

# The Influence of College Students' Employment Initiative on Employment Quality

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## ABSTRACT

As the number of fresh graduates in China is increasing year by year, the employment problem of college students is becoming more and more serious. How to solve the problem of college students' employment has always been a topic of high concern from all walks of life, and how to improve the phenomenon of college graduates' employment has become the focus of scholars' research. This study learned about the current status of employment initiative and employment quality of 1,254 college graduates based on the 2019 questionnaire records, and explored whether employment initiative can affect employment quality. It is found that there are significant differences in the level of learning initiative of college graduates in terms of gender, educational background, political outlook, parents' educational level, mother's technical title, family economic level and family social status. Learning initiative and practical initiative have a positive impact on employment quality, and the impact of practical initiative on employment quality is more significant than the impact of learning initiative on employment quality.

**Keywords:** college students; human capital; employment initiative; employment quality

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the number of recent graduates in China had reached 8.6 million. The employment situation of college graduates not only affects their personal lives, but is also related to the stability and sustainable long-term development of the country and society. Therefore, the employment of college students has always been highly concerned by the society. In recent years, the state has shifted from focusing solely on the employment rate to paying equal attention to both the employment rate and the quality of employment, and is committed to improving the employment quality of graduates. However, at the same time, there are phenomena such as the so-called slow employment in the society. The specific manifestation is that the interval between graduation and employment of graduates is lengthened, and graduates are not very active in obtaining employment. In fact, part of the reason is that graduates have higher expectations for the quality of employment, and try to choose ways to obtain better employment quality by increasing investment in education. However, this article hopes to explore the diversification of employment, and hopes to explore whether the quality of employment can be improved by enhancing individual initiative in addition to increasing the accumulation of human capital through further studies. This can reduce the blindness of further studies to a certain extent, and at the same time, it can provide a certain reference for the employment decision-making of college graduates.

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION OF EMPLOYMENT

### 2.1. Employment Initiative

Numerous studies on the employment of college students have shown that the variable of initiative plays a very important role in the field of college students' career development. It can not only affect the innovation and entrepreneurship abilities of college students to a large extent[1], but also affect their job search results[2]. A large number of studies show that proactive personality is positively related to individual career development. The reason is that individuals with proactive personality will choose to actively seize opportunities when they perceive opportunities with developmental value in their careers. Compared with people who do not have active personality, active personality individuals are good at choosing situations and creating situations to improve work performance.

In addition, studies have shown that all aspects of initiative can have a positive impact on employment. In terms of learning, enhancing learning initiative can enable students to accumulate more human capital and enhance their employment competitiveness[3]. In terms of practice, human capital factors, such as non-professional vocational skills certificates and part-time experience can significantly affect the quality of employment of college students[4]. In

terms of job search, the more you submit your resume and the more you participate in job fairs, the more interview opportunities you get[5].

Therefore, this article defines employment initiative as the behavioral tendency that an individual hopes to have a positive impact on the quality of employment, which is mainly divided into learning initiative, practice initiative and job hunting initiative.

## **2.2. Quality of Employment**

According to the research of scholars, the employment quality of college students referred to in this article will be considered from the college students' own career development, starting from their subjective feelings, and manifested in the degree of matching between individuals and professions, job satisfaction, and the overall quality of the job.

As a complex and changeable research topic, the employment quality of college students is easily disturbed by many factors. On the basis of the definition of employment quality and taking into account the particularity of college students who have just stepped out of school, this article mainly measures the employment of college graduates from the three dimensions of job matching, employment satisfaction and post quality.

## **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.1. Conceptual Model and Construction of Evaluation System**

By analyzing the existing literature, this research attempts to explore the impact of employment initiative on employment quality. In the model, employment initiative is an explanatory variable, which is divided into three dimensions: learning initiative, practice initiative, and employment initiative. Employment quality is an explained variable, which is divided into job matching, employment satisfaction and post quality. First, the entropy method is used to fit the six variables of learning initiative, practice initiative, job search initiative, job matching, employment satisfaction and post quality and then the entropy method is used to fit job matching, employment satisfaction and post quality into employment quality.

### **3.2. Research Hypotheses**

As a positive behavior tendency, initiative can often enable individuals to choose better conditions or even create conditions. For college students, the subjective factors affecting employment are roughly divided into capital accumulation and opportunity control. The process of

capital accumulation can be divided into two aspects, including learning and practice. Stronger initiative can enable them to better grasp opportunities and improve efficiency, thereby enhancing their innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities and optimizing job search results. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a positive relationship between employment initiative and employment quality.

H1: Learning initiative has a positive effect on employment quality.

H1a: Learning initiative has a positive effect on job matching.

H1b: Learning initiative has a positive effect on employment satisfaction.

H1c: Learning initiative has a positive effect on post quality.

H2: Practical initiative has a positive effect on employment quality.

H2a: Practical initiative has a positive effect on job matching.

H2b: Practical initiative has a positive effect on employment satisfaction.

H2c: Practical initiative has a positive effect on post quality.

H3: Job-seeking initiative has a positive impact on employment quality.

H3a: Job-seeking initiative has a positive effect on job matching.

H3b: Job-seeking initiative has a positive effect on employment satisfaction.

H3c: Job-seeking initiative has a positive impact on post quality.

### **3.3. Research Subjects**

Taking the graduates of a municipal university in Beijing in 2018 as the research group, this paper collected 1897 samples. In the entire survey, there were 643 unqualified questionnaires and 1254 valid questionnaires. The effective rate of questionnaire return was 66.10%. The basic information of 1254 respondents is shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Basic Information of valid samples

Informants		Qty	Proportion
Gender	Male	401	31.98
	Female	853	68.02
Educational Background	Bachelor Degree	684	54.55
	Master	558	44.50
	Doctor	12	0.96
Only children	Yes	787	62.76
	No	467	37.24
Political Status	General Public	326	26.00
	League Member	853	68.02
	Party Member	75	5.98
Father's Education Level	High School Degree or Below	902	71.93
	Bachelor Degree	276	22.01
	Graduate Degree or Above	76	6.06
Mother's Education Level	Below High School Degree	982	78.31
	Bachelor Degree	240	19.14
	Graduate Degree or Above	32	2.55
Technical Title of Father	No Title	842	67.15
	Junior	52	4.15
	Intermediate	141	11.24
	Senior	205	16.35
	Most High Grade	14	1.12
Technical Title of Mother	Without Ranking	867	69.14
	Junior	151	4.70
	Intermediate	59	12.04
	Senior	168	13.40
Economic Level of Family	Most High Grade	9	0.72
	Impoverished	143	11.40
	Low Income	412	32.85
	Well-off Standard	549	43.78
	Average Income	105	8.37
	High Income	45	3.59

**4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

**4.1. Employment initiative and job matching**

This study uses linear regression methods and takes the three dimensions of employment initiative (learning initiative, practice initiative and job search initiative) as explanatory variables, job matching as explained variable, and gender, educational background, political outlook, etc. as control variables. The results are shown in the table 2. It can be found from Model 1 and Model 2 that learning initiative and practical initiative have a positive impact on job matching. Model 3 shows that job hunting initiative has a negative impact on job matching. When the three variables are put in the same model for regression, the results of Model 4 show that the effect of learning initiative on job matching has changed from significant to insignificant, which may be caused by the mutual influence between the variables. Therefore, it is assumed that H2a holds.

**Table 2.** Employment Initiative and Job Matching(N=1254)

Variable	Dependent variable: Job matching			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Learning Initiative	0.092*			0.062
Practical Initiative		0.185**		0.184***
Job-seeking Initiative			-0.121**	-0.124**
Other control variables	√	√	√	√
R <sup>2</sup>	0.061	0.087	0.068	0.103

Notes: \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent significant at 10%, 5% and 1% confidence levels respectively.

**4.2. Employment Initiative and Employment Satisfaction**

In this part, the three dimensions of employment initiative are used as explanatory variables, and employment satisfaction is used as explained variable to perform regression analysis. The results are shown in the table 3. From the data of models 5-7, it can be seen that learning initiative and practical initiative have a positive effect on employment satisfaction, while job hunting initiative has no significant effect on employment satisfaction. Comparing Model 5 and Model 8, the effect of learning initiative on employment satisfaction has changed from significant to insignificant, which may be the result of the influence between variables. Therefore, it is assumed that H2b holds.

**Table 3.** Employment Initiative and Employment Satisfaction(N=1254)

Variable	Dependent variable:employment satisfaction			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Learning Initiative	0.080*			0.045
Practical Initiative		0.284***		0.282***
Job-seeking Initiative			-0.034	-0.041
Other control variables	√	√	√	√
R <sup>2</sup>	0.081	0.150	0.077	0.153

Notes: \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent significant at 10%, 5% and 1% confidence levels respectively.

**4.3. Employment Initiative and Post Quality**

The three dimensions of employment initiative are used as explanatory variables, and post quality is used as explained variable to perform regression analysis. The results are shown in the table 4. From the analysis results of Model 10 and Model 11, it is concluded that practical initiative has a positive influence on post quality, and job hunting initiative has a negative influence on post quality. In Model 12, the impact of the three dimensions of employment initiative on post quality is no different than that of independent regression, which further validates the conclusions obtained in Model 9-11. Therefore, it is assumed that H2c holds.

**Table 4.** Employment Initiative and Post Quality(N=1254)

Variables	Dependent variable: Post quality			
	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Learning Initiative	0.061			0.038
Practical Initiative		0.163***		0.162***
Job-seeking Initiative			-0.064*	-0.067*
Other control variables	√	√	√	√
R <sup>2</sup>	0.085	0.107	0.086	0.112

Notes: \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent significant at 10%, 5% and 1% confidence levels respectively.

**4.4. Employment Initiative and Employment Quality**

The three dimensions of employment initiative are used as explanatory variables, and the quality of employment is used as the explained variable to perform regression analysis. The results are shown in the table 5. It can be seen from the regression results that learning initiative and practice initiative have a positive impact on employment quality, while job hunting initiative has a negative impact on employment quality. In Model 16, the impact of learning initiative, practice initiative and job search initiative on employment quality is no different than that of independent regression, which further validates the conclusions obtained in models 13-15. Therefore, it is assumed that H1d and H2d are established.

**Table 5.** Employment Initiative and Quality of Employment(N=1254)

Variables	Dependent variable: Employment quality			
	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16
Learning Initiative	0.110*			0.068*
Practical Initiative		0.306**		0.304***
Job-seeking Initiative			-0.097*	-0.103**
Other control variables	√	√	√	√
R <sup>2</sup>	0.095	0.181	0.102	0.193

Notes: \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent significant at 10%, 5% and 1% confidence levels respectively.

**4.5. Job-seeking Initiative and Employment Quality**

Through the previous analysis, it can be found that the correlation between job search initiative and employment quality and its various dimensions is quite different from the research hypothesis. Considering the possibility of non-linear relationship between job seeking initiative and their respective variables, the quadratic term of job seeking initiative is further put into the same regression model for analysis. This study uses linear regression methods and uses the square terms of learning initiative, practice initiative and job hunting initiative as explanatory variables, job matching, job quality, and employment quality as explained variables, and gender, educational background, political outlook, etc. as control variable. The results are shown in the table 6. There is a significant negative correlation between the quadratic term of job search initiative and the respective variables. This result shows that the relationship between employment initiative and job matching, job quality and employment quality is non-linear. There is a possibility that the dependent variable first increases to a certain inflection point and then decreases, rather than the more active the job search, the worse the quality of employment.

**Table 6.** Job-seeking Initiative and Employment Quality(N=1254)

Variables	Job Matching (Model 17)	Job Quality (Model 18)	Employment Quality (Model 19)
Learning Initiative	0.063	0.038	0.069*
Practical Initiative	0.184***	0.161***	0.304***
(Job-seeking Initiative) <sup>2</sup>	-0.109***	-0.062*	-0.092**
Other control variables	√	√	√
R <sup>2</sup>	0.100	0.102	0.191

Notes: \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent significant at 10%, 5% and 1% confidence levels respectively.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1. Learning Initiative and Practice Initiative Have Positive Effects on Employment Quality**

College students with higher learning initiative will have a clearer learning direction, cherish learning opportunities, and be able to actively use the conditions provided by the school. They even create conditions suitable for their own learning, so as to acquire more knowledge, increase knowledge, and improve academic levels. Employers also pay special attention to a person's learning ability, and will

require applicants to present school transcripts during the interview process, and may ask questions about the content of professional courses. On the basis of a clear understanding of the major and higher knowledge, college graduates are more likely to recognize the job that is really suitable for them. At the same time, they are more capable of having more choices.

Practical initiative is an important prerequisite for high employment quality. Practical initiative can encourage college students to accumulate more knowledge into experience, gain knowledge that cannot be learned from books, and have a broader vision. The abilities of operation, expression, collaboration, emergency response, and communication are better exercised through continuous trial and error correction. From the perspective of the enterprise, people with high practical initiative may have the strong practical ability, and show good enthusiasm. They can communicate with colleagues more easily, and they are easier to adapt to the unpredictable work environment. From the campus to the workplace, academic qualifications are only the conditions for the initial screening of employers. What they value more is the ability to work based on knowledge. The more proactive people are, the more opportunities they will have to exercise their abilities. And therefore, they are more likely to get a higher quality job that makes them more satisfied.

**5.2. Job-Seeking Initiative is Negatively Related to Employment Quality**

The higher the job-seeking initiative, the lower the employment quality of college graduates. This conclusion is inconsistent with the research hypothesis. The author thinks that the comprehensive quality of most interviewers is at an average level. Due to the high pressure of social competition, under normal circumstances, in order to seek a better job, the more students who have difficulty finding jobs, the more resumes they will submit. As a result, the corresponding investment in job hunting will be higher. At the same time, after many interviews, less optimistic job search results will reduce the self-confidence and patience of job seekers. Although there are many interviews and heavy investment, it is difficult to maintain a good quality of interviews, which will also make them miss the high-quality positions. Students with higher ability have less resistance when looking for a job. Students with higher ability have less resistance when looking for a job. They don't need to submit too much resume. They may even become the target of corporate competition. Therefore, they do not require too much investment in job hunting, which makes job hunting initiative and employment quality present an opposite trend.

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