

Current Employment Challenges and Corresponding Solutions in China

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Abstract. This paper elaborates on the employment problems in China and proposes solutions from the perspectives of regional differences and environmental changes. There is a clear problem of urban-rural segmentation in China. There are relatively few employment opportunities in rural areas, and the influx of urban population has led to an increase in urban employment pressure. At the same time, the transfer and employment of rural labor force is also a problem that needs to be solved. There are regional differences in the development of China's economy and employment opportunities. Coastal areas and developed cities usually have more employment opportunities and economic development, while inland and underdeveloped areas face the problem of insufficient employment opportunities. This exacerbates the income gap and population mobility between regions. With the intensification of aging population, the demand for employment in fields such as elderly care and healthcare is also increasing. Understanding the employment challenges in the job market can guide the formulation and implementation of employment promotion policies, entrepreneurial support policies, and vocational training subsidies, in order to improve employment levels and reduce unemployment rates.

Keywords: Urban-rural segmentation, regional differences, aging population.

1. Introduction

China is one of the most populous countries in the world, with huge labor resources and growing employment demand. The Chinese government has been committed to promoting employment, promoting economic growth and industrial upgrading, and providing more job opportunities. Urban areas have relatively good economic development, with more job opportunities and diverse career choices. However, there are relatively few employment opportunities in rural areas [1], mainly concentrated in agriculture and traditional industries which making the mechanism of commodity price changes more complex [2]. China has a large population and significant employment pressure. Every year, a large number of college graduates enter the job market, making job competition fierce. At the same time, some job transfers, laid-off workers, and migrant workers also face employment difficulties.

Studying employment issues can help people understand the situation of the job market, the supply-demand relationship of labor, and changes in industrial structure, thereby better grasping the trends and directions of economic development.

A good employment situation can not only improve personal financial status and quality of life, but also contribute to social stability, poverty reduction, and promoting social harmony. Studying employment issues can help the government and society formulate relevant policies and provide better employment opportunities and welfare guarantees.

Addressing these issues requires cooperation among government departments, enterprises, and various sectors of society, strengthening vocational training, promoting industrial upgrading, improving the social security system, and building a fair, inclusive, and sustainable employment environment.

2. Challenges of Employment in China

2.1. Urban vs. Rural

In July 2023, the national urban survey unemployment rate stood at 5.3 percent, it was up by 0.1 percentage points from August. The employment situation is becoming more and more severe, with structural problems concerning employment coming to the fore, one of which is the urban-rural divide. China's segmentation in urban and rural areas has a long history, originating from the implementation of reform and opening-up policies. At the beginning of the reform and opening-up policy, the family contract responsibility system was gradually implemented in rural areas, which led to the gradual recovery of the rural economy, while at the same time the urban economy developed more rapidly, resulting in the widening of the income gap between urban and rural areas [3]. As urbanization accelerates, the urban population continues to increase, and rural population loss intensifies, further widening the gap between urban and rural areas.

Population outflow reflects the problem of employment. There are relatively few employment opportunities in rural areas, and most farmers are still engaged in agriculture and rural by-products, while urban areas offer more employment opportunities in such fields as industry and services. This has led to a relative lack of employment opportunities for rural residents and a highly competitive urban job market. Meanwhile, cities have more high-quality educational resources, including excellent schools and universities. In contrast, educational resources in rural areas are limited and of low quality, and rural laborers lack learning opportunities and platforms to qualify for high-skill positions, limiting their career development. From an institutional perspective, one significant impediment to the resolution of the urban-rural divide issue is the household registration system in China, according to which urban and rural residents are classified into different types of household registration, with urban household registration usually enjoying more benefits and rights, while rural household registration is subject to certain limitations, such as inequality in healthcare coverage, thus further exacerbating the tendency of the main force of employment to be tilted towards the urban areas [4]. The prioritization of economic transformation in the context of systemic change.

To solve the problem of urban-rural division, the first step is to start with the reform of the household registration system, by gradually narrowing the difference between urban and rural household registration, providing more social welfare and rights and interests to rural residents, helping them with their employment and life in the local area, and thus reducing the mobility of the population, for example, by expanding the scope of medical insurance coverage in the rural area and improving the allocation of medical resources to reduce the urban-rural healthcare disparity, and, at the same time, improving the rural social security system and raise the level of social security for rural residents. Secondly, it must pay attention to the development of the rural economy, encourage the development of rural enterprises and industries in rural areas, and provide policy support and financial assistance to increase employment opportunities in rural areas, such as the establishment of a rural financial support system, so as to fundamentally revitalize the local economy, attract the return of talents and even cultivate local talents, promote the upgrading of rural industries, and raise the income level of rural residents. The sustainable development of the economy requires the continuous injection of vitality into education, so it is also necessary to increase investment in education in rural areas, improve the quality of rural education, ensure that rural students have equal opportunities to receive education, provide them with more resources for development, and improve their occupational competitiveness [5].

2.2. Regional Inequalities

Regional inequalities may be seen as a more refined manifestation of the urban-rural difference, whereby they represent imbalances in regional development over a broader geographical area. The urban-rural difference may be seen as an enhanced manifestation of regional differences to a certain extent. The phenomenon of regional disparities in China mostly stems from the divergent economic, social, and demographic characteristics shown throughout different regions within the nation. In

broad terms, it can be seen that coastal regions and major urban centers like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou exhibit higher degrees of economic advancement and provide a wider array of work opportunities. Conversely, inland and less developed places tend to have slower rates of economic growth and offer fewer prospects for employment.

The phenomenon of regional disparity may mostly be attributed to historical heritage. The reform and opening-up programs of China first prioritized the coastal regions. This phenomenon might be attributed to the higher concentration of natural resources in coastal districts and their strategic geographical location, which facilitates international investment and commerce. These factors were directly responsible for the rapid economic growth seen in these locations [6]. According to the second source, on the contrary, the inland areas received comparatively less attention in terms of policy formation and resource allocation. Over time, regions that experienced economic growth acquired a prominent infrastructure and business climate, along with enhanced educational resources. Furthermore, the presence of several universities and research institutes contributes to the availability of a highly skilled workforce and the establishment of high-caliber firms. Various causes played a significant role in fostering increased modernization and development, resulting in an enduring cycle of prosperity. Additionally, these variables contributed to the emergence of a widening disparity between coastal regions, which possessed a strong historical foundation, and inland places that lacked such a basis. Furthermore, on a broader scale and over an extended duration, these factors also gave rise to regional employment challenges. These several variables, together, led to the continued process of modernization and growth.

To narrow regional differences, it is necessary to start with overall regional development planning, for example, to clarify development policies that support inland and less developed regions, and to artificially guide the flow of investment and resources to these regions through government regulation [7]. At the same time, it is necessary to do a good job of undertaking the work of increasing investment in the construction of inland region infrastructure, improving infrastructure such as transportation, communications and energy supply, and improving regional competitiveness. It is also important to improve regional competitiveness through the formulation of tax and financial policies that are favorable to the inland region and less developed regions. The government can encourage enterprise investment and development by formulating tax and financial policies favorable to inland regions and underdeveloped regions, provide enterprises with employment services and assistance in the introduction of talents, and attract high-quality talents to go to the inland regions to work and live, as well as increase efforts to raise the level of education in the inland regions and cultivate a high-skilled workforce to meet the needs of emerging industries. Fundamentally, the core of inland economic development is to get rid of backward production capacity, so it is necessary to steadily promote the industrial upgrading and transformation of inland areas, encourage the development of new industries and high-tech industries, and improve the added value of regional industries [8]. It is necessary to resolutely get rid of the development model that depletes resources at the expense of environmental protection, ensure that economic development is coordinated with environmental protection, realize sustainable development, and improve the industrial structure of inland areas. Only by balancing the distribution of resources, promoting synergistic regional development, raising the level of education, and strengthening infrastructure construction will it be possible to gradually reduce regional disparities and achieve a more balanced distribution of economic growth and employment opportunities.

2.3. Aging Population

One of the foremost challenges being faced by the global community is the phenomenon of population aging. In a broad context, the term “population aging” refers to the increase in the number of elderly individuals within a given population. This demographic shift is often quantified by calculating the ratio of individuals aged 60 and above in relation to the total population. Due to the progress made in medical technology and sanitary practices, there has been a notable increase in the average life expectancy of the general population. Consequently, there has been a corresponding

upward trend in the population segment aged 65 and above. Currently, there is a global trend of declining fertility rates in several nations, resulting in a decrease in the overall number of births and a corresponding rise in the percentage of older individuals within populations. Simultaneously, individuals belonging to the baby boomer generation, born during the mid-20th century, are progressively transitioning into the senior demographic segment in contemporary times. This phenomenon has resulted in a significant rise in the percentage of elderly individuals [9]. Commencing in August 2023, the dissemination of the urban survey unemployment rate, categorized by age group, including young individuals and other demographic cohorts, will be temporarily halted nationwide. The need to make modifications to the criteria of the relevant indicators exemplifies the inherent complexity of the issue of teenage employment.

In broad terms, the phenomenon of aging population may be attributed to the worldwide progress in medical technology and enhanced sanitary practices. The reason for this phenomenon may be attributed to the correlation between improved accessibility to high-quality healthcare services and a decrease in the likelihood of early mortality. Additionally, the presence of comprehensive social security systems, including provisions such as pensions, health insurance, and long-term care insurance, facilitates the ability of the senior demographic to maintain their livelihoods and extend their lifespan. As a result, the global population is seeing an increase in age. Simultaneously, there has been a notable improvement in individuals' health due to the sustained enhancement of their nations' economies, leading to higher standards of living, improved dietary and lifestyle practices, increased levels of education, and broader health education. These factors have collectively enabled individuals to effectively manage their health. The current decline in fertility seen in several countries is not attributable to one reason. Instead, it may be attributed to a combination of cultural changes, shifts in attitudes, gains in women's rights, and gender disputes, all of which play significant roles. The phenomenon of employment challenges may be attributed to the diminishing size of the labor force, which is comprised of young adults. This decline can be traced back on many factors, including a significant fall in the number of newborns, a steady increase in the population of those aged 65 and above, and a pronounced imbalance in the age distribution within countries.

This has led to an age structure that is significantly imbalanced. In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative to implement short-term policies that are specifically designed to generate additional job opportunities, with a particular focus on the elderly care and healthcare sectors. These sectors encompass various roles, such as nursing care, healthcare facility management, and health information technology. By doing so, the market will be better equipped to address the inherent imbalance between supply and demand while also facilitating the efficient redistribution of resources. The provision of enhanced training and retraining opportunities by the government might potentially provide advantages for both young individuals and those now engaged in their professional careers. Such initiatives have the potential to enhance their employability and foster private sector investment. The government has the ability to use incentives as a means to entice private sector investment in certain areas. In the long run, it is imperative to facilitate a smooth transition and transformation of the industrial structure from labor-intensive to technology-driven. This shift aims to diminish the reliance of economic progress on the workforce while concurrently contemplating a gradual increase in the retirement age [10]. This measure seeks to alleviate the financial burden on social pension systems and prolong the period of elderly individuals' engagement in the labor force. By doing so, it intends to fortify social security, particularly for the elderly population. The demographic composition is characterized by a growing proportion of older individuals.

3. Conclusion

The research has contributed valuable insight into the field of China's employment problem and countermeasures. This paper starts from three aspects, namely urban-rural segmentation, regional differences and aging population. To solve the problem of urban-rural division, the paper proposes to reform the household registration system, strengthen rural economic development and improve

educational resources. For the problem of regional differences, the paper proposes to reform the household registration system, strengthen rural economic development and improve educational resources to regulate the distribution of resources, improve infrastructure and promote industrial upgrading. For the problem of aging population, the article suggests that more employment opportunities in the elderly and medical fields should be created, and some long-term measures, such as adjusting the industrial structure and raising the retirement age, should be taken to improve the population structure. The overall objective of the article is aimed at achieving sustainable social and economic development.

However, there are still some limitations in this article. For example, the analysis in this paper is based on the existing data, if the paper is supposed to be more accurate, it should be based on the particular field to get the latest data. Secondly, some of the measures mentioned in this article are also on the existing basis and are likely to continue to change in the future, so it is still necessary to get the latest policy regularly. At the same time, the study can also gain experience by paying attention to the quality of employment while increasing the quantity of employment. Moreover, the government should continue to change policies according to the employment situation, so as to improve the employment situation, since the urban-rural divide is serious. Finally, the most important thing is to continue to study the root causes of urban-rural division, regional differentiation and population aging, so as to solve this problem most effectively.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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