

Research on the Employment of College Students under the Background of Popularization of Higher Education

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Abstract: The background information includes that nowadays, people are under increasing pressure to find jobs, and more and more people are unable to find jobs or feel the pressure of job competition is extreme. Many college students have great difficulty finding jobs. In this paper, the main research in the background of the popularization of higher education in the employment of college students encountered difficulties and reasons behind, including possible solutions. The conclusion of this paper is that the audience of college students in higher education has increased significantly, and there are obvious differences between what they have learned in undergraduate and what they have faced in work, and there is great pressure of job competition. National policies such as improved job-searching systems, better understanding of the workforce structure, and reforms to make higher education more work-friendly could alleviate these problems. The significance of this article lies in the careful analysis of the difficult problems of college students in employment, providing readers with in-depth understanding and inspiration on the employment of college students and also providing reference for future decision-making.

Keywords: Popularization of higher education, employment of college students, policy impacts.

1. Introduction

With the development of science and technology and the popularization of education, more individuals have the opportunity to enjoy college education. The number of college graduates increased from 1.08 million in 1998 to 7.95 million in 2017, a more than sevenfold increase after the enrollment expansion. According to the national Education Development Statistics published in 2017, the total number of students in all types of higher education reached 3.79 million [1]. Putong Higher Education has a total of 49,000 people, an increase of 80,000 people. The enrollment rate of high grade education has increased from 10% in 1999 to 45.7% in 2017. It can be observed that China has realized a comprehensive transformation from fine education to mass education [2]. However, this has led to increased expectations for exams and diplomas. Thus, college education, which seems to be a better education opportunity, has caused some college students trouble. For example, graduates from non-prestigious universities face intense competition in the job market, particularly in developed cities. Many students lack practical skills despite their theoretical knowledge due to the emphasis on diplomas. Consequently, some unemployed college graduates opt to return to technical schools for specialized training or vocational education. This situation has raised concerns and sparked

discussions about employment issues faced by college graduates amidst widespread access to higher education. This study focuses on the employment situation of college students in the context of higher education popularization, examining challenges faced by non-graduate students from prestigious universities in the highly competitive job market, especially in developed cities. The purpose of this research is to analyze the underlying causes of the employment difficulties and identify effective strategies to improve the employment rate and quality of college graduates, as well as to promote a better match between the education system and the labor market.

2. Overview of the Popularization of Higher Education

The popularization of higher education refers to the process of the development of higher education from the elite stage to the popularization and finally to the realization of the whole. In the popularization stage, the entrance threshold of universities is gradually lowered, and the enrollment scale is expanded so that people of different social classes can receive higher education. The popularization of higher education has brought about the equalization of educational opportunities, which is conducive to the fairness and progress of society. However, the process of popularization has also brought some challenges to the quality and management of higher education, such as the shortage of teaching resources and the uneven quality of education. In recent years, with the popularization of higher education, the number of college graduates has increased year by year, which makes the employment competition extremely fierce. Behind the grim employment situation, there is not only a surge in the number of job seekers but also the impact of multiple factors such as industrial structure adjustment and economic fluctuations. Some college students' choice of major is out of line with market demand, which makes it more difficult to find a job. In addition, employers are increasingly demanding the skills, practical experience, and comprehensive quality of job seekers, while some graduates have shortcomings in these aspects. In order to cope with the problem of employment, some college students choose to continue their studies or take stable jobs such as civil servants, but there are also some students who face problems such as career mismatch and unsatisfactory salary in the early stage of employment. In general, the employment situation of college students presents a trend of oversupply and increasing employment pressure.

3. Its Impacts on College Students' Employment

3.1. Positive Impacts

There is an influence of popularization of higher education on the employment of college students, which can raise series problems. With the popularization of higher education, more and more young people have the opportunity to enter universities and receive systematic and professional education. This phenomenon has a profound impact on the employment of college students. There are positive impacts.

Firstly, the improvement of knowledge and skills can improve student cognition. The popularization of higher education means that more people can get university education. It can provide students with professional knowledge systems and skills training. Students who receive higher education usually learn theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and methods of analyzing problems in their professional fields, which make them more competitive in the job market. Higher education develops not only a deep understanding of a subject, but also comprehensive qualities such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, and critical thinking, all of which are very important soft skills in the workplace. In addition, the demand for talents in modern society is increasingly diversified, and enterprises need compound talents with comprehensive quality and innovation ability, and university education can provide training in the breadth and depth of knowledge. \Thirdly, the diversity of employment opportunities can also be helpful for students. With the popularization of

higher education, college students have a more diversified knowledge structure and broader vision, which provides them with more employment choices. Compared with the skills-based vocational education of the past, higher education often provides a broader and deeper academic training, enabling students to better cope with the diverse and rapidly changing work environment of the future. For example, science and engineering students learn professional skills related to technology, engineering, and computers in college, while liberal arts students develop a deep understanding of areas such as culture, history, and language. In this way, graduates trained by higher education are more able to adapt to the diversified needs of the market and find suitable positions for their own development. Especially in the current era of rapid development of science and technology, new industries and professions continue to emerge, college graduates with certain professional knowledge and interdisciplinary learning ability can adapt to new jobs more quickly and meet new employment opportunities.

3.2. Negative Impacts

However, there are also some negative impacts. The competition for jobs is intensifying, which makes a lot of students confused. With the popularization of higher education, the number of college students has increased sharply, and the growth rate of social employment is often unable to keep up with this change, resulting in increasingly fierce competition in the job market. Official statistics show that the first-time employment rate of college graduates has dropped from 90% to about 65%, transforming the job market for college students from a "seller's market" to a "buyer's market." The head of the education department stressed that the number of college graduates reached 7.95 million in 2017, highlighting the persistently challenging employment situation [3]. This competition is not only reflected in quantity but also in quality. As more graduates flood into the job market, employers' requirements for talents are constantly increasing when recruiting, which has led to the phenomenon of "degree depreciation," and the recruitment standards of many jobs have been upgraded from the past undergraduate to postgraduate or even doctoral degrees. This degree inflation has made some college students feel pressured during the job hunting process and unable to find the ideal job.

Secondly, the disconnection between learning and application can also be challenging for college students. While higher education provides students with knowledge and skills, there is also a problem of disconnection between educational content and job market demand. Some university courses are too theoretical or outdated to adapt to the current trends in the industry, resulting in the knowledge students learn in school not being applied in practical work. In addition, some colleges and universities lack pertinence and practicality in the curriculum, and the students they train lack practical skills and practical experience, which limits the employment choices of graduates to a certain extent.

Finally, the gap between expectation and reality brings troubles to students when they are finding jobs. The popularization of higher education provides students with a higher level of academic qualifications but also makes them have higher expectations for their future careers. Many students believe that receiving a college education should get them a well-paid, decent job, ignoring the complexity and competitiveness of the job market. However, in reality, influenced by the popularization of higher education and the increase in talent supply, many college students find that their expectations and reality are far apart when they are employed.

4. The Specific Performance of College Students' Employment

Currently, college students face various employment challenges, including intense competition, gaps between expectations and reality, mismatches between majors and positions, as well as lack of

practical experience and vocational skills. These issues significantly impact their career choices, development prospects, and the overall social employment situation.

4.1. Fierce Competition for Jobs

The competition for jobs is fierce. In recent years, with the popularization of higher education, the number of college graduates has continued to increase, while the number of jobs in the job market has grown relatively slowly, resulting in fierce competition for college students in the process of job hunting. According to statistics, the number of college graduates is reaching a record high every year, which means that more and more college students have to compete for limited job opportunities after graduation. Especially in the job competition in popular industries and big cities, the recruitment of some well-known enterprises and high-quality jobs often attracts a large number of job seekers, and many college students will lose out in the competition due to the lack of education, experience, ability, and other aspects. This fierce employment competition has also led some employers to raise the threshold in recruitment, requiring higher education, richer experience and more skills, which has intensified the employment pressure of college students. In addition, the supply of some professional graduates exceeds the demand, and the market demand can not digest the huge number of graduates, resulting in many students facing the embarrassing situation of "unemployment after graduation." Especially for ordinary undergraduates of some comprehensive universities, they are in a more disadvantageous position when dealing with the competition from "985" and "211" key universities and overseas students.

4.2. The Gap between Employment Expectation and Reality

The gap between employments expectation and reality is another important manifestation of the current employment problem of college students. Many college students expect to enter big cities and well-known enterprises, get decent positions, and get good salaries when they seek jobs. However, in reality, many college students cannot find a job that meets their expectations, and there are obvious gaps between their salary, career development space, and working environment. On the one hand, college students generally expect to enter popular industries, such as the Internet, finance, consulting, etc., but the competition in these industries is particularly fierce, the recruitment requirements are high, and the entry threshold is difficult to cross. On the other hand, some students lack a full understanding of the job market, lack a clear career plan, and have an inaccurate understanding of their own positioning and ability. As a result, they set their goals too high in the process of job hunting, ignoring their own matching degree with the position, which increases the difficulty of employment.

Due to the gap between expectation and reality, some college students continue to "hit the wall" in the process of job hunting, losing confidence in employment, hoping to delay entering the job market by postgraduate entrance examination, study abroad and other ways, trying to improve their competitiveness, but this way can not fundamentally solve the employment problem, but may aggravate the future employment pressure.

4.3. Major-Occupation Mismatches

The industrial structure is closely related to the structure of higher education, so it is necessary to adjust the training plan and the number of talents in higher education in time according to the changes of the industrial structure. Direct coordination between the two is essential to the rapid and stable development of society [4]. The mismatch between major and employment position is also an important manifestation of the employment problem of college students. When many students choose their major at the time of enrollment, they often have a lack of understanding of their future employment prospects, coupled with the disconnection between the professional settings of

universities and the changes in market demand, which makes it difficult to find a suitable job for their major when they graduate. The job market demand for some majors is low, and graduates have limited job choices. Some emerging industries and hot fields do not offer corresponding university majors, and students can only acquire relevant skills by self-study or by changing careers. For example, the rapid development of the Internet and science and technology fields has put forward new demands for talents, but the professional settings and curriculum systems of colleges and universities cannot keep up with the pace of market changes, resulting in many students' professional knowledge not be directly applied to work. In addition, some students of interdisciplinary and composite majors are also faced with the problem of not finding a clear career orientation when seeking jobs. In addition, the curriculum design of some colleges and universities pays too much attention to theoretical education, ignoring the cultivation of practical and applied skills. As a result, although students have learned solid academic knowledge in school, it is difficult to convert it into practical work ability in the workplace. This mismatch between majors and employment positions makes many college students forced to "change careers" or engage in jobs unrelated to their majors in the employment process, resulting in a waste of human resources.

4.4. Lack of Practical Experience and Vocational Skills

Finally, the lack of practical experience and vocational skills leads to elementary errors when college students are new to working in companies. Many employers not only pay attention to candidates' academic and professional background but also pay more attention to their internship experience, practical ability, and work experience. However, college students mainly receive theoretical education while in school, and lack systematic internship and practical opportunities, which makes it difficult for them to meet the requirements of employers for experience and skills in job hunting. In the actual recruitment, many enterprises are more inclined to recruit graduates with relevant work experience, and college students are often difficult to be qualified for specific jobs due to lack of practical work experience. In addition, the vocational skills training and employment guidance received by college students are relatively insufficient, resulting in a lack of necessary interview skills, resume writing ability, and the ability to communicate with employers. This makes them unable to fully show their advantages and potential in the employment process, and miss employment opportunities. Practical experience and vocational skills are especially important in occupations that emphasize practical ability, such as technology, engineering, and the arts. However, many college students' training in these aspects is obviously insufficient, which makes it difficult to compete with job seekers with rich internship experience and skills.

5. Strategies

In the context of "Internet +," employers' requirements have also been improved, both in terms of professional ability but also for communication skills. As a result, there is an increasing focus on compound talents by enterprises. Therefore, guiding college students to participate in a variety of social practices and internships becomes crucial. This allows them to familiarize themselves with the dynamics of the workplace in advance, gain exposure to and comprehend societal development during internships, and cultivate independent learning abilities. Additionally, universities and relevant departments should assist students in establishing a proactive employment mindset and effectively self-positioning themselves. Achieving a certain level of competence among college students requires not only effective coordination among administrative departments within educational institutions but also innovative teaching approaches from dedicated personnel trainers [5]. In light of this situation, the CPC Central Committee and The State Council issued *the Opinions on Implementing the Employment Priority Strategy to Promote High-quality and Full Employment*. This includes

strengthening state support for college students' entrepreneurship and small business and optimizing the labor market evaluation system to improve the employment environment of college students [6].

Furthermore, college students should rationally consider the economic value and symbolic value of a higher education diploma in relation to their employment prospects. Initially, it is important to lower individuals' expectations for higher education diplomas. The key for college students to get out of the diploma trap is to clarify their "career," give up the simple assumption that "having a better higher education diploma can have a good career", and look at the issue of individual development rationally by reducing the subjective expectations of individuals on the role of diplomas [7].

6. Conclusion

With the popularization of higher education, young people have more opportunities to pursue professional subjects or fields in depth. This has undoubtedly expanded their knowledge and skills, making them equipped for the job market. However, it is important to acknowledge that this trend also brings about certain challenges and negative impacts on the employment environment of college students. One major issue faced by college graduates today is the intense competition in popular majors. As more students choose these fields due to their perceived job prospects or societal expectations, there is a surplus of qualified candidates vying for limited positions. This leads to increased pressure and difficulties in securing employment for individuals with similar qualifications. On the other hand, there exists a significant gap between university education and market labor demand when it comes to unpopular majors. These less sought-after disciplines often suffer from a lack of labor force as fewer students opt for them. Consequently, industries requiring professionals from these fields may face shortages while simultaneously witnessing an oversupply in popular areas. Also, concurrently in the professional realm, the author encounters situations where the knowledge the researcher has acquired remains excessively theoretical to be practically applied. Despite numerous iterations of similar national policies, they still fall short of completely resolving the issue. This is primarily due to their inability to cater to or comprehend the diverse needs of all individuals and instead strive solely to meet the employment requirements of a majority of college students. Furthermore, these policies encompass an extensive range of aspects without a viable implementation strategy or genuine integration into college students' real-world employment and application experiences.

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