefits, employer branding, family expectations, social comparison, opportunities for urban household registration, macroeconomic expectations, and individual risk preference. As a result, the explanation offered for private-enterprise employment intention should not be regarded as exhaustive. Finally, this study addresses graduates' intention to seek employment in private enterprises rather than actual entry behaviour or post-entry retention outcomes. The findings therefore reveal primarily the psychological mechanisms operating at the pre-employment decision stage, rather than the full behavioural chain from job search to offer acceptance and subsequent retention. Future research may build on this study by employing longitudinal tracking, experimental designs, multi-source data, or comparative analyses across different types of enterprises so as to enhance external validity and deepen explanatory insight.

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## Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire Survey

(Data collected from 12/2025 - 01/2026 only)

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Chinese Fresh Graduates' Employment Intentions toward Private Enterprises

#### Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed for academic research. It aims to understand how Chinese fresh graduates perceive employment in private enterprises and how these perceptions shape their employment intentions.

The findings will help identify key factors influencing graduates' willingness to work in private enterprises and may provide useful references for improving employer attractiveness, strengthening talent recruitment, and supporting higher-quality graduate employment.

The questionnaire is anonymous. All responses will be used for statistical analysis only and will remain strictly confidential. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to your genuine views and experiences.

Estimated completion time: 5-8 minutes. Thank you very much for your support.

#### Part I. Screening Questions

Please answer these questions first. Only eligible respondents should continue.

S1. Are you currently a fresh graduate, or have you graduated within the past two years?

- Yes
- No

S2. Are you currently seeking employment, preparing to seek employment, or have you seriously considered your post-graduation employment options within the past year?

- Yes
- No

S3. How familiar are you with private enterprises as a type of employer?

- Very familiar
- Quite familiar
- Basically familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not familiar at all

S4. Is your main employment target the mainland China labour market?

- Yes
- No

#### Part II. Demographic Information

Please tick the option that best describes your situation.

D1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

D2. Year of birth

- 1998 or earlier
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004 or later

D3. Current graduation status

- Graduating this year
- Graduated within 1 year
- Graduated within 1-2 years

D4. Marital status

- Single
- Married
- Other

D5. Highest educational qualification

- Diploma / Junior College
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

D6. Which category best describes your graduating institution?

- Double First-Class university
- Former 985 university
- Former 211 university
- Regular first-tier undergraduate university
- Regular second-tier undergraduate university
- Higher vocational / junior college institution
- Private undergraduate institution / independent college
- Overseas university
- Other

D7. Field of study

- Management
- Economics / Finance

- Law
- Literature / Journalism / Communication
- Education
- Science
- Engineering
- Medicine
- Agriculture
- Arts
- Interdisciplinary / Emerging field
- Other

D8. How well does your major match market-oriented enterprise positions?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Moderately
- Poorly
- Very poorly

D9. Your approximate academic ranking during your studies

- Top 10%
- Top 10%-30%
- Top 30%-50%
- Bottom 50%
- Prefer not to say

D10. Did you hold any student leadership roles (e.g., class, student union, club, or association positions)?

- Yes
- No

D11. Your place of origin is best described as

- Municipality directly under the central government
- Provincial capital / sub-provincial city
- Prefecture-level city urban area
- County town
- Township
- Rural area

D12. Your intended long-term job location is

- First-tier city
- New first-tier city
- Second-tier city
- Third-tier city
- Fourth-tier or below city
- Not yet decided

D13. Willingness to work in a different province

- Very willing
- Quite willing
- Neutral
- Not very willing
- Not willing at all

D14. Which region does your family's permanent residence belong to?

- Eastern China
- Central China
- Western China
- Northeastern China

D15. Father's highest educational level

- Lower secondary or below
- Upper secondary / technical secondary
- Junior college
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or above
- Do not know / prefer not to say

D16. Mother's highest educational level

- Lower secondary or below
- Upper secondary / technical secondary
- Junior college
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or above
- Do not know / prefer not to say

D17. Approximate annual household income

- Below RMB 100,000
- RMB 100,000-200,000
- RMB 200,000-300,000
- RMB 300,000-500,000
- Above RMB 500,000
- Prefer not to say

D18. Does your family have members working in government agencies, public institutions, or other public-sector organisations?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

D19. Internship experience

- None

- One internship
- Two internships
- Three or more internships

D20. Have you ever interned or worked part-time in a private enterprise?

- Yes
- No

D21. Which type of employer do you prioritise most in your job search?

- Government agency / public institution
- State-owned enterprise
- Private enterprise
- Foreign-funded enterprise
- Self-employment / entrepreneurship
- Undecided

D22. Have you prepared for or taken civil service, public institution, teacher recruitment, or state-owned enterprise examinations?

- Yes, currently preparing
- Yes, I have taken such examinations
- No

D23. How do you perceive the current employment situation?

- Very favourable
- Relatively favourable
- Average
- Relatively difficult
- Very difficult

D24. Which factor matters most to you when choosing a job?

- Salary and benefits
- Job stability
- Career development
- Managerial standardisation
- Work atmosphere
- City platform
- Match with major
- Other

### Part III. Main Questionnaire

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement about employment in private enterprises.

Response scale: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

A. Perceived Humane Care (PHC)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel that many private enterprises respect the feelings of young employees in their day-to-day management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	If employees encounter personal or work-related difficulties, I think private enterprises are generally willing to show understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I believe private enterprises often treat fresh graduates with a certain degree of empathy and human concern.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	When evaluating a private enterprise, I care about whether it genuinely cares about employees rather than only about performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	If a private enterprise makes me feel respected, I would be more willing to work there.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## B. Perceived Managerial Compliance (PMC)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
6	When job hunting, I care greatly about whether a private enterprise complies with labour regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I pay attention to whether a private enterprise has problems such as excessive overtime, arbitrary penalties, or unfulfilled verbal promises.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	If a private enterprise has clear management procedures and rules, I feel more secure about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Whether recruitment procedures, labour contracts, and salary payments are handled properly influences my evaluation of a private enterprise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I would be more willing to join private enterprises that are transparent and rule-based in management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## C. Perceived Employment Security (PES)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
11	I worry that jobs in some private enterprises may not be sufficiently stable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	I pay attention to whether a private enterprise is likely to engage in layoffs, post reductions, or sudden staffing changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	If a private enterprise develops in a stable manner, I would be more willing to consider it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I hope that income, job arrangements, and labour relations after joining an employer will be predictable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Whether a private enterprise can provide graduates with a reassuring employment experience matters to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## D. Organisational Attractiveness (OA)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
16	If a private enterprise leaves me with a good overall impression, I am willing to learn more about it proactively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	I believe some private enterprises are genuinely worthwhile employment options for fresh graduates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	When I encounter a private enterprise that I like, I am willing to submit my application.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	If conditions are suitable, I would recommend such a private enterprise to my classmates or friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	My overall impression of a private enterprise influences whether I include it on my shortlist of job options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## E. Employment Intention toward Private Enterprises (EIPE)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
21	During my job search after graduation, I am willing to treat private enterprises as a formal employment option.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	If job conditions are appropriate, I am willing to give priority to working in a private enterprise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Rather than waiting indefinitely for other opportunities, I am willing to try a suitable private enterprise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	I can accept a private enterprise as my first full-time job after graduation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	In future job searching, I hold an open attitude toward working in private enterprises.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Part IV. Supplementary Questions

These items may be used for descriptive or control-variable analysis.

C1. How would you evaluate your overall impression of private enterprises?

- Very poor
- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Very good

C2. What is the general attitude of your family members or teachers toward employment in private enterprises?

- Strongly unsupportive
- Unsupportive
- Neutral
- Supportive
- Strongly supportive

C3. Compared with state-owned enterprises or public-sector jobs, private enterprises can offer better opportunities for growth.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

C4. When seeking employment, do you hesitate to join a private enterprise because of social evaluation or external opinions?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

### Part V. Open-ended Questions

O1. If you are not very willing to work in a private enterprise, what is your main concern?

O2. If a private enterprise wishes to attract you, what do you most hope it would improve?

**Thank you for your participation.**