

Current Status and Analysis of Employment and Unemployment Statistics in China and Vietnam

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Abstract: This research examines the employment and unemployment situation in China and Vietnam from the perspective of their employment and unemployment statistical survey systems and methods. Firstly, based on the International Labour Organization's definitions of employment and unemployment, the paper compares the conceptual definitions of employment and unemployment in China and Vietnam, further analyzing the similarities and differences in the statistical survey methods of the two countries. Secondly, it provides a comprehensive description of the basic situation of the labor market employment and unemployment in China and Vietnam from 2018 to 2023, revealing the common challenges faced by the employment markets of the two nations. Finally, based on the analysis of issues related to employment and unemployment statistics in China and Vietnam, the paper proposes targeted countermeasures and suggestions to improve the stability of the employment market and enhance the protection of workers' rights.

Keywords: China; Vietnam; employment statistics; unemployment statistics; employment situation

1. Introduction

Between 2019 and 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the global economy, causing significant fluctuations in labor markets. According to the 2022 10th edition of the ILO World of Work Monitor Report, 94% of countries and regions worldwide closed workplaces to contain the virus's spread. By early 2022, most countries had gradually lifted restrictions, with China following suit by relaxing its controls in December of that year [1]. This easing of measures led to a resurgence of economic activity across various regions; however, the recovery in labor markets varied. In developed economies, employment rates generally returned to or even surpassed pre-pandemic levels, creating a gap in labor demand. In contrast, some countries faced declining economic activity and increasing fiscal deficits due to protective policies, resulting in substantial employment pressures. In 2023, the ILO projected that global unemployment rates would remain below pre-pandemic levels in the coming years; however, low-income countries still exhibit notable employment gaps during their economic recovery.

As important neighboring countries in East Asia, both China and Vietnam implemented strict control measures during the pandemic, but differences in economic and socio-cultural backgrounds led to distinct labor market responses. China, with the world's largest population and third-largest land area, is also the world's second-largest economy, characterized by abundant labor resources and a diverse industrial structure. Vietnam, meanwhile, is a rapidly growing emerging economy in Southeast Asia, with abundant natural resources and an

active export market. Studying the current state and trends in both countries' labor markets will aid in developing more effective employment policies, optimizing human resource allocation, and supporting regional economic cooperation and cultural exchange.

Employment forms the foundation of economic and social stability and development. Understanding the current conditions and trends in the labor markets of both countries aids in formulating targeted policies and measures to promote balanced distribution of employment opportunities and the effective flow of labor. Unemployment is closely tied to social stability and public well-being; analyzing changes in unemployment rates and identifying underlying causes help reveal potential risks and issues in the labor market, allowing for timely intervention and prevention. Examining the differences and characteristics of employment and unemployment in both countries provides essential insights for economic cooperation and labor mobility, facilitating mutual growth in trade, cultural exchange, and other areas of regional collaboration. This paper comprehensively reviews and analyzes the employment and unemployment statistical survey systems, methodologies, and current conditions in China and Vietnam. It explores both countries' statistical systems, policy measures, employment conditions, and social security, with the aim of offering insights for developing more scientifically grounded employment policies, providing theoretical support for corporate recruitment and talent development, and making positive contributions to the prosperity and stability of the China-Vietnam economy.

In recent years, the issue of cross-border employment between China and Vietnam has also gained widespread attention. This phenomenon involves migration, labor mobility, and illegal employment, becoming a focal point of research. Chinese and Vietnamese scholars have conducted in-depth studies on this topic, analyzing China-Vietnam cross-border employment issues from policy, economic, and social perspectives, exploring the impact of migration policies, employment opportunities, and illegal employment, and proposing relevant countermeasures, as demonstrated by Hou Shanghong and Meng Xinxin in 2021 [2]. Another study, conducted through field surveys and data analysis, examined illegal migration and employment along the China-Vietnam border, with Chongzuo City as a case study, investigated by Li Guoliang and Pan Minyi in 2018. Their research highlighted the conflicts between border control policies and the demand for cross-border labor, proposing solutions for managing illegal immigration and employment [3]. Furthermore, the current status of Vietnamese cross-border labor was reviewed from a humanistic perspective, along with proposed human resource management measures for China-Vietnam cross-border labor, in a study by Chen Xue in 2021 [4].

Although there is extensive research on labor market issues in both China and Vietnam, comparative studies on their employment and unemployment statistical systems and methods remain scarce. In particular, with the growing focus on new forms of employment, a comparative study of the employment and unemployment statistics between China and Vietnam is increasingly important, providing a scientific reference for understanding these trends in the new era and serving as a foundation for future policy development and practice.

2. Comparison of Employment and Unemployment Statistics Systems and Methods between China and Vietnam

2.1. Overview of China and Vietnam

China and Vietnam are neighboring countries with close relations. Since the 1980s, both countries began transitioning from traditional agricultural economies and initiated market reforms—China starting in 1978 and Vietnam in 1986. Initially, both countries had similar per capita incomes; however, China's economy grew more rapidly, with its per capita GDP reaching \$12,174 in 2023, compared to Vietnam's \$3,817.2. Differences in land area and population size are also significant factors in the economic disparity between the two countries: China's land area is 29 times that of Vietnam, and its population exceeds 1.4 billion, while Vietnam's population stands at just over 100 million (as shown in Figure 1).

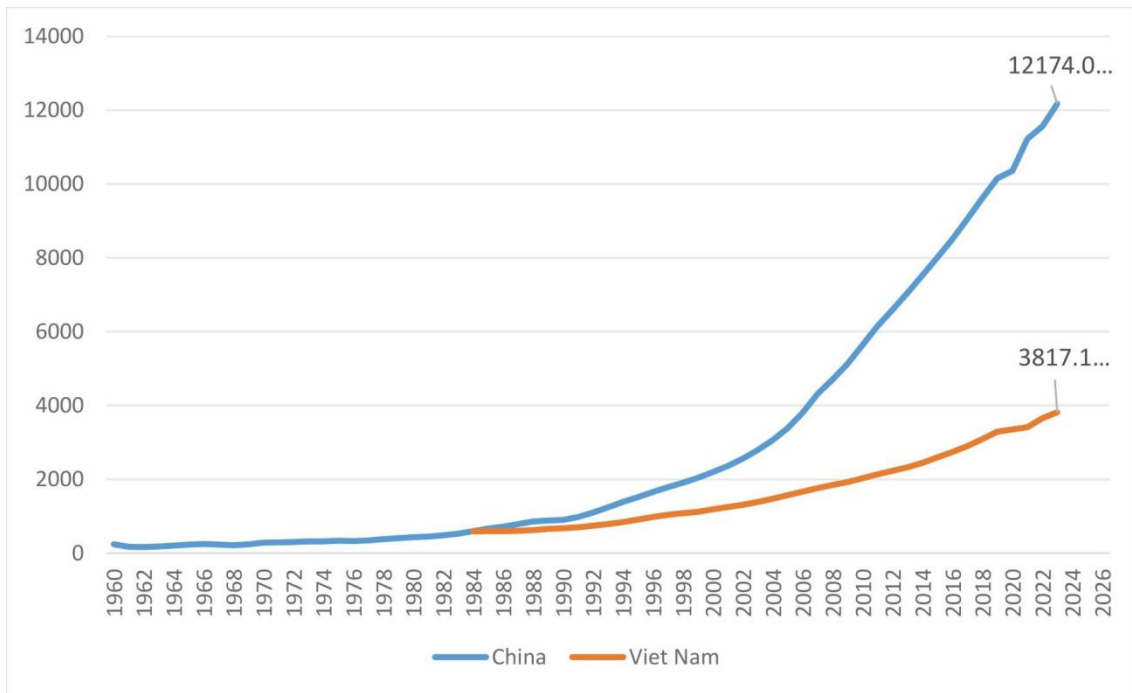


Figure 1. Comparison of GDP per capita (constant 2015 US \$) between Vietnam and China (1960–2023). Source: World Bank Data (data.worldbank.org.cn).

Both Vietnam and China have a pyramid-shaped labor force population, with each country currently in a demographic period advantageous for labor, as the labor force comprises over 60% of the total population (As shown in Table 1). China’s labor structure is gradually aging, whereas Vietnam’s population remains relatively young, with 22% of the population aged 0–14. This youthful demographic provides Vietnam with abundant labor resources, supporting its economic development.

Table 1. Population Structure by Age in China and Vietnam in 2022.

Vietnam			China		
Age Group	Population (million people)	Proportion	Age Group	Population (million people)	Proportion
0-14	22.18	22.30%	0-15	256.9385	18.20%
15-59	63.55	63.90%	16-59	875.56	62%
60-64	4.67	4.70%	60-64	70.26	4.90%
65+	9.05	9.10%	65+	209.78	14.90%

Source: National Statistics Bureau (China and Vietnam).

2.2. Comparison of Employment and Unemployment Concepts and Survey Methods

Employment and unemployment are two core indicators that reflect the current state of the labor market, indicating a country’s level of economic development, policy effectiveness, and social welfare standards. These indicators are of critical importance for national and social stability. It is essential to clarify the definitions of employment and unemployment, as well as the statistical survey methods used internationally and in both China and Vietnam.

2.2.1. Definitions of Employment and Unemployment by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

The 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 1982 defined “employment” as individuals who, during the reference period (the past week), engaged in any work for pay or profit or worked

without pay in a family business or farm for more than one hour daily. Individuals temporarily absent from their jobs due to illness or other reasons were also classified as employed. Unemployment was defined as those of working age who, in the past week, had no job, were actively seeking work, and were available to start within the next two weeks. The labor force is the sum of the employed and unemployed, while the economically inactive population includes individuals of working age who are not part of the labor market (such as students, active military personnel, etc.) [5].

Figure 2 illustrates the ILO’s classification logic for employment, unemployment, and economically inactive populations. For individuals of working age, those who worked at least one hour per day in the past week are classified as employed; those without work who actively sought a job in the past four weeks and are available to start within the next two weeks are considered unemployed. Others who are not actively seeking or are unwilling to work are classified as economically inactive.

In 2013, the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS 19) updated these standards by excluding “subsistence production activities” from the definition of employment, so that household labor for self-sufficiency is no longer counted as employment [6,7]. The update aimed to more accurately reflect changes in the global labor market and emerging forms of employment, such as remote work and platform-based economies. This update improved the accuracy and international comparability of statistical data, helping countries to more effectively develop policies and promote international cooperation in response to the challenges posed by technological advancements and globalization.

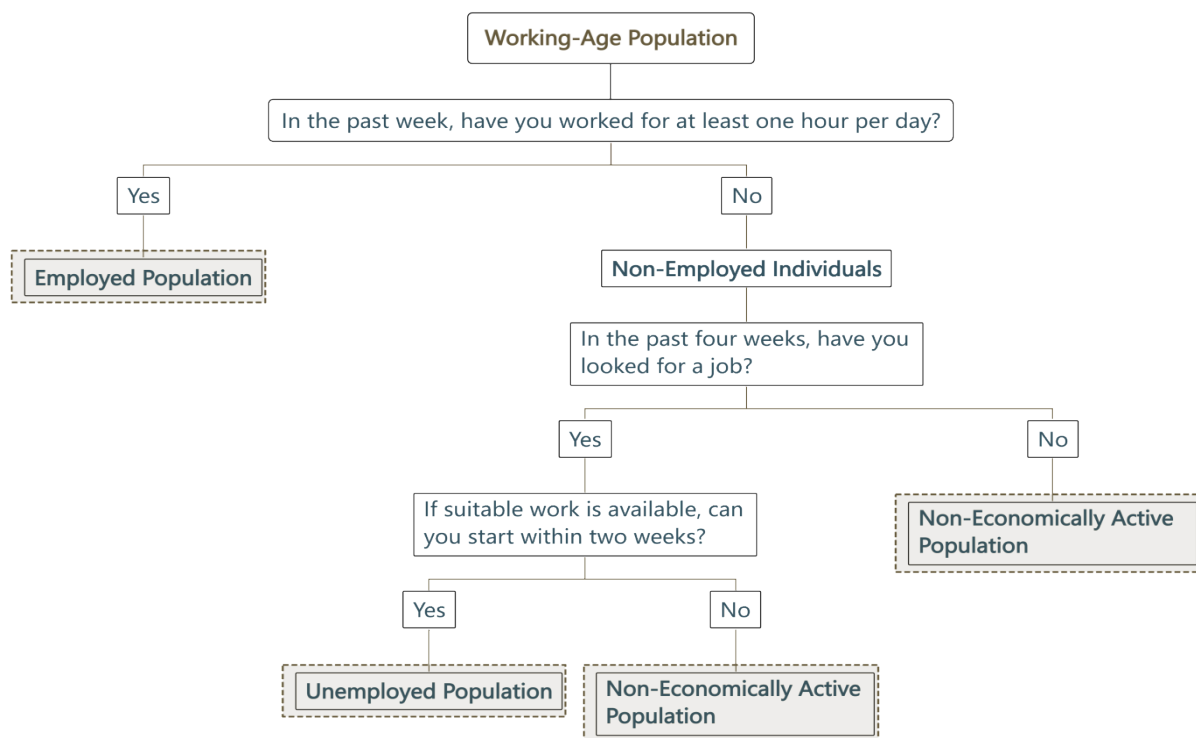


Figure 2. ILO Classification of Employed Population, Unemployed Population, and Economically Inactive Population.

2.2.2. Definitions of Employment and Unemployment in China and Vietnam

As members of the International Labour Organization (ILO), both Vietnam and China adhere to the ILO’s conceptual framework and standards for labor and employment. However, notable differences remain in the scope of employment and unemployment definitions between the two countries. To ensure data aligns with consistent international standards, both China and Vietnam apply the ILO’s standard definitions of employment and unemployment in their labor force surveys, implementing ILO-recommended standards to maintain comparability with data from other countries, which is crucial for integration into the global economic system.

Within the limits allowed by ILO-recommended standards, each country defines the working-age population

slightly differently. According to Table 2, China’s legal working age starts at 16 years, covering only the urban population, while Vietnam’s begins at 15 years and encompasses the entire country. In China, the definition of the employed population includes individuals who work at least one hour per week and those who are temporarily absent from work but retain a job relationship. Vietnam’s definition is broader, encompassing all activities aimed at profit generation or service provision, whether involving goods production or service delivery.

Regarding the definition of unemployment, China imposes a three-month job search period and requires that unemployed individuals be available to start work within the next two weeks. Vietnam has a more inclusive definition, covering all working-age individuals who have sought work within the last 30 days but have not yet found a job. Additionally, China excludes individuals who exceed the retirement age from labor force statistics, while Vietnam includes those beyond retirement age if they are still actively seeking employment. China has also made adjustments to align with domestic labor laws, such as adding the option of “whether someone else is commissioned to seek work on their behalf” in surveys and extending the reference job search period to three months. In contrast, Vietnam follows the ILO’s four-week standard. Given differences in working age, job search period, and retirement age regulations, China’s unemployment data tends to be slightly higher than Vietnam’s.

Table 2. Definitions of Employment and Unemployment in China and Vietnam.

Indicator	China	Vietnam
Working Age	≥16 to retirement age	≥15
Statistical Scope	Urban	National
Employed Population	Persons who worked for one hour or more during the survey week for remuneration or business profit; or individuals who did not work temporarily during the survey week due to on-the-job training, vacation, etc.; or those temporarily not working due to work stoppages or downturns in their organization.	Any activity performed for more than one hour to create or provide goods or services (not prohibited by law) for the purpose of earning wages, compensation, or profit. This also includes individuals who did not work during the survey week but still hold a job and maintain a close connection to it (e.g., receiving wages/compensation while not working or expected to return to work within one month).
Unemployed Population	Urban unemployed persons refer to individuals with non-agricultural household registration who are within a certain working age, capable of working, unemployed, and seeking employment. Urban registration: individuals who need to register for job-seeking at local employment service agencies. Urban sample survey: individuals who have actively sought employment within the three months prior to the survey date.	Unemployed individuals are those who have actively sought employment within the 30 days prior to the survey and are available to start work within the following two weeks; those who have secured a new job that begins after the survey week (without a specific time limit); individuals unable to work due to unexpected family business or temporary illness; and seasonal workers outside of their working season. This category also includes students, retirees, and homemakers actively seeking part-time or full-time employment.
Unemployment Rate	Urban unemployed population / (urban employed population + urban unemployed population)	Unemployed population / (employed population + unemployed population)

2.2.3. Employment and Unemployment Statistical Survey Methods in China and Vietnam

The content of Table 3 below presents a Comparison of Employment Statistics Systems and Methods between China and Vietnam.

China’s employment and unemployment data are derived from three statistical systems: the labor force survey, labor statistics reports, and social insurance data. The labor force survey, initiated in 2005, covers individuals aged 16 and above and is conducted twice a year using sampling methods. The urban unemployment rate is published monthly. To ensure data timeliness, since 2016, the monthly survey sample size has gradually expanded to 340,000 households, covering all prefecture-level and county-level areas. Labor statistics reports, targeting enterprises, public institutions, and non-profit organizations, provide data on wage levels and

employment numbers. Social insurance and unemployment registration data are used to analyze new urban employment figures.

Table 3. Comparison of Employment Statistics Systems and Methods between China and Vietnam.

	China	Vietnam
Survey Target	Population aged 16 and above	Population aged 15 and above
Survey Unit	Housing Unit	Household Unit
Survey Time Point	Employment Status in the Previous Week; Unemployment Status in the Past 3 Months	Employment Status in the Previous Week; Unemployment Status in the Past Month
Frequency	Monthly	Quarterly
Survey Method	Using a 2-10-2 rotation sample model, each household participates in surveys for 2 consecutive months, then is excluded for the next 10 months, before participating again for another 2 months, after which it exits the sample. To ensure sample rotation: (1) Each month, 1/4 of the sample is in its first survey, 1/4 in its second, 1/4 in its third, and 1/4 in its fourth. (2) There is a 50% overlap in samples between consecutive months. (3) Within the same calendar month, 50% of the sample is repeated across years.	Using a 2-2-2 rotation sample model, each household is surveyed for 2 consecutive quarters, then removed from the sample for the next 2 quarters, and reintroduced for the following 2 consecutive quarters. This way, each household is surveyed twice a year, with a 50% overlap in samples between quarters.
Statistical Indicators	Labor Force Employed Persons Total Wage and Average Wage Registered Unemployed Persons and Unemployment Rate in Urban Areas	Labor Force Employed Persons Total and Average Wage Underemployment Status Unemployed Persons and Unemployment Rate
Release Date	National Urban Survey Unemployment Rate Data: Monthly; Other Indicators: Annual	Data reports are released quarterly, semi-annually, every nine months, and annually.

Data Source: Decision on Occupation Investigation Measures for 2022, The State Council the People's Republic of China www.gov.cn

In contrast, Vietnam uses a single labor force survey system. Since 1997, Vietnam has conducted its survey based on the ICLS 13 framework, transitioning to ICLS 19 in the first quarter of 2021. According to the “Decision on Occupation Investigation Measures for 2022” issued by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, these surveys are conducted quarterly, covering 58,932 households across 63 provinces and cities nationwide. With a relatively small sample size, Vietnam employs a “2-2-2” model, whereby each household participates in surveys for two consecutive quarters, followed by a two-quarter break, to efficiently manage resources and ensure data stability [8].

According to Feng Shuaizhang in “Scientific Standardization of Survey Unemployment Rate Statistical Methods”, China employs a 2-10-2 model, with a larger sample size due to its high population and mobility, with separate statistics for urban and rural areas, resulting in higher survey complexity. China’s unemployment rate data is released monthly, while other indicators are published annually [9]. In comparison, Vietnam’s labor force data is published quarterly, meeting the needs of government and businesses. These statistical methods reflect each country’s population distribution and labor force structure, showcasing their respective statistical needs and capabilities.

3. Comparative Analysis of Employment and Unemployment Status in China and Vietnam

The data in Table 4 presents the main employment statistics indicators for China and Vietnam from 2019 to 2023. The indicator “working-age population” refers to individuals aged 15 and above in Vietnam, while in

China, it refers to those aged 16 and above. For the youth unemployment rate indicator, Vietnam's statistics cover individuals aged 15 to 24, whereas China's cover those aged 16 to 24. The primary data sources for China's employment statistics are the China Labor Statistical Yearbook (2019-2023), while Vietnam's employment statistics are derived from the Vietnam Labor and Employment Survey Report (2019-2023). All data for 2023 are preliminary estimates, and China's preliminary 2023 data is sourced from the Statistical Bulletin of the People's Republic of China on National Economic and Social Development in 2023, published by the National Bureau of Statistics [10].

Table 4. Employment Statistics Indicators in China and Vietnam.

Indicator	Vietnam					China				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	pre 2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	pre 2023
Total Population (million people)	96,48	97,58	98,5	99,46	100,31	1410,08	1412,12	1412,6	1411,75	1409,67
Working-age Population (million people)	73,18	74,37	74,6	75,41	76,335	1159,09	1143,82	1149,58	1155,6	1161,78
Labor Force (million people)	55,76	54,84	50,56	51,7	52,376	789,85	783,92	780,24	768,63	779,24
Employed Population (million people)	54,65	53,6	49,07	50,6	51,287	754,47	750,64	746,52	733,51	740,41
Urban Population (million people)	17,56	17,51	17,76	18,7	19,071	452,49	462,71	467,73	459,31	470,32
Rural Population (million people)	37,09	36,09	31,3	31,89	32,216	301,98	287,93	278,79	274,2	270,09
Employment Rate	75,3%	72,1%	65,8%	67,1%	67,2%	65,1%	65,6%	64,9%	63,5%	63,7%
Urban Employment Rate	32,13%	32,68%	36,21%	36,97%	37,18%	59,97%	61,64%	62,65%	62,62%	63,5%
Rural Employment Rate	67,87%	67,32%	63,79%	63,03%	62,80%	40,03%	38,36%	37,35%	37,38%	36,5%
Labor Force Participation Rate*	76,8%	74,4%	67,7%	68,6%	68,9%	68,1%	68,5%	67,9%	66,50%	67,1%
National Unemployment Rate	2,17%	2,48%	3,20%	2,34%	2,28%	-	-	-	-	-
Survey-based Urban Unemployment Rate	3,11%	3,89%	4,33%	2,82%	2,73%	5,20%	5,20%	5,10%	5,50%	5,20%
Registered Urban Unemployment Rate	-	-	-	-	-	3,62%	4,24%	3,96%	-	-
Youth Unemployment Rate	6,51%	7,21%	8,55%	7,78%	7,63%	11,88%	14,19%	14,26%	17,56%	14,90%

Note: * Labor force participation rate = Labor force / Population within the working age.

3.1. Recent Labor Force Trends in China and Vietnam

China's population is 14 times that of Vietnam, providing a considerably larger labor force. Although China's defined working age is one year shorter than Vietnam's, the labor participation rates in both countries are very similar. Additionally, as both countries are currently experiencing a demographic golden age in terms of labor force, fluctuations in labor supply and employment have shown similar trends in recent years.

In employment data, China's employment reached 789.85 million people in 2019, while Vietnam's reached 55.76 million. By 2021, both countries saw declines in their labor forces, with China's workforce at 780.24 million—a reduction of approximately 9.61 million, which is 1.22% of the 2019 labor force. In Vietnam, the workforce decreased to 50.56 million, a decline of about 5.20 million, or 9.32% of its 2019 labor force. It's evident that the labor markets in both China and Vietnam have been unavoidably impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, China's fluctuation rate was only 1.8%, while Vietnam's was as high as 8.7%.

The difference can be attributed to China's government policies during the pandemic, which encouraged and developed new types of jobs based on the internet and software, creating more flexible employment opportunities to adapt to the complex pandemic situation. In 2021, Vietnam saw a sharp reduction in its employed population, primarily due to the adoption of the new ICLS19 framework, which no longer classifies certain self-sustaining work as employment.

After 2021, with the pandemic under control, Vietnam's socio-economic conditions stabilized, and the labor force grew. Specifically, it increased by 1.1445 million in 2022, a growth rate of 2.26%, and by 676,000 in 2023,

a growth rate of 1.31%. In contrast, China continued its “zero-Covid” policy in 2022, implementing quarantine measures to prevent virus transmission. As shown in Table 4, China’s labor force decreased slightly from 780.24 million in 2021 to 768.63 million in 2022, a total reduction of 1.49%. However, at the end of 2022, China lifted its “zero-Covid” policy and reopened, leading to a positive shift in the labor market in 2023, with an increase of 10.61 million people—a 1.38% rise from 2022.

3.2. Severe Impact of COVID-19 on the Employment Markets in China and Vietnam

During the pandemic, the employment markets in China and Vietnam were severely impacted. According to the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, as of December 2020, approximately 32.1 million Vietnamese workers aged 15 and above were negatively affected by the pandemic [11]. Of these, 69.2% experienced income reduction, 39.9% had reduced working hours or were on rotational leave, and 14.0% were forced to halt work. In 2021, Vietnam’s employment dropped significantly, with 5.58 million fewer employed individuals compared to 2019, marking a 10% decline and pushing the unemployment rate up to 3.2%, an increase of 1.03 percentage points from 2019. This period is regarded as the most severe for Vietnam’s labor market during the pandemic.

Although Vietnam began vaccinating its population in 2021, multiple outbreaks of virus variants forced the government to implement extensive lockdowns and social distancing measures to contain the spread. Many businesses were compelled to close temporarily, resulting in a rise in the unemployment rate from 2.48% in 2020 to 3.20% in 2021. By 2022, with the population having received at least two vaccine doses, Vietnam gained some immunity to the virus, and life, along with economic activities, gradually returned to pre-pandemic levels. Consequently, the employment rate rose from 65.8% to 67.1% and the unemployment rate dropped from 3.20% to 2.34%, further declining to 2.28% in 2023. This indicates a steady stabilization of the labor market.

In contrast, China’s labor force continued to decline from 2019 to 2022, with the employment rate dropping from 65.1% in 2019 to 63.5% in 2022. The urban surveyed unemployment rate rose from 5.2% in 2019 to 5.5% in 2022. While this rate increased, it remained relatively stable during 2020–2021. The pandemic significantly impacted China’s economic and social development, with the average monthly urban surveyed unemployment rate in 2020 rising by 0.47% from the previous year, going from 5.15% to 5.62%. Notably, in February 2020, the urban surveyed unemployment rate reached a historic high of 6.2%. However, in 2021, the unemployment rate fell slightly, coming in 0.1 percentage points lower than in 2019, primarily due to the creation of new employment models. By 2023, China’s employment rate rose by 0.2%, and the unemployment rate returned to the pre-pandemic level of 5.2%.

Overall, China’s labor market remained relatively stable, with the unemployment rate fluctuating around 5.5%. Despite the general decline in labor markets in both countries from 2019 to 2021, China experienced relatively less impact compared to Vietnam and other smaller economies. From 2022 onwards, Vietnam’s labor market recovery accelerated, while China demonstrated strong stability. By 2023, both countries showed positive trends in employment and unemployment rates.

3.3. Opposite Urban-Rural Employment Gaps in China and Vietnam

As both countries pursue a market economy, the number of urban workers has tended to rise during the urbanization process. However, in Vietnam, employment in rural areas remains higher. Figure 3 shows the urban-rural employment structure in both countries. In 2019, Vietnam’s rural employment stood at 37.09 million, accounting for 67.87% of total employment, 2.11 times higher than urban employment. By 2023, urban employment increased by 5.05%, reducing the urban-rural gap, with rural employment now 1.68 times that of urban areas.

In contrast, China’s urban employment consistently surpasses rural employment. In 2019, urban employment in China reached 452.49 million, comprising 59.97% of the national total. By 2023, urban employment had risen by 3.55% compared to 2019, while rural employment continued to decline, reaching 318.9 million, making urban employment 1.74 times higher than rural employment.

This urban-rural employment structure indicates that Vietnam’s labor force is primarily concentrated in rural areas, while China’s is centered in urban regions. The main reasons for this disparity in urban and rural

employment structures between China and Vietnam are as follows:

Economic development levels: China's higher economic development has driven rapid urbanization, while Vietnam's slower growth means rural employment remains predominant.

Agricultural and industrial structures: China's advanced agricultural mechanization has reduced labor needs in rural areas, encouraging migration to cities. In Vietnam, agriculture still occupies a significant portion of the national economy, with most employment concentrated in rural areas.

Policy drives: China has implemented various policies to accelerate urbanization, supporting manufacturing and services that create urban employment opportunities. Vietnam, by contrast, has a slower urbanization process and policies that rely more on rural employment.

These economic, industrial, and policy differences have led to the significant disparities in urban and rural employment structures between China and Vietnam.

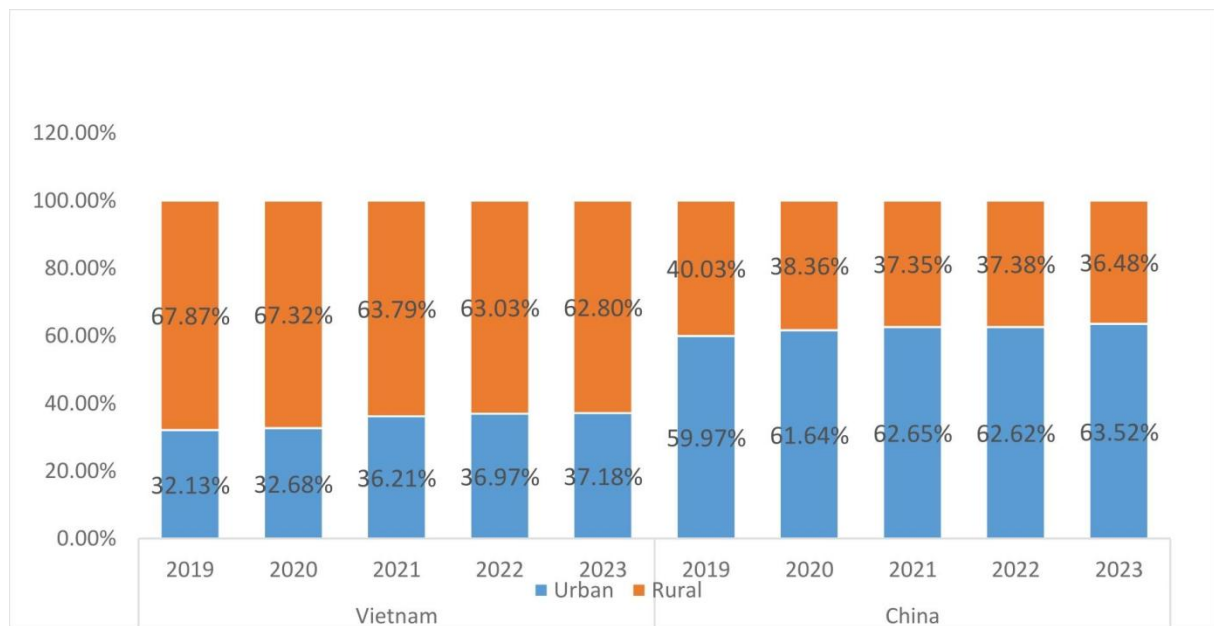


Figure 3. Urban-Rural Structure of Employed Population in China and Vietnam.

3.4. Higher Youth Unemployment Rate

According to data from the statistical offices of China and Vietnam, the youth unemployment rate among those aged 15 to 24 is high in both countries, but China's rate is significantly higher, nearly double that of Vietnam. Nevertheless, the general trend in youth unemployment is similar in both countries.

As shown in Figure 4, China's youth unemployment rate has been steadily rising from 2019 to 2022. In 2019, the urban unemployment rate among Chinese youth aged 16 to 24 was 11.88%, increasing to 14.19% in 2020 and 14.26% in 2021, and further climbing to 17.56% in 2022, a total increase of 3.3 percentage points. Meanwhile, Vietnam's youth unemployment rate rose from 6.51% in 2019 to 8.55% in 2021 but saw some relief in 2022, decreasing by 0.77 percentage points. In 2023, although China's youth unemployment rate declined slightly, it remained notably higher than that of Vietnam, where the youth unemployment rate continued to improve gradually.

In a report released on August 15, 2022, China's National Bureau of Statistics noted that in July 2022, the unemployment rate among urban youth aged 16 to 24 in China reached 19.9%, up 0.6 percentage points month-over-month—marking the highest level since this statistic began being recorded in 2018 [12]. Due to ongoing economic slowdown, the aging of sectors like internet and manufacturing, and the limited capacity of industries like education and training to absorb a large number of young workers, Chinese youth are facing significant employment pressure. In contrast, the larger scale of China's economy and stricter employment requirements have led many young people to experience "graduation unemployment". Addressing youth unemployment is a shared challenge for both China and Vietnam, requiring urgent and effective measures.

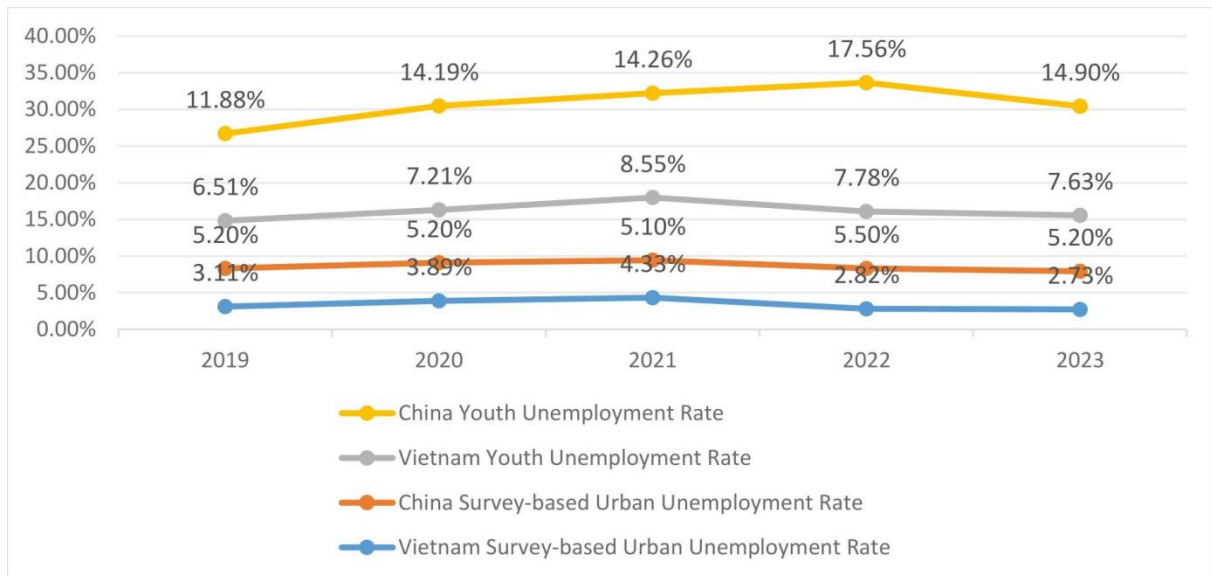


Figure 4. Comparison of Youth Unemployment Rates in China and Vietnam (2019-2023).

4. Strategies and Recommendations for Employment and Unemployment Statistics in China and Vietnam

4.1. Conclusion

From the analysis of employment and unemployment statistics and related issues in China and Vietnam, the following conclusions are drawn:

First, there are certain differences in statistical methods, survey subjects, and indicators for employment and unemployment in China and Vietnam. China's statistical methods are more complex, utilizing a larger sample size and higher-frequency surveys to ensure data comprehensiveness and accuracy. In contrast, Vietnam tends to use a simplified, resource-saving approach with a smaller sample size, focusing more on efficiency. The two countries also differ in terms of working-age definition, unemployment criteria, and survey frequency.

Second, in recent years, China's labor market has shown a slight downward trend, mainly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, though it has remained relatively stable overall. Urban employment has continued to grow with the urbanization process. However, the youth unemployment rate has been rising yearly, potentially related to economic restructuring and an increase in the number of graduates. Vietnam's labor market was more significantly impacted by the pandemic, with a noticeable rise in the unemployment rate, though it showed recovery in 2022. The urban-rural employment gap has narrowed, with the urban employment ratio increasing, but rural employment still occupies a substantial share. Both countries face the challenge of high youth unemployment rates.

4.2. Strategies and Recommendations for Employment and Unemployment Statistics in China and Vietnam

4.2.1. Strategies and Recommendations for Vietnam's Employment and Unemployment Statistics

Optimize Employment Survey Methods and Data Collection Techniques: The Vietnamese government should enhance employment survey methods, using scientific tools and technologies to increase sample size and data collection frequency (shifting from quarterly to monthly) to ensure data accuracy and provide a reliable basis for policy-making. More frequent publication of employment data would help the government track market changes in real-time, adjust policies accordingly, and promote economic and social stability.

Strengthen Employment Support for Youth: The government should introduce more youth employment policies, providing vocational training and entrepreneurship support, encouraging companies to increase youth hiring, and offering career advancement opportunities. Additionally, the government can offer financial and technical support to qualified young entrepreneurs, fostering innovation and injecting new momentum into the economy.

Enhance Rural Employment Levels and Narrow the Urban-Rural Gap: The government should increase support for rural employment, promote labor migration to urban areas, develop rural industries, and create more

jobs. By strengthening urban-rural integration, optimizing resource allocation, and fostering balanced economic development nationwide, Vietnam can further reduce the employment gap.

4.2.2. Strategies and Recommendations for China's Employment and Unemployment Statistics

Refine Statistical Standards and Improve Data Accuracy: In terms of measuring employment and unemployment, China's statistical criteria are relatively lenient, such as extending the job search period to three months without detailed classification of individuals at the boundary between employment, unemployment, and non-labor force status. This may lead to risks of overestimation or underestimation of employment and unemployment rates. Enhancing international comparison and learning from advanced statistical practices from international organizations and other countries could further improve China's statistical standards and capabilities. Conducting comparative research with other countries could help identify best practices suited to China's national conditions, advancing the standardization and scientific development of employment and unemployment statistics.

Address Youth Employment Challenges through Job Guidance and Entrepreneurship Support. The government can address youth employment issues in various ways, including:

Promote Education and Training: Increase investment in youth education and training to improve employability and competitiveness.

Encourage Entrepreneurship: Support youth entrepreneurship through policies and funding, providing more opportunities and platforms for young entrepreneurs.

Enhance Employment Services: Strengthen employment services and information dissemination to provide more job opportunities and position information for youth.

Encourage Companies to Increase Youth Hiring: The government can incentivize companies to increase youth hiring by formulating relevant policies to support recruitment and talent development for young employees.

4.2.3. Recommendations to Promote Cooperative Development and Increase Employment in China and Vietnam

Enhance Knowledge Exchange and Share Labor Statistics Expertise: China and Vietnam should foster in-depth cooperation by exchanging knowledge and sharing expertise in labor and unemployment statistics. Organizing joint workshops, training sessions, and research projects will help improve the quality of labor statistics in both countries and optimize measurement methodologies to suit each nation's unique conditions. Reliable labor data is essential for informed policymaking, supporting stable employment growth in both countries.

Develop Joint Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship Support Programs: Both nations can collaborate on vocational training programs, especially in high-demand fields such as information technology, industrial manufacturing, and services. These programs should focus on developing practical skills aligned with market needs, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of young workers. Additionally, joint entrepreneurship support initiatives will provide young people with opportunities to start new businesses, fostering innovation and economic growth in both countries.

Promote Labor Mobility Policies and Develop Linked Economic Zones: China and Vietnam could establish linked economic zones along their shared borders, encouraging labor from both countries to participate in joint economic projects. Facilitating labor mobility through supportive policies will allow workers to access employment in high-demand areas, reducing unemployment and driving economic growth in these regions.

Increase Investment in Rural Industrial Development: Collaborative projects in rural industrial and agricultural development will create more job opportunities and increase income sources for rural populations in both countries. This approach not only narrows the urban-rural employment gap but also stabilizes the economy by reducing unnecessary migration to large urban centers.

Strengthen Worker Rights and Social Protection Policies: Implementing policies that safeguard worker rights and provide robust social protection is crucial for establishing a sustainable labor environment. China and Vietnam should cooperate to share best practices in building programs for unemployment insurance, retraining,

and worker health benefits. By securing social protections, both countries can increase job security, enhance productivity, and minimize the adverse effects of economic fluctuations.

4.3. *Limitations and Future Research Directions*

First, discrepancies in statistical standards and definitions between China and Vietnam may limit data comparability, as differing interpretations of employment and unemployment can lead to variations in reported outcomes. Additionally, limitations in survey frequency and scope may affect the timeliness and comprehensiveness of findings, potentially underestimating or overestimating certain employment trends, particularly in rural and youth populations.

This study may also be limited by its focus on labor market indicators within formal employment sectors, potentially overlooking significant segments of the informal economy, especially in Vietnam's rural areas and certain urban sectors in China. Furthermore, the influence of external economic factors, such as global market shifts and technological advancements, has not been fully addressed, which could affect labor market stability and youth employment rates in unanticipated ways.

Future research could address these limitations by exploring longitudinal data across a wider range of economic sectors to capture long-term labor market dynamics. Studies on the informal labor market's role in national economies would offer a more comprehensive view of employment and social welfare standards in both countries. Additionally, future research could examine the impact of specific employment policies, such as youth programs and rural-to-urban migration incentives, on employment outcomes and regional disparities. Comparative studies with other emerging economies could provide insights into the effects of globalization and technological change on labor markets, enhancing the broader applicability of these findings.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Institutional Review Board Statement

This study did not involve any human or animal subjects and therefore did not require ethics approval. All data used in the study were obtained from publicly available sources.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Not applicable.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Professor Zhou Nan Nan for her support and contributions to this research. Special thanks to Professor Zhou for her valuable insights and feedback during the preparation of this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest. There are no financial or personal relationships that could have influenced the research presented in this manuscript.

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