

A Multidimensional Review of College Students' Career Planning and Employment Guidance in the Digital Age

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Abstract: The multifaceted nature of the digital age is highly interconnected with the shaping and renewal of college students' career outlook and employment outlook. As an important source of the formation of such outlooks, the college courses on career planning and employment guidance are inevitably intertwined with digitalization. At present, the relevant courses in colleges and universities are confronted with prominent problems, including rigid course content, inadequate practicality, lack of appeal, insufficient institutional emphasis, limited teaching subjects, and inadequate professionalism. In view of these problems, this paper argues that digital empowerment can be employed to reform teaching content, enrich and strengthen the teaching and research body, and, at the same time, establish a benign interactive mechanism between teaching and learning subjects.

Keywords: Digital Age; Career Outlook and Employment Outlook; College Courses on Career Planning and Employment Guidance.

1. Introduction

Given the advantages of digitalization and its irreversible trend, and given that the strategic action of education digitalization has been incorporated by the Ministry of Education of China into the Key Points of the Ministry of Education, colleges and universities, as the core stage connecting education and digitalization, deserve an inquiry into such interconnection. For college students, career planning and employment guidance in the digital age are issues of vital importance to their future. Accordingly, this paper intends to conduct an interrelated inquiry around three core concepts, namely the digital age, the career and employment outlooks of college students, and the design of career planning and employment guidance courses in colleges and universities.

2. The Linkage between the Digital Age and College Students' Career and Employment Outlooks

2.1. The Digital Age

1. Positive Aspects

Contemporary emphasis on the digital age is largely concentrated on the expansion of digitalization into various domains of human life. The positive aspects elaborated in this section refer to the positive significance that digital transformation and in-depth development bring to multiple subjects in terms of information acquisition and self-renewal.

From a macro perspective, making full use of the advantages of digitalization enables multiple subjects to grasp current popular information in a timely manner, so as to carry out their own "updating and iteration" and adapt to the development trend of emerging industries. The Internet industry is the most common driving force of digital transformation and upgrading. Apart from the intelligent development and utilization of data by large platform enterprises, the online celebrity (influencer) industry has also become a common component of the contemporary Internet industry. In addition, digitalization has given rise to diversified industries such as the sharing economy and the AI-

driven economy. At this level, the digital age has broken through the limitations of time and space, catalyzing a large demand for labor and diverse job requirements, while the visible economies of scale have encouraged all parties to continue investing in digital transformation and upgrading. It can be said that the industrial chain created by digitalization has become a beacon guiding public pursuit.[8]

2. Negative Impacts

In contrast, the negative impacts of digitalization stem from the inherent difficulty of distinguishing true data from falsehood, and such impacts mainly arise in the input and output links of Internet information. Since the data connection created by digitalization is not confined to a single department, when massive data are linked without sound screening standards, true and false information are likely to be confused, and the enormous volume of information ultimately makes it difficult for subjects to identify effective information. The reality is that the threshold for accessing the Internet is continuously lowering, and people can use digitalization for self-packaging. Therefore, the simpler and less evidence-based a certain viewpoint is, the more authoritative it tends to appear. Driven by the "herd effect", individuals lacking discernment will fall into the barriers created by such viewpoints, and whether the outcome is good or bad can only be verified by themselves. It can thus be seen that the negative impacts brought by the digital age do not originate from the data information itself, but emerge in the interaction between the subject and the data information, as well as between subjects.

2.2. The Impact of the Multifaceted Digital Age on College Students' Career and Employment Outlooks

The linkage between the two subject concepts emphasizes that the irreversibility of the digital age promotes the formation of college students' career outlook and employment outlook, while the inherent negativity of the digital age constrains the shaping of these two outlooks.[7] Since the vast majority of college students have not yet truly entered society, their career outlook and employment outlook are mostly shaped by family and school education. The rapid

development of digitalization has also made it an important source of the formation and shaping of college students' career and employment outlooks, thereby assuming a new role in providing career planning and employment guidance for college students.

1. The Coexistence of Advantages and Disadvantages of the Multifaceted Digital Age for College Students' Career and Employment Outlooks

As discussed above, the advent of the digital age has given rise to various new industries and created enormous job demands. Through the external dissemination of information, it can enrich the cognitive reserve of college students on the basis of their existing concepts of career and employment, thereby broadening their future career planning and employment options.[3] This level emphasizes the expansion of career and employment choices. College students tend to obtain career and employment information through Internet media in their daily life. Therefore, once they have determined their preference for a certain type of career- and employment-related content (such as employment location, remuneration, and benefits), they will obtain specific information through online platforms.[1] At that point, the massive information resources of the Internet will be instantly presented after college students lock in keywords, helping them efficiently master resource information. It can be said that digitalization provides this group with an effective channel for acquiring new resources, which differs from the "closed" mode in which career and employment information is grasped through word of mouth.

However, in the "interaction" between college students and online information, due to their lack of social experience and insufficient discernment, they are extremely vulnerable to the interference of massive information that confuses truth and falsehood, and may consequently form judgments divorced from reality. The number of college graduates keeps rising, in inverse proportion to the employment rate of college students, and the jest of "graduation means unemployment" has become a realistic dilemma confronting college students. Apart from objective factors such as the current poor employment environment and monotonous employment fields, the career and employment outlooks formed by college students during their schooling are also "contributing factors" to their employment difficulties. On the one hand, with the reinforcement of online information, the various high-salary personas created by the Internet imperceptibly raise college students' expectations, and inaccurate self-positioning makes it difficult for them to enter their ideal jobs after graduation. On the other hand, surrounded by massive information and driven by the herd effect, some college students who are not adept at reasoning are liable to act rashly, form erroneous career and employment outlooks, and throw themselves into seemingly attractive employment traps.

3. The Design of Career Planning and Employment Guidance Courses in Colleges and Universities

3.1. Design Objectives and Necessity

The purpose of offering career planning and employment guidance courses in colleges and universities is to guide students in career exploration and provide employment guidance so that they can master job-seeking skills, thereby determining their future career choices and employment destinations through accurate self-assessment and enhancing

their market competitiveness. On the one hand, since college students have not yet truly entered society and know little about the actual conditions and development prospects of various jobs, it is necessary to offer career planning and employment guidance courses in colleges and universities to help them complete the initial connection and transition from school to society.[5] On the other hand, given the fierce employment competition and diverse forms of employment at present, how to help college students achieve precise positioning and enhance their competitiveness also reflects the importance and necessity of such courses. Beyond the necessity expounded from the student-centered perspective, colleges and universities themselves are also a subjective factor in the design of career planning and employment guidance courses. Through the provision of relevant courses, it is ensured that students can form a correct career outlook and employment outlook, put existing concepts into practice, determine their employment destinations before graduation, and achieve direct job signing upon graduation. The resulting graduation job-signing rate of college students can also serve as content for the self-assessment and publicity of colleges and universities.

3.2. Interconnection with the Digital Age

The interconnection between college career planning and employment guidance courses and the digital age is mainly reflected in teachers' use of Internet platforms to acquire and expand the volume of course knowledge, and in the comparison of various delineated information presented through the collation of massive information—for example, the existing salary of graduates from various occupations—so as to provide students with references. At the same time, however, the convenience brought by digitalization may also cause teachers to rely on the Internet to internalize information as a teaching tool while neglecting real situations, leading to rigid course content. This problem is widespread in current college career planning and employment guidance courses. Therefore, digitalization also exhibits multifaceted characteristics with respect to the teaching-research body and the teaching body of the courses. Nevertheless, since the linkage between college students' career planning and employment guidance and the digital age is direct and firsthand, the design of relevant courses in colleges and universities cannot be neglected, which likewise places important demands on teachers.[4]

3.3. Current Status at This Stage

Although, in theory, the design of college career planning and employment guidance courses is highly beneficial to students and colleges and universities, in practice, relevant courses still suffer from a large number of common problems, which can be broadly divided into the following three aspects.

1. Rigid Course Content and Inadequate Practicality

At present, the teaching of career planning and employment guidance courses by teachers in the vast majority of colleges and universities is accomplished through lecturing textbooks and presenting PowerPoint slides. Since students' employment rate is not an assessment criterion for the lead teacher, there is no so-called "further-study" pressure, and in most cases teachers simply follow the textbook and output purely theoretical knowledge. For students, the input content can only remain on the surface and cannot be effectively applied to practice, which directly deviates from the central objective of the course design. Meanwhile, since these

courses are not part of the major curriculum, they are offered in the form of large lectures attended by students of different majors. In addition, the textbooks are oriented toward a huge specific group and must be comprehensive and systematic, which results in a lack of pertinence in the teaching content. Meanwhile, in order to ensure the coherence and integrity of teaching, teachers can only start from common content and cannot provide differentiated guidance for students of each major. Beyond that, the introduction of digitalization mostly merely facilitates teachers' data collection and collation, is confined to the teaching link, and cannot be effectively applied to the practical link. The superposition of multiple factors has thus given rise to the problems of rigid content and inadequate practicality in college career planning and employment guidance courses.

2. Lack of Appeal and Insufficient Institutional Emphasis

It can be said that the lack of appeal and insufficient emphasis are the direct consequences of the above problems. Since the theoretical content is overly tedious and students lack direct contact with what teachers lecture, the so-called career and employment knowledge conveyed by teachers is abstract and unrealistic to some extent. At the same time, since the internship opportunities provided by the university are limited, and each major has designated guiding posts for internship, without proactive awareness, students will directly encounter limitations in the transformation of theoretical knowledge into practice, and the practice of employment will remain confined to a certain occupational range. At this level, the certainty of the major often leads to the certainty of career choice, so the career planning and employment guidance courses offered by colleges and universities are of little practical significance to students. Coupled with the relatively lenient assessment of this course, the realistic problem that students do not attach importance to relevant courses is further aggravated.[2]

3. Limited Teaching Subjects and Inadequate Professionalism

In addition to the above problems, limited teaching subjects and inadequate professionalism are also prominent problems in the design of relevant courses. Since the relevant courses are mainly offered as electives, the teaching subjects are often part-time counselors or specialized-course teachers, which leads to limited transmission of practical knowledge and insufficient professionalism.[6] Specifically, the former generally enter the counselor post after completing their studies through examinations or political recommendation for postgraduate admission without examination; they therefore actually lack sufficient work experience, and the relevant professional content they can teach in the classroom is relatively limited, making it impossible to effectively solve students' differentiated career choices and employment trends. As for the latter, if they have long served as specialized-course teachers, their main energy is concentrated on the advancement of teaching and research tasks, and they still know little about the specific situation of the market. If specialized-course teachers undertake the teaching of career planning and employment guidance courses, there may be a phenomenon that the theory is at the forefront but divorced from reality. Therefore, limited teaching subjects and inadequate professionalism likewise constitute an "obvious" problem in the design of relevant courses in colleges and universities.

4. Practical Paths to Improving the Design and Implementation of Relevant Courses in Colleges and Universities

In view of the above problems and in light of the digital era, the design of career planning and employment guidance courses in colleges and universities can be adjusted as follows.

4.1. Harnessing Digital Empowerment to Reform Teaching Content

The advent of the digital age has broadened the depth and flexibility of information acquisition and accelerated the speed of information dissemination. Colleges and universities should make full use of the new-era demands and job requirements spawned and presented by digitalization, reform teaching content, and timely adjust teaching syllabi and phased teaching objectives. In addition to using digitalization to optimize the adjustment of teaching content, digitalization and its driving force should also be incorporated into textbooks or teaching content. Through teaching, students should be made aware of the linkage effects generated by contemporary digital empowerment, so as to enhance their enthusiasm for career exploration, give play to students' initiative under the guidance of teachers, and return the subject of course design to the student-centered position. With regard to the teaching mode, schools and teachers should fully exploit the convenient advantages brought by digitalization to carry out in-depth [development of] courses.

4.2. Enriching and Strengthening the Teaching and Research Body

Combining the above discussion, inadequate professionalism of the teaching and research body is also a prominent problem in the design of relevant courses. In response to this problem, schools should actively expand the teaching body of college career planning and employment guidance, and use the advantages of digitalization to optimize the teaching and research team. This can be specifically approached from two aspects. The first is to transform existing teacher resources into course lecturers, who must be those not devoted primarily to theoretical research. In many colleges, specialized-course teachers have their own main professions in addition to their identity as university teachers. For example, among the teachers of law, economics, and business schools, there are many practical talents with rich theoretical and practical experience. Converting such teachers into lead instructors of career planning and employment guidance is conducive to achieving the core objective of course design. The second is to give full play to the university's own advantages and realize the linkage between enterprises and universities. Combined with the advantages of digitalization, teachers should be optimized and upgraded, thereby providing high-quality teacher resources for course delivery.

4.3. Establishing a Benign Interactive Mechanism between Teaching and Learning Subjects

The so-called benign interactive mechanism between teaching and learning subjects emphasizes a virtuous cycle in which teachers lecture, students give feedback after practice, and teachers then carry out teaching innovation. This process

needs to highlight students' practice, because this link is the key to the effective transformation of theoretical knowledge. At this level, it is necessary to rely on the university to create more internship positions and on students to independently seek internship opportunities. The former depends on the university strengthening cooperation with multiple parties such as governments, courts, procuratorates, and enterprises to create more internship channels for students; the latter requires teachers to use the massive information resources of digitalization in course lectures to highlight the fierce competition in the market environment and the diversity of available employment modes, so as to motivate students to take the initiative in seeking internship opportunities. Through these two approaches, graduates can be helped to move toward employment ahead of time, and the gains from practice can be fed back to enrich course content, thereby realizing a benign interaction between teaching and learning subjects.

5. Conclusion

This paper only conducts a multidimensional discussion from a macro perspective on the three subject concepts of digitalization, college students' career and employment outlooks, and college career planning and employment guidance, and therefore lacks pertinence and has limitations. Since differences exist among colleges and universities and among their subordinate schools, the design of relevant courses and the implementation of teaching syllabi and teaching tasks should still be flexibly adjusted in light of specific conditions. However, regardless of the perspective

from which it is approached, students must be placed at the center.

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