

Research on the Current Situation and Enhancement Strategies of Employability of General College Graduates

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Abstract: With the number of Chinese graduates increasing year by year, graduates of Chinese general colleges and universities are facing a variety of employment problems, including the problem of reduced employment opportunities brought by the decline of the future birth population, the problem of lagging behind in the development of the employment service system of colleges and universities and the problem of structural unemployment of college and university graduates. The author analyzes the influencing factors through the higher education institutions and graduates as the main body, and on the basis of the Career-EDGE competency model, partially amends and defines it, adds the analysis of the influencing factors of the employment competency school, and puts forward the paths and methods of reforming and perfecting the existing employment service system according to the different influencing factors in a targeted way, to help improve the quality of employment services in local colleges and universities, and then hopes to be able to promote the improvement of graduation ability of college students in local colleges and universities.

Keywords: General College Graduates; Influencing Factors; Employability; Competency Model.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of college graduates graduating every year in China has been rising year by year, and according to the latest data from China's Ministry of Education, the number of college graduates across the country is expected to reach 11.58 million in 2023, which is once again a record high, and an increase of 820,000 people compared with 2022 year by year. Behind these huge numbers reflects that the employment situation of college students is very serious, and almost every year in recent years has been the most difficult employment period.

This study starts from exploring the influencing factors affecting the structure of employment ability of college students in local general colleges and universities, analyzes the degree of influence of individual graduates and school double main body factors on the employment ability of graduates, and through in-depth investigation and research to understand the current situation of the employment of graduates in local general colleges and universities and the main problems, and puts forward the strategy of cultivating the ability of graduates and the path of reforming the existing employment service model in a targeted way.

In terms of theory, this study focuses on the status quo of the influencing factors of the employability of local graduates of general colleges and universities. Although scholars have studied the influencing factors of employability from different perspectives, many of the studies in the existing literature are narrower in scope, most of them have obvious geographical limitations, and there are fewer studies exploring the influencing factors of the school, and the research adopts a double main body of research from the structural factors of the individual's employability and the school's factors, which makes the research content richer and more favorable for the college graduates. The research content is richer, which is conducive to the systematization of the research on the employment ability of college graduates

and provides a new way of thinking for the research on the influencing factors of employment ability. At the same time, the study of the structural influence factors of the employability of graduates of local colleges and universities and the school influence factors, and the exploration of the strategies for improving the employability of college students can promote the reform of the talent cultivation mode oriented to the improvement of the employability of college students, and at the same time, it has the practical significance of solving the actual employment problems, enriching the content of the evaluation of the employability, perfecting the existing evaluation system of the employment, and increasing the satisfaction of employment. It can also provide useful reference for the talent cultivation of local universities in China, realize the quality and quantity of talent cultivation, promote the employment of college graduates of higher quality, maintain the stability of social talent supply, and contribute to the healthy and stable development of the domestic economy.

2. Current Situation and Problems of Employment of Graduates of General Colleges and Universities

Employment is the biggest people's livelihood, and the Chinese government's work report in 2023 put forward the goal of about 12 million new jobs in urban areas, which is higher than that of the past few years, highlighting the importance of employment work. Looking at the future development of the employment situation of Chinese college graduates, on the whole, there are still many favorable conditions for maintaining the stability of the employment situation (Cao Jia, 2021). However, under the macro-environment of China's economic slowdown, increasing downward pressure on the economy, and industrial restructuring, the number of jobs in the job market will be reduced, and there is a gap between the actual ability of

college graduates and the needs of employers, leading to the coexistence of the problems of "difficult to enroll" and "difficult to find employment", and "difficult to find employment". This will lead to the coexistence of "difficult enrollment" and "difficult employment" (Huang Jie, 2022). Mismatch between college students' own quality and the requirements of enterprises, inaccurate job-seeking orientation, excessive employment standards of enterprises and other problems affecting the employment of college students will continue to exist, maintaining the overall stability of the employment of college graduates and achieving the goal of fuller and higher-quality employment will continue to face a number of challenges, and structural contradictions in the employment of college graduates will also exist for a long time and become normalized.

2.1. Crisis Brought About by the Precipitous Decline in the Birth Population.

The National Bureau of Statistics of China published the "Statistical Bulletin of the People's Republic of China on National Economic and Social Development in 2022" on February 28, 2023, which shows that the national population at the end of 2022 was 141.175 million people, a decrease of 0.85 million people from the end of the previous year, and China's population has experienced a negative growth for the first time since 1962, and the problem of the decline in the birth rate has aroused widespread concern in the society. Some scholars point out that low fertility rate will naturally solve employment, in fact, low birth population will have a negative impact on social and economic growth, which in turn may lead to a reduction in the demand for jobs, and in the long run, the decrease in the export population will instead affect the employment situation of graduates.

2.2. The Development of Employment Service System in Colleges and Universities is Lagging Behind.

From the analysis of the current employment service system of local general colleges and universities, the existing school employment guidance and service system does not well meet the needs of graduates' employment knowledge and skills enhancement. Many colleges and universities still continue to correspond to the administrative management system of government departments, and the departmental settings mainly correspond to the administrative needs of government departments, such as the enrollment office, employment office, innovation and entrepreneurship office, etc., which correspond to the relevant functional departments of the government. The implementation of such departmental settings to the student service work, there are still few employment services, employment guidance courses, employment guidance courses, more theoretical knowledge, less practical exercises, resulting in low motivation of students to participate in the employment guidance on-line resources are fewer and other issues, resulting in some graduates of the comprehensive ability to employment status quo, which leads to the social public opinion on the ability level of college students questioned, which undoubtedly increase the problem of employment difficulties of college students. For colleges and universities employment problems will be related to the survival of general schools of higher education, there is an urgent need to reform and improve the existing college employment services and guidance system, in order to promote and improve the local general schools of

higher education graduation employment capacity to deal with the problem of graduates who are now difficult to find employment.

2.3. The Structural Unemployment Problem of College Graduates Is Prominent.

In recent years, as the level of higher education continues to rise, more and more college graduates are bound to face fierce social competition in order to seek jobs, so the phenomenon of "structural unemployment" has arisen (Yu Ziyue, 2021). In fact, the problem of structural imbalance in graduate employment has existed since the new industrial revolution, and has gradually evolved into a social conflict under the impact of the epidemic (Gao Tingting, 2023). With the gradual change of the job market from a buyer's market to a seller's market, the substantial return of overseas students, and the further decrease in the number of jobs and needs of ordinary college graduates, the society and enterprises are demanding more and more of the employability of college graduates. As the news reports on the Internet that labor-oriented enterprises are facing the problem of labor difficulties, and the corresponding scene of overcrowded job fairs for college graduates, the structural unemployment problem of college graduates needs to be solved urgently.

3. Analysis of Factors Influencing the Employability of College Graduates

What kind of employability do the society and enterprises need in college graduates? How to deal with the structural unemployment problem of existing college graduates? The employment problem is a systematic problem, in which individual graduates, higher education institutions, education departments and social environment all affect the overall employment situation, and the whole society needs to make concerted efforts to solve the problem by mobilizing the overall resources. In recent years, with the government's emphasis on employment and the gradual recovery of society and economy, as well as the Chinese government's strong call for grassroots employment of college students, a lot of employment opportunities have been created for fresh graduates, which has solved the problem of graduates' employment difficulties to a certain extent (Yang, 2022). Putting aside the influence of the external environment and the government, what we should pay more attention to is that the two employment subjects with the most direct relationship should be the higher education institutions and graduates, and ultimately realize the synergistic effect of the governmental system, the social environment, the service of the schools, and the graduates' individual subjects and means and promote them together, so as to solve the fundamental problem of the graduates' employment effectively.

The constraints on the employment of college students ultimately depend on the competitiveness of college students in the labor market, that is, whether their comprehensive quality and ability and the requirements of society and employers are compatible with each other (Jiao Chengying, 2022). Therefore, it is more important for us to discover the deeper reasons behind the main problem of graduates' employment, explore the current situation characteristics, influencing factors and improvement path of local college graduates' employability, focus on exploring which main influencing factors affect the employability of local college graduates, and try to find out the structural factors of the

employability based on the Career-Edge employability: the learning situation of career development, the experience of internship, the professional knowledge, the skill situation, the mastery of general technology, the emotional and emotional competence, and the ability to improve the employability. Skill situation, general technology mastery, emotional intelligence level and other employability influences in the graduates in the employment process. To discover the problems existing in the existing employment service system of colleges and universities, and purposefully put forward the paths and methods of reforming and improving the existing employment service system, to help improve the quality of employment services in local colleges and universities, so that the employment guidance education really promotes the enhancement of the graduation ability of college students in local colleges and universities.

4. Employability Structure Model of College Graduates

The most representative model of employability is Poole's "Career-EDGE" model of employability, which contains five elements: career development learning, work and life experience, subject knowledge understanding and skills, general skills and emotional intelligence. He believes that there are three levels of employability, the bottom level being career development learning, work and life experience, specialized knowledge, understanding and generic skills, emotional intelligence, the next level being reflection and evaluation of learning experiences, and the top level being self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem. Compared with the USEM theory, this model is more concise and emphasizes more on the skills and experiences necessary for students in their careers. The definition and structural division of college students' employability in the Career-EDGE Competency Structure Model provides an important reference and theoretical basis for the construction of college students' employability model in this study.

The main contribution of the EDGE model is that it proposes five influential factors on college students' employability. First of all, one of them is "career development learning", which mainly improves the employability of college students by enhancing their ability to acquire employment information quickly and process it efficiently. Secondly, "experience" is also an important factor. Having rich life experience and internship experience has an important impact on employability, which is also valued by employers. Thirdly, "knowledge, understanding and skills in specialized fields" is also a key factor that guides employability in a specific field. Fourth, "generic skills" are the core skills of an individual's work ability, including a variety of learning, innovation and management skills, which are useful in different areas of work. Finally, "Emotional Intelligence" is an influencing factor, which mainly affects interpersonal communication ability, people with high EQ have stronger communication ability, and employers prefer students with strong communication ability. The five basic elements of Career-EDGE's employability are interconnected and complementary to each other.

The factors affecting the employability of graduates of local general colleges and universities are divided into individual ability factors and school factors, the individual ability structure factors mainly include career development learning, work and life experience, subject knowledge

understanding and skills, general skills, and emotional intelligence modeled on Career-EDGE theory, and the school influencing factors mainly include teaching management, teaching methodology, teaching attitudes, and professional curriculum setting, English course curriculum, career guidance course curriculum, practical course curriculum, club activities and learning resources. By targeting the above influencing factors, we propose suggestions to improve the quality of employment services and help university students to enhance their comprehensive employability.

We are in a fast-developing and diversified information age, and society and enterprises have put forward higher requirements for graduates' employability. Some of the theoretical systems and structures in the model have their own lessons to learn from, while in the practical application of Career-EDGE, more should be borrowed and integrated, and attention should be paid to combining with the actual situation of the local area, and no one specific competency structure assessment is suitable for every student. Therefore, the researcher has partially revised and defined the model based on the theoretical research results of literature and in-depth interviews in recent years, and added the school influencing factors of employability, and the school influencing factors affecting college students' employability should be summarized into three modules: classroom teaching, curriculum and campus cultural environment, which should include the factors consisting of teaching management, teaching methods, teaching attitudes, professional course settings, English and Computer courses, career guidance courses, practical courses, club activities and learning resources, etc. The three modules are the organic integration of the employment service quality system, which must be integrated together, not simply combined and superimposed. Then through the analysis of the internal connection between the individual ability factors of employability and the school factors, the countermeasures and suggestions on the quality of employment services in colleges and universities can be put forward in a targeted manner.

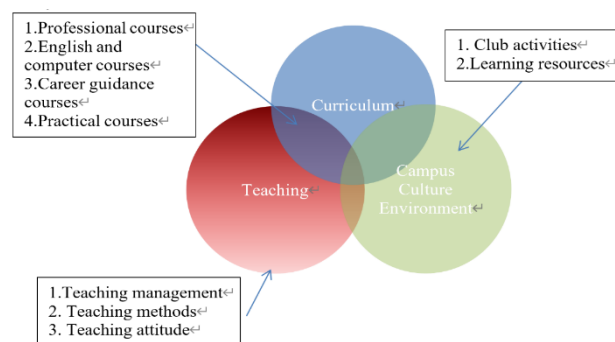


Figure 1. Employability school influencing factors

5. Strategies for Improving the Employability of College Graduates

1.Strengthen Career Development Programs: Educational institutions should enhance their career development programs to provide comprehensive support for graduating students. This includes offering career counseling, workshops, and resources to help students explore different career paths, set goals, and develop effective strategies for job search and application.

2.Foster Skill Development: Institutions should focus on fostering the development of essential employability skills,

such as problem-solving, communication, and emotional intelligence. This can be achieved through a combination of theoretical learning, practical experiences, internships, and co-curricular activities that provide opportunities for students to apply their skills in real-world contexts.

3. Gender-Sensitive Support: institutions should develop gender-sensitive support mechanisms. This may include targeted mentorship programs, networking events, and workshops designed to address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by male and female students in their career development.

4. Enhance Industry Connections: Educational institutions should strengthen their connections with industries and employers to ensure that their curriculum aligns with market demands. This can be achieved through partnerships, internships, and guest lectures by industry professionals, providing students with valuable insights and exposure to real-world practices.

5. Promote Practical Experience: Institutions should create more opportunities for students to gain practical experience through internships, co-op programs, and community engagement. This hands-on experience will not only enhance their employability but also provide valuable insights into their chosen fields and help them make informed career decisions.

6. Foster Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration between educational institutions, students, and employers can lead to the development of programs and initiatives that better address the challenges faced by graduating students. This can include advisory boards, industry advisory groups, and joint projects that bridge the gap between academia and the workplace.

7. Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: It is crucial for institutions to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their career development programs and make necessary improvements based on feedback from students, faculty, and employers. This iterative process ensures that the programs remain relevant, responsive to changing market needs, and effective in preparing students for the demands of the job market.

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