

Survey on Employment Intention of Nursing Students in Primary Healthcare Institutions

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Abstract: This study investigates the career preferences of nursing students from four undergraduate and vocational colleges in Kunming, Yunnan Province, regarding employment at primary healthcare institutions. The research aims to provide scientific evidence for optimizing graduate employment guidance and encouraging nursing students to pursue grassroots healthcare careers, thereby advancing the development of primary healthcare systems. Conducted from October to November 2025, the survey involved 911 nursing students from Kunming Medical University, Kunming University, Kunming Medical University Haiyuan College, and Yunnan Medical and Health Vocational College through online questionnaires. Results revealed that 74.31% of nursing students expressed willingness to work at primary healthcare facilities, with this preference significantly correlated to parental support and personal passion for the nursing profession. The study emphasizes the importance of strengthening home-school collaboration in career guidance, maintaining effective communication with parents, and cultivating students' professional interest. By transforming their passion for nursing into patriotic dedication, students can align their personal aspirations with the broader goals of national development.

Keywords: Undergraduate and Junior College Students; Nursing Students; Grassroots Employment Intention; Professional Interest; Parental Support

1. Introduction

According to the "Healthy China 2030" Outline issued by the state in 2016, it is required to improve the medical and health service system and achieve equal access to basic medical and health services for all [1]. This has made the demand for grassroots medical and health

professionals increasingly urgent. Nursing students are an indispensable part of the frontline clinical work at the grassroots level. As a nursing education institution, it is crucial to help nursing students establish a grassroots employment perspective and guide them to actively engage in the construction of grassroots medical and health services, which holds significant theoretical and practical value for the implementation of the "Healthy China" national strategy [2]. Meanwhile, in June 2025, the Ministry of Education, together with three other departments, issued the "Notice on Doing a Good Job in the Employment of College Graduates and Other Young People in 2025," which explicitly guarantees grassroots service work, highlighting the high priority given by the government to grassroots employment [3]. Based on this, this paper takes nursing undergraduate and college students as research subjects, uses the cross-sectional research method to investigate and analyze their perceptions of grassroots employment, explores their willingness to work at the grassroots level, and then proposes targeted suggestions and countermeasures to guide nursing students to adapt to the trend of national development and realize their personal life values in grassroots positions.

2. Research Subjects and Methods

2.1 Research Subjects

This study conducted an online survey, with 917 participants completing the questionnaire. The valid responses included 212 students from Kunming Medical University, 222 students from Kunming College, 187 students from Kunming Medical University Haiyuan College, 251 students from Yunnan Medical and Health Vocational College, and 39 students from other institutions, totaling 911 valid responses, achieving a 99.34% response rate.

2.2 Research Methods

This study conducted an online survey via the Wenjuanxing platform from October 22 to November 7, 2025. After performing literature reviews and interviews with medical students, we designed a questionnaire to assess the employment intentions of nursing students at both undergraduate and college levels, referencing Wang Lei's [4] well-established scale and aligning with our research objectives. The questionnaire primarily covered four core variables: students' basic information, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Data were organized and analyzed using Excel, with descriptive statistics presented as counts and percentages. Some data were scored, and independent samples t-tests were performed

using SPSS 30. Results were expressed as "mean \pm standard deviation".

3. Result Analysis

3.1 Basic Information of the Survey Subjects

This survey primarily targeted nursing students from institutions including Kunming Medical University, Kunming University, Kunming Medical University Haiyuan College, and Yunnan Medical and Health Vocational College. A total of 911 valid questionnaires were collected, achieving a 99.34% response rate, which demonstrates both high engagement in expressing employment intentions and the survey's reliability. The demographic profile of the respondents is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic Information of the Survey Participants

Variables and Categories		Number of cases (people)	percentage(%)
sex	woman	769	84.41%
	man	142	15.59%
grade	first grade	266	29.20%
	second grade	126	13.83%
	junior class	341	37.65%
	senior class	178	19.32%
nation	the Han nationality	747	82.00%
	minority nationality	164	18.00%
political status	Non-member	881	96.71%
	organization member	30	3.29%
Whether it is an only child or not	deny	769	84.41%
	yes	142	15.59%
homeplace	rural household registration	757	83.10%
	urban household registration	154	16.90%
Household annual income per capita	Less than 10,000	85	9.33%
	10,000 to 30,000	423	46.43%
	30,000 to 50,000	268	29.42%
	Over 50,000	135	14.82%
The highest educational level of the parents	High school and below	587	64.43%
	junior college	198	21.73%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	126	13.83%
Are you willing to work at the grassroots level?	be willing	677	74.31%
	under protest	234	25.69%

As shown in Table 1, the current survey included 911 participants with a male-to-female ratio of approximately 5.4:1. The survey demonstrated a higher proportion of female students in the nursing program, consistent with its educational characteristics. Students were distributed as follows: 43.3% from lower grades (1st and 2nd years) and 56.7% from higher grades (3rd and 4th years). Ethnic Han students accounted for 82%, while ethnic minorities represented 18.00%, with a balanced distribution in

multi-ethnic regions. Regarding political affiliation, 96.71% were Non-member, with only 3.29% being organization member. Among respondents, 84.41% were non-only children, while only 15.59% were only children. Family registration status showed 83.10% primarily rural and 16.90% urban. Household income distribution revealed: 9.33% earning under 10,000 yuan annually, 46.43% between 10,000-30,000 yuan, 29.42% between 30,000-50,000 yuan, 85.18% below 50,000 yuan,

and only 14.82% above 50,000 yuan. Parental education levels were: 64.43% with high school or below, 21.73% with college diploma, and 13.83% with bachelor's degree or higher.

In this survey, a striking 74.31% of nursing students were employed in primary healthcare institutions.

3.2 Differences in Career Guidance, Professional Interests, and Parental Support

As shown in Table 2, 57.08% of students reported receiving career guidance services at a

moderate frequency (occasionally, 4-6 times), while 22.94% received them frequently (more than 7 times), indicating that most students have engaged with career guidance services at this level or higher. Additionally, over 60% of nursing students expressed interest or strong interest in the nursing major. Regarding parental support, 57.63% of students received support, while only 42.37% expressed disapproval or uncertainty, highlighting the significant role of family factors in career decision-making.

Table 2. Different Employment Guidance, Professional Interest, Parental Support

Variables and Categories		Number of cases (people)	percentage (%)
The implementation of school career guidance programs	Rarely (1-3 times) (3 points)	182	19.98
	Occasionally (4-6 times) (4 points)	520	57.08
	Frequently (>7 times) (5 points)	209	22.94
Interest in nursing work	Very interested (5 points)	40	4.39
	Interested (4 points)	511	56.09
	Not very interested (3 points)	329	36.11
	Not very interested (2 points)	31	3.4
Do your parents support your employment at primary healthcare institutions	Support (5 points)	525	57.63
	Not supported, uncertain (3 points)	386	42.37

3.3 Analysis of different Categories and Grassroots Employment Intention

Table 3 reveals a statistically significant difference in nursing major interest scores between the "unwilling to work at the grassroots level" and "willing to work at the grassroots level" groups ($T=-6.47$, $P=0.01$), indicating that higher interest correlates with stronger willingness to work at the grassroots level. The significant difference in parental support ($T=-12.617$, $P=0.01$) suggests family attitudes

are a key driver. However, the frequency of university career guidance shows no significant impact ($T=-2.431$, $P=0.15$), indicating limited effectiveness of existing guidance services in enhancing grassroots employment willingness. Data from Table 1 further reveals that 85.18% of students come from families with an annual income below 50,000 yuan, and 74.31% express willingness to work at the grassroots level, suggesting economic pressures may drive students to choose stable grassroots positions.

Table 3. Analysis of Different Categories and Grassroots Employment Intention

Different categories	I am not willing to work at the grassroots level.	I am willing to work at the grassroots level.	T	P
Interest in the nursing profession	3.39 ± 0.65	3.69 ± 0.60	-6.47	0.01
College Career Guidance	3.93 ± 0.66	4.06 ± 0.65	-2.431	0.15
Whether parents agree to work at the grassroots level	3.26 ± 1.46	4.33 ± 0.98	-12.617	0.01

4. Discussion

4.1 Nursing Students Have a Strong Willingness to Work in Primary Medical Institutions

The employment of college students has always been one of the important livelihood issues of

social concern. China has implemented the preferential policies of college students' employment in the grass-roots level for more than ten years, and the phenomenon of the shortage of grass-roots talents has been improved. In this survey, as high as 74.31% of nursing students are willing to work in the grass-roots level, which is significantly higher

than many other majors [5,6].

In recent years, college graduates have faced a craze for civil service exams, with many students choosing to join the ranks of civil servants in pursuit of job stability and institutional guarantees [7]. The national strategy of "Healthy China" has led to a growing demand for grassroots medical services, and support policies for grassroots employment have been strengthened. It is crucial for the government to formulate policies that encourage students to participate in programs such as "Three Supports and One Assistance." At the same time, reasonable policies on position management, performance evaluation, and professional title promotion can stimulate the intrinsic motivation of practitioners [8]. With these strong policy supports, the willingness of college students to pursue grassroots employment has been enhanced, which in turn strengthens their overall employment intentions [9].

The preference for stable employment may be linked to the socioeconomic backgrounds of college students. Survey data reveals that 83.1% of students hold rural household registration, with 85.18% of their families earning an annual income below 50,000 yuan. Academic research indicates that family background and parental income significantly influence disparities in educational institutions attended, career destinations, and employment earnings [10]. Rural college graduates are more likely to pursue grassroots employment, having grown up in rural areas and being direct beneficiaries of local economic development. Their optimistic outlook on grassroots career prospects, coupled with the attractive salaries offered by government positions, serves as a major draw. Additionally, students from regular universities demonstrate stronger willingness to work at the grassroots level, primarily because most have internship or part-time experience, giving them clearer understanding of current employment trends and the urgency of job market demands. This awareness helps them establish realistic career goals and plan professionally [11]. As the labor market approaches saturation in high-level talent demand, grassroots employment has become an increasingly popular strategy for college students to avoid intense industry competition.

4.2 The Influence of Professional Interest and Family Support on Students Working in Grassroots Medical Institutions

The results showed that the interest in nursing and the support from parents had a significant impact on the students working in primary medical institutions.

As nursing students, their career orientation primarily focuses on healthcare. Primary healthcare institutions provide abundant practical opportunities and career development prospects. Their passion for nursing naturally leads them to prioritize grassroots employment. Despite the widespread trend of civil service exams, nursing students demonstrate strong inclination toward grassroots work due to their professional characteristics and market demands. Their love for nursing and sense of professional identity actively drive their choice of grassroots positions, as they value hands-on practice and opportunities to serve society more highly.

Secondly, parents play a significant role in shaping their children's career paths. Their involvement during the child's development profoundly influences their social behavior choices [12]. Family support, particularly parental encouragement and recognition, provides students with psychological security and motivation, alleviating concerns about working conditions or compensation in grassroots positions.

These factors collectively significantly enhance students' willingness to pursue grassroots employment, demonstrating that personal interests and family environment play pivotal roles in career choices. It is essential to leverage positive family influences to strengthen the guiding function of family education. Some nursing students face challenges such as unclear understanding of employment prospects, insufficient professional knowledge, lack of career planning, and inadequate self-awareness [13]. Future educational policies should focus on cultivating students' professional interests and enhancing family communication, helping them establish proper employment perspectives and develop effective career plans to further advance the development of grassroots medical talent teams.

5. Conclusion

The study reveals that 74.31% of nursing students prefer grassroots employment, with this preference showing significant correlation to parental support and interest in the nursing profession. The research suggests that in guiding nursing students' career choices, universities

should strengthen home-school collaboration, maintain effective communication with parents, and provide proper career guidance. Additionally, it is crucial to cultivate students' interest in their profession, transforming their passion into patriotic enthusiasm and aligning personal aspirations with the nation's development goals.

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