

BACHELOR THESIS REVIEW

Type of review: *thesis supervisor, opponent*

Author: Chang Liu

Title: “A study on the discrepancy between employment expectations and actual employment of Chinese graduates”

Supervisor: Mirna Jusić, M.A., Ph.D.

Reviewer: Mgr. Ing. Olga Angelovská, Ph.D.

Please explain the reasons for your evaluation (especially reservations and criticisms) according to the criteria listed below.

1. Is the aim of the thesis (research question) clearly stated and do the conclusions correspond to it? Is the thesis appropriately structured?

Comments: The author clearly states her research aim and questions. The aim of the thesis is to understand the factors that shape employment expectations and analyze the reasons for the mismatch between employment expectations and actual employment (p. 30).

The research questions are:

1. Do the career expectations of master's degree students at the time of their former employment match exactly with their actual employment?
2. Do master's degree students have an understanding of career expectations, job-seeking abilities and the current situation in society?
3. Why are there differences between the career expectations of master's students and their actual employment? (p. 29)

While all questions have been addressed in the Data analysis chapter, the summary of findings in the conclusion is rather short and could have included a more thorough overview of the findings in relation to all three questions.

The thesis is structured appropriately, in the following manner: Introduction; Background/Literature Review; Theoretical Framework; Methodology; Data analysis (including discussion); Recommendations; Conclusion.

Although the Introduction includes the research aim, it would have been beneficial to include the research questions as well. These are introduced in Section 3.3, on page 29. I appreciate the fact that, at the end of the Introduction, the author gives an overview of how the thesis is structured.

2. Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?

Comments: The author has studied and referred to relevant research and literature. The work appears to accurately summarize and integrate this information. The author has used both international literature and literature from China in her literature review and background, and also refers to relevant studies in her discussion of findings.

The author has also chosen to include a theoretical chapter, with an in-depth overview and justification of the theories chosen.

3. What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?

Comments: The thesis combines primary and secondary data. The author has generated her own primary data through 10 interviews with MA students from one university, who have employment and job search experience. She also makes use of secondary data when discussing the employment situation for graduates in China in the Background / Literature review sections.

The methodology is discussed in a very detailed and systematic way, especially in relation to data collection. The author also includes sections on ethical considerations and limitations of the methods used. I appreciate that the interview guide developed and used, which has been included in the Appendix.

The sample of graduate students with previous work experience could have been justified somewhat more, potentially citing limitations in terms of access to respondents as one possible reason for the choice. The author stresses that the group of graduates is wide, and that she has therefore decided to focus on MA students of the Renmin University of China Business School, as they have certain employment and career selection experience which can provide for strong research data for the study (p. 2). It is evident that this group (from, as the author stresses, a university located in a mega-city, whose graduates have a very high employment rates) will have a different experience and expectations than prospective employees who have not opted for graduate studies. Nevertheless, the author does not claim that her work is representative of a broader population of young graduates in the labor market.

4. Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?

Comments: The findings are directly relevant to the research questions. The conclusions of the thesis (contained in the Data analysis chapter) are generally based on sound argumentation, albeit in some instances, written in a somewhat unclear manner (e.g. when discussing personal factors on pp. 54-55). The argumentation from the Discussion could have been more thoroughly summarized in the Conclusion, as described above.

5. Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?

Comments: In the data analysis part of the work, the author reflects upon her research results in an original way, interpreting the results while applying theories and also relating them to other studies.

In other sections (literature review, theoretical framework), this is perhaps less distinguished, as the author has provided more of an overview, rather than a reflection. In some instances, normative language is used when referring to the ideas of other authors (e.g. when referring to Yin, 2010, who discusses how companies can meet employees' expectations). In such instances, it would have been beneficial to emphasize more clearly that these are the respective author's findings (and/or

recommendations).

Although the recommendations in Chapter 5 represent an additional contribution that is not required for the thesis, it would have been good to distinguish more clearly how these recommendations originated, as they appear not only to be rooted in the research results of the author. For instance, when providing the recommendation that “Universities should avoid over-theorising education and can work with companies to provide internships that combine practice and theory so that students can study their expertise in the context of reality” (p. 59) it is unclear whether the claim is based just on the interviews, or also on other studies that may have identified this as a problem.

6. What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?

Comments: The style of the paper is academic. It meets the formal requirements in terms of layout, page numbers, spelling/grammar and punctuation (with some minor mistakes), and the use of references. At times, in the background and literature review sections, the arguments could have been thematically better linked for a more cohesive text, and to avoid repetition. There are some stylistic issues (e.g. a very long quote in a paragraph on p. 5.). The detailed description of the coding process on pp. 37-38 would be better suited for the Annex.

The wording used is at times not standard for the English language and may appear confusing or vague (for instance, “the mentality of choosing a job before employment”, p. 2; “compressed positions in government agencies”, p. 5). Nevertheless, as Chang’s supervisor, I want to emphasize that the author has made great improvements in her English-language writing while working on her thesis, and the work is now quite clearly written.

7. Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.

The author’s use of the grounded theory approach is not always fully clear. The author describes in detail what grounded theory is and provides justifications for its use on pp. 26-28, albeit in a somewhat vague manner, referring mainly to other authors’ accounts of this approach. The open/axial/selective coding appears to be done in a systematic manner, is described in detail and presented in tables in the data analysis section (pp. 34-38). The author undoubtedly identifies some important themes from her data. However, it is unclear to what extent these emerge from the data and to what extent they are reliant on concepts from the Career Choice and Two-Factor theories, which are applied to interpret the findings (and also, to some extent, reflected in the interview guide). Moreover, it is not directly explained how theory is to be built on the basis of the information gathered, in line with this approach. The author does include a theoretical model of career choice theory in Figure 4.1 (p. 48); and a theoretical model exploring employment expectations from a company’s perspective, in line with the Two-factor theory (Figure 4.2, p. 54), based on her results. Both figures, which reflect the author’s research findings concerning factors that she has found to influence employment expectations (social, personal, other, etc.) in connection to the theories applied, could have been more thoroughly explained in the text. Maybe the author can reflect upon these and her use of grounded theory during the thesis defense.

8. What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?

In addition to the suggestion above, I propose the following question for discussion:

- 1) How do you think your research may have differed if you had picked as your respondents BA graduates who are not MA students? Do you anticipate that they would have had similar employment expectations?

2) How would you describe the key contributions of your research to this particular topic in the context of China?

9. I declare that I have checked the result of the originality check of the thesis:

Theses Turnitin Ouriginal (Urkund)

Comment on the result of the check: The Turnitin similarity score is low (14%), with all potentially used sourced similar in the extent of less than 1%. There are no evident problems with referencing.

Overall evaluation of the thesis:

(Please, state clearly whether the thesis is or is not recommended for a defence and write the main reasons for the recommendation).

I recommend this thesis for defense. The student has written a comprehensive work, with relevant research questions, and with a thorough and systematic analysis of primary data collected through interviews, and appropriate application of theories to understand the problem that she has decided to study.

Proposed grade: (A - F)

B

Date: 15/6/2023

Signature: