

## Article

# The Study on the Construction of the Profile of Returned Overseas Students: A Case Study of Guangxi

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**Abstract:** With the deepening of globalization and the acceleration of talent mobility, returned overseas students have become an important force driving local economic innovation and social development. As a key link between China and ASEAN, Guangxi faces significant opportunities and challenges in attracting and utilizing returned overseas students. This paper analyzes the demographic characteristics, main issues, and current situation of returned overseas students in Guangxi, and proposes a series of paths and strategies to address these problems. The research finds that returned overseas students in Guangxi still face difficulties in employment matching, policy support, and social adaptation, with challenges particularly prominent in innovation and entrepreneurship support and career development opportunities. To address these issues, this paper suggests measures such as precise data collection and analysis, optimizing policy support, enhancing social integration, and strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem to promote the effective introduction and long-term development of returned overseas students, thereby advancing Guangxi's economic and social transformation and high-quality development.

**Keywords:** returned overseas students; demographic profile; construction; Guangxi

## 1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out: "We will deepen the implementation of the strategy to strengthen the country with talent. We will uphold the respect for labor, knowledge, talent, and creativity, and implement more active, open, and effective talent policies." With the acceleration of globalization, the frequency of international talent mobility has increased, making international talent a core resource for the development and competition of various countries. Studying abroad, as one of the main ways of talent mobility, has become an important part of global education and technological innovation.

In 2010, Guangxi issued the "Medium- and Long-Term Talent Development Plan Outline (2010-2020)," aimed at achieving the goal of "enriching the people and strengthening Guangxi" through the development of talent resources. The strategic goals of the plan are comprehensive and balanced, with a global perspective and diverse objectives, and it includes a wide range of talent policies and measures [1]. In August 2024, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Department of Human Resources and Social Security identified the main responsibilities of the Guangxi Returned Overseas Students and Experts Service Center: to provide relevant services for the cultivation and use of high-level talents such as experts, postdoctoral fellows, and returned overseas students; to be responsible for the development platform for expert services; to undertake the daily work of building postdoctoral research stations; and to be responsible for the construction of entrepreneurship parks for returned overseas students, improving the employment and entrepreneurship service system for returned overseas students.

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Returned overseas students in China, especially high-level returned talents, have become a key force in national and local economic development, technological innovation, and cultural exchange. Against this backdrop, how to better identify, guide, and utilize the advantages of returned overseas students is crucial for enhancing regional competitiveness. This is especially important for provinces like Guangxi, which is located in the Belt and Road Initiative and is within the influence of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The introduction and proper allocation of returned overseas students is vital. Returned overseas students can bring advanced technology, management experience, and an international perspective, injecting innovative vitality into the local economy and driving industrial upgrading and social modernization. With the country's emphasis on innovation-driven development, the role of returned talents is increasingly prominent in high-tech fields, strategic emerging industries, and innovative enterprises.

For Guangxi, the introduction of returned overseas students can help optimize its industrial structure, especially in cooperation with ASEAN countries, where they can play a significant bridging role in promoting economic and cultural exchanges. The role of returned overseas students in promoting local internationalization, improving education and research levels, and other aspects should not be underestimated.

Guangxi, as a critical land and sea intersection point between China and ASEAN, has unique geographical advantages and cultural resources. However, it also faces challenges such as a relatively simple industrial structure and weak innovation capacity. In recent years, Guangxi has sought to enhance its economic competitiveness by developing high-tech industries and optimizing its talent structure. In this context, returned overseas students are not only an important resource for Guangxi to enhance regional competitiveness and deepen reform and innovation, but also a key force in promoting cooperation with ASEAN countries. A deeper study of the current situation, needs, and issues of returned overseas students in Guangxi will help provide theoretical support and practical guidance for local governments in formulating more precise talent attraction, retention, and utilization policies.

## 2. Demographic Characteristics of Returned Overseas Students in Guangxi

The demographic group of returned overseas students in Guangxi, with the increasing scale of studying abroad and the growing number of returnees, exhibits a series of distinctive characteristics. Most returned overseas students in Guangxi are concentrated in the youth and middle-aged groups, particularly those between 25 and 40 years old. Data on overseas study show that about 22,000 university students and nearly 1,400 full-time faculty members went abroad for further studies and academic exchanges [2]. This age group typically has certain academic and professional backgrounds, having achieved some success in higher education or research both domestically and internationally. Young returnees usually possess high academic enthusiasm and innovation, along with strong adaptability, enabling them to quickly integrate into local social and work environments.

According to surveys, the gender ratio of the returned overseas student group is relatively balanced, with a slight male advantage. Men are more inclined to work in research, engineering, and information technology, while women tend to be more prominent in fields like education, public administration, and cultural and creative industries. In recent years, with the increasing proportion of female returnees, the representation of female talents in high-level talent groups has gradually risen.

The returned overseas talent group in Guangxi has shown a "peak" trend in recent years. Especially under the "Belt and Road" initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development strategy, more and more overseas students have chosen to return home, with strong entrepreneurial and development intentions. Those who have returned in a relatively short period typically have undergone a well-rounded

education system and cross-cultural work experiences, granting them a higher level of international vision.

The academic qualifications of returned overseas students in Guangxi are generally high, with a concentration at the master's and doctoral levels. Although the proportion of doctoral talents is relatively low, their advantages are clear in research and technological innovation. Survey results show that the highest proportion of returned overseas students holds a master's degree (41.04%), followed by those with a doctoral degree (26.59%) and undergraduate degrees (21.39%). Having a high level of education is a typical feature of returned overseas students. Nearly 80% of these talents hold master's, doctoral, or post-doctoral qualifications, with those holding a master's degree representing more than two-fifths. Most of these individuals have received specialized training and practice at well-known universities or research institutions, both domestically and abroad [3].

Most of Guangxi's returned overseas students come from English-speaking countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. However, in recent years, the number of returned overseas students from non-English-speaking countries, such as Southeast Asia and Europe, has been gradually increasing. The diversity of study abroad experiences and academic backgrounds means that returned talents possess a rich knowledge structure, strong cross-cultural communication skills, and an international perspective.

The academic backgrounds of returned overseas students are quite diverse, but science, engineering, and management fields remain dominant. For example, returned students from fields such as computer science, information technology, mechanical engineering, biomedical sciences, and electronics and communications account for a large proportion. At the same time, there has been a gradual increase in the number of returned overseas students in the social sciences, such as economics, law, and international relations.

### **3. Current Situation Analysis of the Construction of the Profile of Returned Overseas Students in Guangxi**

In the context of accelerating globalization and talent mobility, Guangxi, as a "gateway" between China and ASEAN, has gradually increased efforts in attracting and cultivating returned overseas students. To better leverage the role of returned overseas students in the economic and social development of Guangxi, the research and construction of the demographic profile of these talents have become crucial. However, at present, the research and practice in this field in Guangxi are still in their early stages, facing challenges such as a low total talent pool, an imbalanced talent structure, and low talent contribution rates [4].

#### *3.1. Late Start of Research and Inadequate Overall Understanding*

Guangxi's policies for attracting returned overseas students and related theoretical research began relatively late. Although in recent years, with the national emphasis on high-level talents, local governments have gradually increased their efforts to attract returned overseas students, research on talent profiling and data analysis remains insufficient. Existing research mainly focuses on the design and effectiveness evaluation of talent attraction policies, with a lack of systematic studies on the demographic profile of talent groups. Therefore, the formulation and optimization of related policies lack sufficient data support and theoretical foundations.

Currently, Guangxi still has significant shortcomings in the systematic collection and analysis of data on returned overseas students. Many of the specific circumstances and developmental needs of these talents cannot be accurately analyzed through effective survey data. Government departments or research institutions often rely on a few case studies or survey samples, lacking in-depth research and data statistics on the large-scale group of returned overseas students. As a result, information on the true needs, group

characteristics, and employment status of returned overseas students is often fragmented, lacking overall, scientific, and actionable insights.

### *3.2. Imperfect Research Framework and Structural Imbalance*

Most current research focuses on single dimensions such as educational background, academic qualifications, and overseas study experiences, without integrating multiple disciplinary perspectives, such as sociology, economics, and psychology, for comprehensive analysis. For example, factors like the social adaptability, cultural identity, and family background of returned overseas students are rarely addressed in existing studies, yet these factors may have a significant impact on the career development and social integration of returnees. The current research framework is still relatively one-dimensional in terms of methodology and perspective, lacking a comprehensive and multi-dimensional profile analysis of the returned overseas student group.

The structural imbalance of international talent mobility remains present globally. Despite the “multi-center” trend in global talent movement—where talent flows from developing countries to developed countries, among developed countries, and high-end talent flows back to emerging economies—talent movement is still highly correlated with socio-economic development levels. The adjustment of the global industrial structure has led to a dual demand for high-end and practical talents [5]. For Guangxi, as the “gateway” between China and ASEAN, its position in global talent mobility is becoming increasingly important. Guangxi faces the dual challenge of attracting both high-end and practical skills talent, particularly in high-tech, manufacturing, and modern service industries. How to optimize talent attraction policies and alleviate the competitive pressures resulting from the structural imbalance in global talent mobility has become an urgent issue in Guangxi’s talent development strategy.

### *3.3. Lack of Talent Synergy and Difficulty in Resource Integration and Collaborative Development*

Currently, Guangxi has not yet formed a unified and efficient coordination mechanism for attracting and retaining returned overseas students. There are information barriers and communication obstacles between various departments and institutions regarding talent policies, project management, and funding support, making it difficult to effectively integrate and collaboratively utilize talent resources. At the same time, the distribution of returned overseas students in Guangxi is uneven, with most talents concentrated in larger cities such as Nanning and Guilin, while remote and economically underdeveloped regions face relative talent shortages. This uneven distribution limits communication and cooperation among talents within the region, hindering the formation of synergies.

Although Guangxi’s returned overseas students cover multiple fields, there remains a relative scarcity of talent in key sectors and emerging industries. This phenomenon of limited expertise in certain fields restricts the complementarity and synergy between talents, making it difficult to form a diversified talent structure.

## **4. Pathways and Strategies for Constructing the Profile of Returned Overseas Students in Guangxi**

Talent recruitment involves a series of activities aimed at attracting, selecting, and evaluating talents through the formulation of policies, which is central to talent management and an essential driving force for sustainable development in Guangxi [6]. To address issues that returned overseas students face in career development, social integration, policy support, and innovation entrepreneurship, several pathways and strategies can be formulated to promote the effective recruitment, full utilization, and long-term development of returned overseas students.

#### 4.1. Strengthening Data Collection and Precise Profile Construction

Establish a comprehensive data collection mechanism: The government should leverage big data platforms, surveys, and talent tracking systems to conduct regular surveys on returned overseas students, collecting basic information, academic backgrounds, employment intentions, demand types, and other data to build a detailed, systematic talent database. Establish an inter-departmental coordination mechanism: Different departments (such as human resources, education, and science and technology) should strengthen information sharing and establish a joint working mechanism to ensure that various talent data are effectively integrated, updated, and analyzed to support policy-making.

First, precise talent profiling and data analysis are foundational to constructing the profile of returned overseas students in Guangxi. By establishing a comprehensive data collection mechanism and dynamic tracking systems, it becomes possible to better understand the group characteristics and needs of returned overseas students, providing data support for the precise formulation of policies. Second, the precision and effectiveness of policy design and implementation are key to the successful integration of returned overseas students into Guangxi. Personalized recruitment policies should be tailored for returned overseas students in different fields and career stages, ensuring policies are effectively implemented and provide tangible support for talents.

#### 4.2. Optimizing Policy Design and Implementation

Design more precise talent attraction policies based on differences in academic backgrounds, technical fields, job demands, and other factors. For example, high-end technical talents could enjoy greater research funding support, while innovation and entrepreneurial talents could benefit from policies such as financial support and tax reductions. Strengthen policy implementation to ensure policies are genuinely effective. Simplifying the recruitment and reward approval processes and setting up dedicated service windows will ensure that returned overseas students can quickly and conveniently enjoy policy benefits. The government should offer differentiated policy support according to the varying needs of talent. For returned overseas students with master's degrees or below, flexible employment support policies, such as job matching and talent subsidies, should be provided. For doctoral-level high-end talents, special support for entrepreneurship, research funding, and project incubation should be offered.

Additionally, improving social adaptation and a sense of belonging is central to the successful integration of returned overseas students. Strengthening cultural adaptation training, building social recognition, and creating social platforms can enhance returned overseas students' sense of social identity and professional belonging. Optimizing the innovation and entrepreneurial environment is also crucial. Guangxi needs to strengthen the innovation ecosystem and provide support in terms of funding, policies, and resources to offer a fertile ground for returned overseas students' innovation and development. Through policy guidance and ecosystem optimization, bottlenecks in employment, entrepreneurship, and other areas can be addressed, stimulating creativity and potential.

#### 4.3. Efficient Construction of Talent Coordination Mechanism and Resource Integration for Collaborative Development

As a border ethnic region, Guangxi faces many challenges in attracting and retaining returned overseas students. To effectively respond to these challenges, a more comprehensive talent coordination mechanism needs to be established to achieve the optimal allocation and efficient use of resources. First, Guangxi should strengthen top-level design and overall coordination, clarifying the development goals and tasks for returned overseas students. By developing detailed talent development plans, the positioning and role of returned overseas students in Guangxi's economic and social development should be clearly defined, ensuring the coherence and consistency of talent policies. Additionally,

building cross-regional talent coordination institutions will help foster collaborative development between major cities in Guangxi, such as Nanning and Guilin, and neighboring regions, forming a talent development pattern of complementary advantages, resource sharing, and mutual support.

Implementing broader talent exchange programs will facilitate talent flows and cooperation between Guangxi and other regions, both domestically and internationally. For example, a “remote talent cooperation model” can be established, supporting the establishment of “talent enclaves” or “offshore talent centers” in developed areas to attract more excellent talents to innovate and start businesses in Guangxi. Furthermore, Guangxi should enhance its talent coordination service system, providing more convenient and efficient services for returned overseas students. By optimizing processes for household registration and social security transfers, administrative barriers can be reduced, and service efficiency improved.

#### *4.4. Innovation in the Talent Service Supply System for Returned Overseas Students*

To further optimize the service supply system for returned overseas students and promote their steady development in Guangxi, successful domestic reform measures, such as the talent supply-side reforms in the Qianhai Cooperation Zone, can be used as references. In the Qianhai Cooperation Zone, a series of policies supporting talent introduction and financial and tax incentives were introduced to promote the development of emerging industries, such as artificial intelligence. This fostered rapid talent development and the integration of talent chains, industry chains, and innovation chains [7].

Drawing on the experience of the Qianhai Cooperation Zone, Guangxi should integrate government, enterprise, and social resources to build a one-stop service platform for returned overseas students. This platform should offer a full range of services, including policy consulting, career planning, project matchmaking, and life services, ensuring that returned overseas students receive efficient services and support in Guangxi. At the same time, Guangxi should implement tax incentives for returned overseas students and establish a special fund to support innovation and entrepreneurial projects, reducing their entrepreneurial risks and improving their attractiveness to settle and develop in the region.

Furthermore, leveraging Guangxi’s unique geographical and ethnic cultural advantages can help create a talent development environment with distinct local characteristics. For example, establishing innovation industry bases or maritime industry parks for returned overseas students can provide high-quality innovation and entrepreneurial platforms and resources, helping talents gain practical experience in industry-academia-research collaboration while raising Guangxi’s visibility and influence in the international talent market. This will contribute to the reform and implementation of the returned overseas student system and inject new vitality into the economic and social development of Guangxi.

## **5. Conclusion**

Returned overseas students in Guangxi play a crucial strategic role in driving local economic development, enhancing innovation capabilities, and promoting international cooperation. However, this group still faces many challenges in career development, social integration, policy support, and innovation entrepreneurship. To better leverage this valuable talent resource, Guangxi should adopt multidimensional and systematic pathways and strategies to address the existing issues and promote the successful integration and long-term development of returned overseas students.

The potential of the returned overseas student group in Guangxi is vast, and their impact on the region’s economic development and social progress is profound. Through systematic policy design and a comprehensive support system, the various challenges faced by returned talents can be effectively addressed. Creating a favorable environment

that both attracts and retains talent will contribute to the realization of a more open, innovative, and sustainable future for Guangxi.

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