



Research on Enhancing Employment Core Competitiveness of University Students

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Abstract: The employment issue of university students has always been a matter of great social concern. In the new era, university students face a complex and ever-changing job market. Only by enhancing their core competitiveness in employment can they stand out in the fiercely competitive job market. Based on an analysis of the connotations of college students core competitiveness in employment, this article identifies issues such as outdated career selection concepts, vague career planning, and insufficient professional competence during the process of improving core competitiveness. It proposes suggestions including establishing the concept of "employment-oriented ideological and political education," conducting specialized career planning education, optimizing talent cultivation models, and building a multi-party collaborative talent nurturing mechanism.

Keywords: university students; employment; core competitiveness; improvement

1. Introduction

Employment concerns the national economy and peoples livelihood, and it is also a "major life event" for millions of college graduates. With the continuous expansion of university enrollment, the number of college graduates has been steadily increasing. In 2024, the number of college graduates in China reached 11.79 million, setting another historical record, making the employment situation increasingly challenging. Against the backdrop of intensifying employment challenges, enhancing the core competitiveness of college students employment is imperative.

2. The connotation of employment core competitiveness

Regarding the definition of "core competitiveness" in employment, there is currently no unified consensus in academia. Yang Zhangcheng et al. (2013) argue that "the core competitiveness of college students employment is the unique and stable personal employment competitiveness formed through systematic theoretical learning and practical application. This ability is either not possessed by others or difficult to emulate and surpass." [1] Zhao Qian (2023) believes that the core competitiveness of college students employment mainly includes the mastery of professional knowledge and skills, innovation ability, team cooperation ability, communication ability and other aspects [2] Through summarization and sorting, this paper believes that the core competitiveness of college students employment mainly refers to the ability that college students acquire through post-learning and practice. These abilities are not easy to be imitated or replaced by other competitors, including scientific job selection concept, solid professional skills, high professional quality and rich practical experience.

3. Challenges faced by college students in improving their core competitiveness in employment

3.1 Constrained by traditional ideas, the concept of choosing a job cannot keep up with the times

Currently, there is still an irrational mindset among college students regarding job selection and employment. On one hand, some college students have overly high expectations for their jobs. They set stringent requirements for work environments and positions, carefully studying factors such as corporate culture, team atmosphere, and salary benefits, overemphasizing issues like major alignment and career prospects, spending more time to ensure they can work in an environment that aligns with their values and development needs. On the other hand, some college students are significantly influenced by family factors, making them prone to follow parental wishes when choosing a workplace, neglecting self-assessment and market analysis. "Stability," "secure positions," "civil service exams," and "public sector exams" remain the primary choices.

3.2 The career planning is not clear, and the motivation to improve core competitiveness is insufficient

Career planning can help students understand themselves and their careers, achieving a "person-job fit." The clarity of college students career planning is crucial for their future professional development, yet there is still insufficient emphasis on career planning. On one hand, some universities have not established a systematic, professional, and personalized career planning and employment guidance education system, leading to a weak awareness of career planning among students. On the other hand, there is a disconnect between theory and practice in some universities.

3.3 Lack of professional quality and job competence

Learning ability, innovation capability, and practical skills are crucial manifestations of college students professional abilities and essential guarantees for job competence. Some college students, due to insufficient foundational knowledge, need more time to learn new skills in actual work processes, extending their adaptation period; others focus solely on completing required courses and general education at school, neglecting participation in practical activities and the cultivation and training of hands-on skills. This results in a lack of problem-solving capabilities, inadequate practical work experience, and poor flexibility and innovation, thereby weakening their core competitiveness.

4. Path to improve the core competitiveness of college students in employment

4.1 Firmly establish the concept of "employment and ideological and political education", and strengthen the effectiveness of employment education

Currently, college graduates generally suffer from issues such as employment perception biases and insufficient employability. Promoting the deep integration of employment education with ideological and political education can effectively enhance college students core competitiveness in job hunting. On one hand, integrating employment education with ideological and political education guides students to establish correct career and employment perspectives, enabling them to realize their professional value in ordinary jobs and fulfill their responsibilities through relentless efforts, aligning personal growth with the grand blueprint for national strength. On the other hand, by fully utilizing the valuable resources provided by the "Grand Ideological and Political Course" platform, actively promoting both "bringing in" and "going out," inviting experts, scholars, employers, and outstanding alumni from outside the campus to visit schools, broadens college students theoretical horizons and cognitive levels, enhances their practical skills and innovative awareness.

4.2 Carry out systematic and personalized career planning education to empower students career development

Career planning is of utmost importance for enhancing college students core competitiveness in employment. Universities should help students with their career planning by balancing systematic and personalized approaches. On one hand, it is essential to recognize that student career planning is a systematic project. A comprehensive system for career planning and employment guidance must be established, covering all members, the entire process, and every aspect. This includes classroom teaching, extracurricular practice, from freshmen enrollment to graduate graduation, utilizing big data, artificial intelligence, and other technological means to conduct career planning activities and vocational training, providing high-quality career planning and employment guidance services to students. On the other hand, personalized service should also be emphasized. Given the diverse backgrounds and growth environments of students, universities need to offer customized career counseling, including one-on-one career planning guidance, personality tests, interest assessments, etc., helping them discover their strengths and interests, and develop suitable career development paths, thereby enhancing college students core competitiveness in employment.

4.3 Optimize the talent training mode of colleges and universities to meet the needs of industry development

Industry demand should guide the construction of higher education talent cultivation systems. As the new round of technological revolution advances, the state and society have put forward more specialized requirements for educational services. On one hand, higher education should aim to meet the needs of national modernization strategies and new economic development, take proactive actions, actively understand the specific skill demands of the labor market on job seekers, reform teaching logic and content, and integrate teaching practice with work requirements. Combine disciplinary development with the needs of the times, using application and practice as drivers to help students build a comprehensive professional knowledge system. On the other hand, universities must dare to adjust their disciplinary and professional structures. Higher

education institutions urgently need to change traditional disciplinary and professional layouts, forming resource allocation mechanisms based on actual needs[3].

4.4 Explore multi-party linkage and collaborative education mechanism to comprehensively improve students comprehensive ability

Employment work requires collaboration from multiple parties. First, enhance cooperation between schools and enterprises. Schools and companies can establish partnerships in various aspects such as joint course development, internship and training base construction, co-creation of research projects and innovation and entrepreneurship projects. By providing practical opportunities for students and guiding them to understand industry frontiers, this approach enhances the practicality and foresight of career planning education. Universities can build information-sharing communities with students and families, where dedicated personnel are responsible for conveying professional information and new employment concepts. This gradually updates the perceptions of students and parents, helping them understand the unique value of different job positions and their compatibility with students personalities and abilities, rather than solely pursuing postgraduate studies, civil service exams, or administrative positions.

5. Conclusions

The employment of college graduates concerns peoples livelihood, economic development, and the future of the country. Enhancing students core employability is an effective way to promote their job placement. In light of the current severe situation in student employment, outdated career selection concepts, vague career planning, and lack of professional competence, universities should firmly establish the concept of "employment-oriented ideological and political education," conduct specialized career planning education, optimize talent cultivation models, explore multi-party collaborative mechanisms for nurturing talents, enhance students core employability, and achieve high-quality employment.

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