Impact of Employment Policies of Liaoning Province in China on Talent Flow in the Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract. The importance of studying talent migration in Liaoning lies in its strategic role in Northeast China's economy, particularly for post-pandemic recovery and global adaptation. This paper assesses the impact of Liaoning's employment policies on talent flow and labor market equilibrium after COVID-19. It underscores the critical influence of government strategies in tackling employment issues, especially for newly graduated individuals and established professionals. This highlights the synergy between public policy, economic stability, and workforce progression amidst global shifts. The findings indicate a positive effect of these policies in retaining and attracting talent, thereby reducing the negative impact on the labor market due to the pandemic. The paper recommends further enhancements to these policies, focusing on the incorporation of digital transformation and ongoing educational initiatives. These steps are proposed to foster workforce flexibility and to stimulate regional economic development. This comprehensive approach aims not only at immediate labor market stabilization but also at long-term strategic planning for Liaoning's economic and workforce competitiveness on a global scale.

Keywords: Talent migration, post-pandemic employment, Liaoning province policies, labor market stability.

1. Introduction

With the rise of globalization and communication technologies, the flow of talent has increasingly improved worldwide, thereby impacting economies worldwide. Talent is a crucial economic resource, and its improved flow enables emerging and developing economies to meet their demand for talent, leading to more favorable outcomes. Yet talent and the entire labor market have been severely affected by COVID-19, which has sent shock across the global landscape since its emergence in early 2020. There are various issues including the immediate need to shift to remote working as well as more complex challenges concerning workforce management and the overall flow of talent in an economy. Governments worldwide have promptly responded to the situation with various policies and guidelines of practices surrounding labor, thereby influencing how talent flows within and beyond their territories, both in and outflow. This paper evaluates the impact of employment policies of Liaoning Province, China, on talent flow in the post-pandemic era.

2. Analysis of Talent Situation and Policy Characteristics in Liaoning Province

The section examines Liaoning's response to post-pandemic employment challenges, focusing on its robust industrial sector and significant graduate population. It highlights initiatives to address unemployment and underemployment among recent graduates, including financial subsidies and support for innovation and entrepreneurship. The province's policies also emphasize the absorption of graduates into state-owned enterprises and public institutions, offering diverse job opportunities. Furthermore, it discusses China's labor law's influence on employment practices, including eldercare leave and fair employment practices.

2.1. Current Talent Flow in Liaoning

Liaoning province is the indisputable home of heavy industries, with many state-owned enterprises. Since the 1950s, migrants from central China began to move, settle, and work in the growing Liaoning industry and urbanization. The province currently has a population of about 41 million, primarily settled in the urban areas where the drives are concentrated [1]. The province is thereby one of the remarkable employers. Notably, State-owned companies account for a more significant proportion of the Chinese economy, even though they are significantly less productive than privately owned firms. They are deemed effective in supporting social-economic stability through job provision. Yet, in the post-pandemic era, a high level of unemployment has been reported in China, which underpins a waste of human capital and is a source of critical social and economic problems [2]. Of the nearly 3 million graduates in China in 2020, Liaoning province accounted for about 250,000 graduates, and the number rose to 350,000 in 2022 [3].

2.2. Analysis of the Characteristics of Talent Policy in Liaoning Province

Some of the labor regulatory policies introduced in China target the educated labor force, which has been met with unprecedented challenges in navigating the complex employment environment. The policies targeting graduates are characterized by an increase in financial subsidies, including subsidies to graduates, enterprises, trainee units, and third parties such as employment service institutions.

Another characteristic of the policies is promoting employment via innovation and endorsing entrepreneurship. It has become an indisputable engine for boosting employment in the province. 22 detailed rules and provisions have been offered to support innovation and entrepreneurship and promote engagement [3]. These provisions include training and education programs on innovation and entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial loan guarantees. This includes supporting higher learning institutions to organize conferences and workshops where potential entrepreneurs can bud.

Also, recent policy promotes state-owned enterprises and public institutions to take up fresh graduates and lead in providing flexible and indigenous job opportunities. The opportunities facilitated by the state included enlisting in the armed forces, working at the grass-roots levels, research assistant positions, and a focused absorption of graduates in state-owned enterprises [4]. This would ease the employment pressure graduates face, especially when efforts to look for a job would have proven futile.

Some researchers believe mainland China's labor environment and relations are mainly guided by the labor law of the People's Republic of China Article 2 [5]. Since it applies to all individuals and enterprises within the country, it impacts all provinces including Liaoning. The particulars of the law include social insurance obligation, statutory termination indemnification, minimum wages, and working hours. A remarkable regulation is the eldercare leave, which began in 2022 to allow the working class to care for their older parents. It is mainly for parents over six years old, and the length of leave offered depends on whether the individual is one child or more in the family [6]. This regulation came in timely to ensure that the elderly, who were the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, got a chance to be cared for. Also, the government endorsed fair employment practices such as informing employees about the content of work, working conditions, occupational hazards, and product safety conditions and disclosing other relevant information that employees may ask about.

Another set of policy measures is related to the stress and burnout challenges for some staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, most remarkably being the medical staff. Some study thinks that medical staff face more significant psychological stress and are prone to mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety, as confirmed by various studies [7]. A large population drawn from Liaoning indicated a dire need for psychological wellness-related policies, ultimately leading to the adjustment of government policy regarding employee wellness. Various measures were implemented to help deal with such challenges beyond the pandemic.

Another set of policies is the remote working policy, which is meant to help workers strike a work-life balance. Although there is no definite government policy for remote working arrangements, its

amendment of working hours, labor conditions, and equipment are meant to apply even when working from home [8]. Different organizations have taken up the challenge to create policies and procedures that allow their workers to work from the comfort of their homes and maintain high levels of productivity, engagement, and employee satisfaction.

3. Benefits of Policy Formulation

The benefits of policy formulation by the government cannot be understated. It is the ultimate process through which decisions and actions are focused on addressing pressing needs in society. By implementing labor-related policies in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Liaoning's national and local governments made tremendous positive changes in the labor market. Various benefits continue to be witnessed across Liaoning. For instance, by increasing financial subsidies, the government affected the four primary players in the supply and demand of labor from a practical viewpoint [9]. It has proven paramount in an emergency such as the pandemic compared to conventional policies since its broader scope and the subsidies cover all relevant parties.

According to the CEIC Data Global Database, the employment rate in Liaoning has remained relatively stable during the COVID-19 pandemic, a trend that is expected to continue even past the pandemic era [10]. Even though there was a slight drop in the rate from 14, from 830 million in 2021 to 14.250 persons in 2022, the labor market has arguably withstood the harsh economic times during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is partly attributed to the various policies targeting labor relations.

By endorsing the disclosure of employers about the nature of work and other relevant information, the government heightened health and safety measures at work, which continues to help prevent casualties and occupational illnesses that hinder individual and organizational development [11]. Employers and human resource managers are more proactively pursuing disease prevention, psychological safety, and occupational exposure to illnesses. Workers' health and well-being have become a priority, which is excellent for social and economic development.

The policy formulation has also unleashed a new frontier of talent management, requiring managers and employers to implement stress and burnout management among their employees [12]. They are keen on offering access to mental health resources, including stress management and training employees to manage their stress levels better. Moreover, organizations have realized better results in terms of productivity and cost-cutting [13]. By better managing their talent, they can attract great talent, motivate them, and obtain the best out of their work.

4. Analysis of Problems and Countermeasures

4.1. Issues during Policy Implementation

4.1.1 Technology and digital culture issues

The application of digital culture and technology was a highly remarkable challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic when new policies were implemented. Workers and the targeted fresh graduates had an imminent challenge adapting to the digital culture. It is noted that marketers had difficulty navigating the work landscape, which was filled with harsh realities, thus operating in chaos and chronic inefficiency. The policies pushed more than 70 percent of companies to invest in the digital transformation of the workplace, a move that was not anticipated by most [14]. The shift, which involved a lot of changes, attracted significant digital and technology issues that influenced the success of workers and employers.

4.1.2 Significant change in work culture

Some problems emerging among the Chinese include flexible work arrangements and salary and career stability expectations. Employees have set high standards of flexibility in the new work paradigm. It is noted that this aspect has been particularly challenging since, before the pandemic, remote working had not kicked off like in other countries [15]. Companies were reluctant to allow

even flexible or hybrid work arrangements. Thus, the necessary shift came with heightened challenges in adapting to the new workplace reality.

4.2. Suggestions

4.2.1 Shift in labor demand and supply

Some analysis notes that the demand and supply of labor in Liaoning Province has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated policies [16]. Despite significant improvements in the labor market, there has been a remarkable shift from the northern parts of Liaoning to the southern parts of smaller cities. It is also noted that the demand for blue-collar jobs decreased relative to white-collar jobs, especially those with stable jobs that could work from home. Further, the need for blue-collar jobs shifted from manufacturing to service jobs, reflecting the breakdown manufacturing companies experienced during the pandemic [17]. While the decrease in labor demand evened out moving into 2022, the manufacturing industry needed more time to recover.

It is noted that manufacturing workers who lost jobs during this season could try their luck in the express industry. Thus, to avoid such labor demand deviations, it is essential to ensure that prompt policies are offered to increase the availability and access to express jobs. It is recommended that governments become proactive in real-time policy making as they engage in macro regulation of the labor market sustainable development. According to Vyas [18], in the current era the labor environment requires suitability for automation, alertness to scenarios that may disrupt the anticipated plans, and a great understanding of when intervention is needed. Not only will this improve policymaking, but it will also bring up a revolutionary change in service delivery.

4.2.2 Emphasis on digital transformation training

Another suggestion is the emphasis on career training and development, mainly focusing on digital transformation. At a time when digital technologies have proven to significantly impact individual careers and opportunities available in the career support policies, it is essential to invest in digital education and training since analysis has proven that digital is the future of career and business [19]. As suggested by Forsythe & Rafoth, it is essential to encourage agility and flexibility, embrace transparency, and establish leadership, risk-taking, and collaboration to succeed in digital culture [20]. A digital transformation entails so much about collaborative work and effective communication across all levels of employment. Therefore, every worker must be ready to work together with others in a digital environment.

5. Conclusion

The paper focuses on the impact of employment policies in Liaoning of China during the COVID-19 pandemic. It scrutinizes the influence on both recent graduates and established professionals, highlighting how policies have sought to mitigate issues like workplace stress and burnout. Additionally, the paper examines the challenges presented by the shift towards digitalization. A critical part of the analysis is assessing the success of these policies in stabilizing the local labor market. Furthermore, it provides recommendations for refining policy-making in the future. This study is essential in understanding the complex relationship between governmental policies, labor market evolution, and the management of skilled personnel in a post-pandemic setting. Key measures included financial subsidies for graduates, initiatives to promote employment through innovation, adherence to the national labor law, and the introduction of remote working arrangements. These strategic interventions were effective in maintaining stable employment levels, supporting individuals and businesses, and enhancing talent management in the province. The study underscores the critical role of agile policy-making and the need for continuous investment in career training and development. These steps are essential to adapt to changing economic conditions and technological advancements. The proactive approach of the government in formulating and implementing these policies highlights the importance of state intervention in shaping labor relations, managing talent

flow, and ensuring economic stability during crisis periods. This case study from Liaoning Province serves as a valuable example of how targeted policy interventions can effectively mitigate the adverse effects of a global crisis on local labor markets.

Authors Contribution

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

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