



# Analysis of the Causes and Solutions to the Employment Difficulties of Chinese College Students

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**Abstract.** The concept of educational equity usually includes three levels: equity in starting point, equity in process, and equity in outcome. The severe employment problem of college students has drawn the whole society's attention. After the rapid development of higher education, more and more college students face difficulties finding jobs after graduating from college. This global issue is especially serious under the COVID-19 circumstances around the world. This paper analyzes China's current strategies that are used to address the employment difficulties of college students to this problem based on the concept of educational equity. This paper aims to spread awareness of this current issue and provide relevant educators with a clear view on the basis of relevant literature research. The result shows that the employment difficulties of Chinese college students can be a breakthrough from the improvement of school curriculum as well as the changes to the policies and enterprise management. Also, the solutions must involve the contribution of students' self-improvement.

**Keywords:** Employment · College students · Educational Equity · China · COVID-19

## 1 Introduction

Today, China's higher education level has entered a popularization stage after the rapid development of higher education. With the promotion of educational policies alongside the reform of society, the number of college students has a dramatic increasing trend. Due to the inadequate provision of job opportunities in the labor market, many college students have to compete for the insufficient labor opportunities in businesses and institutions. Even though they are somehow an indication of sustained labor resources that can contribute to China's economic and social growth, the sustained job demands are still scarce and competitive [1]. This inherent contradiction becomes much more pronounced, especially under the incredible outbreak of COVID-19. As a result, many college students find difficulties after entering society and finding employment.

Currently, there is much research and exploration of educational equity. For instance, there are some investigations from the perspective of public economics and even some that are based on the development of the internet. Unfortunately, although research in

this field is robust, the unemployment problem of college students under the principle of educational equity remains under-considered comprehensively. Analyzing from the direction of educational equity is also a significant perspective to address the problem of college students' employment difficulties. To approach a deeper analysis of this problem in China, this paper reviews the existing literature in the field of educational equity and the current employment phenomenon of college students in China. The keywords "employment" and "college students" are used as the main ideas to select and investigate fifteen articles from 2005 to now on CNKI and Google Scholar. This article includes four main parts: the analysis of the current employment situations of college students; changes in university and enterprise management; and the requirement of students' self-progression. Overall, the research results of this paper can provide educators and the government with a comprehensive analysis and view of current strategies to address the unemployment problem of college students.

## **2 Current Situations of College Students' Employment**

### **2.1 Decrease in Employment Opportunities Due to the Impact of the Epidemic**

Since 2020, the epidemic has had a great impact on many fields. The typical impact is on the employment of college students. On the one hand, the epidemic caused import restrictions and production disruptions for some companies, especially some high-tech manufacturing companies. As many companies started to cut jobs, the overall job opportunities in the job market decreased. On the other hand, along with the increase in the number of returning foreign students, the competition for jobs between the same positions in the job market became increasingly fierce. Many companies have increased their hiring requirements for the same position. Within companies, due to the impact of the epidemic, many companies have also raised their standards in terms of internal staff appraisal performance.

In the past two years, the number of new jobs is expected to decrease by hundreds of thousands each year due to the negative impact of COVID-19 [2]. However, every year, the number of college graduates in China is very surprising. In 2020, there were 874 thousand college graduates, and in 2021, there were more than 900 thousand graduates[3]. Affected by the epidemic, most college graduates will feel anxious and confused about whether they can find a proper job and even have passive and negative attitudes toward employment. Therefore, the sustainable development of college students' employment requires deep consideration. This may have a great influence on China's economic and educational development as a whole in the future.

### **2.2 Students' Personal Reasons**

Another major concern caused by today's situation is the inadequate entrepreneurship guidance courses. Students are not willing to access professional education during college times. The curricula are only based on theoretical knowledge, instead of giving students practical instruction and guidance. Due to the boredom and monotonous courses, the absenteeism rate in those job guidance classes is also very high. As a result, students

find it extremely hard to find matching employment in large cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, with their studied major, thus making an appropriate transition from college to society.

Students' awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship instruction classes from their own side is also insufficient. Some students have had less exposure to actual outside jobs during their school years and believe that after doing the actual work, they will be competent in the job requirements based on their professional knowledge.

### **2.3 Employment Through Entrepreneurship**

With the continuous improvement and promotion of the entrepreneurship rate of college students, college students returning to their hometowns for employment and entrepreneurship have become the focus of social attention. According to relevant statistics, a total of 4.26 million college students were employed in 2004 to 2005. There are 430,000 unemployed poor college graduates, 10% of whom come from low-income families[4]. The main motivations promoting college students to return to their hometowns or small cities include social security concerns and social competition.

Due to the differences in economic development and market opportunities in different regions across China, this greatly varied college students' abilities to get employment opportunities. It also leads to the unbalanced distribution of graduate employees to a certain extent. From the perspective of sociology, the employment process of college graduates is actually a process of obtaining occupational status, which further affects future labor income and social stratification[5]. In addition to the external factors, the differences in family background, school background, and labor force between various industries also have a significant effect on graduates' job satisfaction. It is inevitable that those combined factors motivate current college students to become more passive.

## **3 Improvement of University Management**

### **3.1 Curriculum Improvement Requirements**

From the point of management in colleges, to ideally address college students' employment problems, the initial step should focus on educational management in colleges and universities. Considering the old concept of curriculum theory, the curriculum structure is way behind modern society. Parts of college courses still follow the conventional theoretical curriculum structure. There is a huge lack of practical content, such as enterprise simulation operations, and cooperative enterprise investigation, along with the absence of internship opportunities provided within schools.

As a result, one major outcome will be incredibly serious since the courses are becoming disjointed from the rapidly changing outside society. Outside employment market demand changes in tandem with the rapidly changing external environment. Therefore, if the college and universities aim to achieve the purpose and outcomes, the old theoretical courses should be abandoned and replaced with new curricula. The conventional theoretical courses should also add more valuable practices to provide students with more real-life experiences. Additionally, employment psychology education

is often neglected in current colleges' curricula. Students often have confusion, anxiety, and even fear in the process of finding employment[6]. The furious competition also forces students to become passive and have slack attitudes towards employment. If there is no psychological education in the course of employment education, it will make it difficult for students to overcome psychological obstacles in employment and produce psychological escape from employment.

### **3.2 Requirements for the Professional Level of Faculty Members**

Along with the perfection of the college employment curriculum, the professional level of the college teachers is also a crucial factor that directly affects the teaching quality of those courses. Hence, the sustainable development of college students' employment will be heavily based on professional outcomes. In the practice of employment and entrepreneurship education, those relevant courses aim to develop students' innovative thinking, help them accumulate practical experience, cultivate their entrepreneurial ability, and shape interdisciplinary talents with innovative and entrepreneurial skills[7]. However, many college teachers, in fact, have no entrepreneurial experience and have not received systematic training for employment and entrepreneurship courses. Therefore, since the number of professional guidance teachers is insufficient, and the number of full-time teachers after professional employment training is limited, which is not strong enough to undertake the employment education and management of all students in colleges and universities. Colleges must continuously optimize their training programs based on employment demands to cultivate talented people in society. Meanwhile, developing application-oriented talents for various front-line positions in the employment market, thus increasing the matching degree between graduates and the current job market.

## **4 Related Policies and Enterprise Support**

In addition to the perfection of the school resource system, the improvement of the employment rate of college students must be supported by society. For instance, the government can solve the current difficulties of college students' employment by acting directly as the main body of employment to expand the demand for college students. In other words, the government can encourage more enterprises to recruit college students by cutting taxes[8]. Especially in the era of the epidemic, as every region in China needs to face the government's prevention controls and requirements, some enterprises have begun to launch new recruitment methods, such as online job fairs using video interviews, which are becoming more and more common. Consequently, some enterprises temporarily stop any face-to-face communication to avoid cross-infection risk.

Although online recruitment seems to bring convenience to students, it also raises new challenges. Firstly, the new recruitment method requires graduates to master the corresponding interview skills. Secondly, there are some limitations to the online recruitment process. Students will lose the opportunity to visit the enterprise before signing the contract[9]. In the most severe cases, there is some risk that online recruitment may provide false information. The misleading information will lead to a psychological gap

for graduates after entering the enterprise due to the absence of face-to-face conversation to clarify the information. From the perspective of the enterprise, this will also be a disadvantage for them as it relates to the possibility of high turnover rates. Therefore, to close the gap for college students in the industry, enterprises should consider providing more valuable recruitment guidance and even cooperate with various enterprises to carry out job fairs for college students to provide more career opportunities at the same time.

## 5 Self-progression of College Students

The core of promoting the employment rate must include students' own engagement. First of all, there are many misunderstandings about the employment expectations of contemporary college students. They believe that graduates should enter large enterprises in big cities with high salaries. The anticipation of becoming elite not only restricts college students' career choices but also causes many contradictions. Unfortunately, competition is getting fiercer due to the excessive number of elites in large cities, while elites are hard to reach in small towns[10]. While being inspired and guided by professionals, college students should take the initiative to learn and adapt to the current situation of the current enterprise market. In other words, understanding the employment situation and changing the traditional employment concept in the right way are the critical steps to achieving higher employment rates.

Besides, the employment process of college students should be independent and conscious with a positive attitude without relying on any external pressure. We should establish the concept that college students do not necessarily need to become elite[11]. College students need to lower their expectations of the starting points. They have to accept the view of adapting to society before reaching higher positions. Even as parents, they should abandon the traditional idea and accept the truth that the purpose of higher education is simply to improve people's overall quality of life. College graduates should stand on the same starting line as those who have not received higher education. In the meantime, while working on their current jobs, they can find proper ways to improve their academic background by attending guidance classes and job fairs. In their spare time after work, college students can also do some online self-learning according to the skills they need to master in their work so as to continuously enrich and improve their work quality.

## 6 Discussion

Regarding the current limitations of this analysis, some aspects are still way behind in considerations. As the employment rate of college students is a widespread and severe social problem, addressing the social event must involve the participation of the government. Despite the expectations and perfection for schools and students being met, the government also needs to take action to solve this problem. On the other hand, there are even some ideal expectations for the government to implement regarding laws related to graduates' employment. Thus, it will further increase college students' employment rate and stabilize an already balanced economic market. Moreover, this paper only reviews

the theoretical analysis of this social problem. It still requires further practice and fulfillment from different fields to achieve the goal of college students' employment rate. In view of the educational field, the strategies should keep advancing with any changes in society and the economic market.

## 7 Conclusion

This paper reviews the situations and influencing factors that led to the current employment conditions of college students in China. The paper organizes the solutions to this social problem into three main steps. Firstly, colleges and universities should provide career guides and other related courses. This should necessitate a break from the traditional theoretical curriculum offered by colleges. Instead, schools should provide ample time for college students to practice practical skills while also providing them with a solid psychological foundation. Since employment anxiety is a very common phenomenon among college students, colleges should take the responsibility to provide related psychology courses to guide students on the right track. In addition, some professional career guide teachers are still inadequate in current colleges and universities.

However, schools need to start training teachers to optimize the cultivation programs taken by universities. Along with the requirements for colleges and teachers, there are some demands for society and enterprises to promote the progression of graduates' employment. During the Epidemic Era, valuable guides for online recruitment are also expected for enterprises to use the online platforms efficiently. Since the restrictions on offline meetings, college students have fewer employment opportunities. At the same time, they have to face fierce competition in the market. Therefore, enterprises have to host more online job fairs with supportive, detailed information and guidance for the job instructions. In this way, it can also help college students to avoid any misunderstandings of the enterprises whilst gaining a better understanding of their preferred corporations.

All in all, students themselves should take the initiative to improve their current situations. Students and parents should correct their employment views in the future, accepting the reality that becoming elite is not the first step to take after graduation. College graduates must gain enough practical and entrepreneurial skills to adapt to society as an initial stage. However, there are still some limitations to this paper. The analysis is only based on relevant theories and articles, lacking empirical data from other perspectives. Therefore, future research can focus on a more in-depth analysis of relevant factors affecting employment from an empirical perspective to investigate this topic further.

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