

Exploration of the Relationship Between the Quality of Higher Education and the Employability of College Students

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Abstract: With the continuous expansion of the enrolment scale in universities in China, the number of graduates has rapidly increased, which has brought certain difficulties to the employment of college students. In order to ensure smooth employment, college students need to have strong employability. There is a close relationship between the quality of higher education and the employability of college students. Universities need to improve the employment rate of college students by ensuring the quality of education. The problems in higher education and the relationship between education quality and college students' employability are discussed in this paper, and effective strategies for improving the education quality and college students' employability are proposed. This study will likely contribute to the employment of college students.

Keywords: Higher education; College student; Employability

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1. Introduction

The concept of employability first appeared in Britain in the early twentieth century and was first proposed by the British economist Beveridge in 1909. According to Beveridge, employability refers to an individual's ability to obtain and maintain a job. In the late 80s of the 20th century, some scholars in the United States revised this concept, proposing that employability is a dynamic process of obtaining initial employment, maintaining employment, and re-selecting and obtaining new jobs, and adding macro aspects such as the job market and national economic policies to explain the overall concept of employability more comprehensively^[1]. In 2005, the American Commission on Education and Employment again clarified the concept of employability. Employability refers to the ability to obtain and maintain a job, not only the ability to find a job in a narrow sense, but also the ability to continue to complete the job and achieve good career development^[2].

College graduates struggle with employment due to the significant increase in number of graduates and the need to improve their employability. Therefore, universities must deeply reflect on the problems in education, comprehensively understand the relationship between education quality and college students' employability, as well as improve both of these factors through various practical and feasible strategies to promote smoother employment for college students upon graduation. These efforts would alleviate employment difficulties and help millions of college students^[3].

2. Problems in higher education

2.1. Deviated curriculum design from market demand

The quality of education in universities is directly influenced by the adequacy and rationality of professional curriculums. Unfortunately, some universities have set their curriculum without consideration for the current market demand, resulting in an insufficient improvement of university courses. Consequently, upon graduation, college students need to align their knowledge systems and abilities with the requirements set by their employers ^[4].

Besides, some instructors mainly focus on explaining professional theoretical knowledge during class instruction and provide their students with minimal opportunities to engage in practical operations and social practices. This approach leads to poor professional knowledge application ability among the students, and their mastery of professional skills becomes superficial as they need more practical experience. Unfortunately, this circumstance adversely affects their employability, as their abilities and knowledge do not meet the standards of the job market ^[5].

2.2. Backward employment guidance

While conducting educational and teaching activities, there is a tendency for universities to neglect providing adequate employment guidance to their students. Typically, such guidance is only offered to college students upon entering their fourth year of studies, and the content and methods must be updated. Additionally, the staff responsible for providing employment guidance are often teachers from different disciplines who lack sufficient professional abilities and experience to guide students effectively. As a result, they tend to face challenges in executing the job with competence ^[6].

2.3. Surficial employment awareness

Contemporary college students grow in a period of rapid development of socialist market economy ^[7]. The coercion of the internet and the interest-oriented and competitive-driven attributes of the market economy confer young students a solid materialistic orientation, competitive awareness, and social pressure ^[8]. Faced with many practical problems such as employment, housing, medical treatment, education, and marriage, some students have significantly reduced or even lost their independent motivation to improve their overall quality of employment. At the same time, the educational discourse system of college education that guides students to establish a correct outlook on employment and career selection needs to be more flexible. There are dull, preaching, and urging discourse styles, which are not in line with young students' ideological pursuit and language style. It is difficult to resonate with teachers and students to think about high-quality employment ^[9].

3. Relationship between the quality of higher education and the employability of college students

3.1. The employability of college students reflects the quality of higher education

Nowadays, higher education has transformed from elite education to mass education, and with the continuous development of society, higher requirements have been put forward for the employability of college students. College students not only need to master sound professional knowledge system and basic literacy, but also have a strong sense of innovation and social responsibility. The critical way for college students to improve their abilities and literacy is through the implementation of school education and teaching activities; thus, the employability of college students reflects the quality of higher education ^[10].

3.2. The quality of higher education affects the employability of college students

The setting of professional courses in universities and the methods adopted by teachers in educational activities are directly related to the improvement of college students' professional abilities, ideological and

moral qualities, values, as well as their sense of responsibility, which are the main components of their employability. If the quality of educational activities carried out in universities is poor, it will inevitably have an impact on the development of college students' abilities and qualities, leading to relatively weak employability and having a significant impact on their smooth employment ^[11].

4. Effective strategies for improving the quality of higher education and the employability of college students

4.1. Building a comprehensive education quality management system

In order to improve the employability of college students, we need to ensure the quality of higher education ^[12]. To this end, universities should actively build a comprehensive education quality management system, implement complete process control over education and teaching activities, as well as encourage all personnel, including both teachers and college students, to actively participate in the education quality management work ^[13]. Each university department needs to clarify its own educational responsibilities and focus on improving the quality of talent cultivation. The content of the system mainly includes clarifying educational goals and policies. Second, there is a need to highlight the curriculum teaching standards for cultivating college students' professional abilities and put forward precise requirements for the standardized implementation of teaching activities in order to ensure the quality of education. Third, the authority and responsibilities of each department and faculty member should be clarified. Fourth, a teaching plan should be developed, and the selection of textbooks should comply with educational requirements and standards. Fifth, it is necessary to clarify that the selection of teaching methods should meet the standards of educational quality requirements ^[14].

4.2. Strengthen the optimization of education plans

The formulation of education plans is directly related to the quality of higher education. In order to improve the quality of higher education and the employability of college students, teachers need to pay attention to strengthening the optimization of education plans ^[15]. Firstly, the education plan needs to be adapted to social development. With the continuous development of society, the requirements for college graduates are constantly changing. To this end, teachers should conduct comprehensive market research before formulating education plans and consider the current industry development, talent demand, and new requirements for talent when formulating education plans. In order to ensure that the development of education plans is scientific and reasonable, teachers need to strengthen communication with relevant enterprises, jointly develop education plans, and improve the contemporary characteristics of education plans, thereby improving the employment management of college students. Secondly, in order to ensure that college students have strong employability to cope with future employment upon graduation, teachers need to strictly follow the basic principle of comprehensiveness when formulating education plans and take the following as the main entry point for the formulation of education plans: promoting the comprehensive development of college students' morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor ^[16]. Thirdly, when formulating education plans, teachers must implement the educational philosophy of applying knowledge and combining learning with application, vigorously cultivate college students' knowledge application and practical abilities, as well as organize targeted professional skill training for students. Fourthly, the formulation of education plans must be in line with reality. It should not only be in agreement with the current industry development, but also meet the actual situation and needs of college students to fully reflect the characteristics of universities ^[17].

4.3. Innovative educational methods

Innovating and reforming educational methods are effective ways to improve the quality of higher

education and, naturally, one of the ways to enhance the employability of college students. In the process of innovating educational methods, universities should strive to ensure that the educational methods adopted by teachers can achieve ideal educational results and quality. Therefore, universities must strive to connect with relevant enterprises to understand the current employment needs and requirements ^[18]. In the process of innovating and reforming educational methods, it is necessary to use this as a basis to choose appropriate methods for activities and encourage college students to actively participate in classroom teaching so as to strengthen the cultivation of university employability. With the continuous deepening of education reform in China, various educational methods are emerging. Teachers must strengthen their research and analysis of these educational methods and combine them with educational content to choose appropriate methods for the implementation of educational activities. For example, teachers can use project-based teaching methods relevant to the educational content to help college students apply their learned professional knowledge and skills independently to complete project tasks. Through this, college students will not only be able to complete project tasks independently and cultivate independent thinking and self-learning abilities, but also work together in groups to complete project tasks, thereby improving their collaborative spirit and ability, and gain team awareness, thereby laying a solid foundation for the improvement of their employability ^[19].

4.4. Curriculum design in line with social needs

In order to ensure the quality of higher education, it is necessary to make appropriate adjustments to the curriculum based on the current social development and talent needs, break the outdated and single curriculum, and solve the problem of overemphasizing theoretical knowledge while neglecting practical teaching, and appropriately increase the proportion of practical teaching. For example, universities can offer elective courses based on current social needs to meet the learning needs of college students and broaden their horizons, thereby ensuring that college students have strong employability. The cultivation of college students' innovation ability and social adaptability will be an important part of course teaching. In addition, university teachers need to follow the development of society and constantly enrich their knowledge structure system in order to make timely adjustments to the curriculum and teaching content and thus meet the future career development needs of college students for employability.

4.5. Strengthen employment guidance for college students

In the early stages of college students entering higher education, it is necessary to consider improving their employability as an important task in higher education. Universities can enhance their students' employability by strengthening employment guidance for them. Through employment guidance, universities can help students form correct employment perspectives once they step into the campus, allowing them to realistically position their career development direction, accurately grasp the relationship between professional knowledge and skills learning and employability, as well as make scientific plans for their career development. It lays a solid foundation for the improvement of college students' employability and smooth employment in the future.

4.6. Strengthen the reform of the examination system

In the process of carrying out educational activities in universities, final exams, which are usually written exams, are often used to evaluate students' learning. The exam questions are set by teachers from various disciplines, and students are graded based on their answers. Obviously, this evaluation method is quite arbitrary and one-sided. This is also the main reason for the current phenomenon where college students have high scores but low ability ^[20]. Although some college students have consistently performed well during their studies, they could have achieved better results in the recruitment tests, resulting in missed

employment opportunities. Therefore, in the process of improving the quality of education and students' employability, universities must actively change the traditional examination system and strengthen the optimization and improvement of the teaching evaluation system. Firstly, universities should strengthen the evaluation of teachers' lesson preparation in order to encourage teachers to conduct educational activities with accuracy and clarify the education direction and goals for each lesson. Secondly, universities should carry out questionnaire surveys to comprehensively understand the objective evaluation of educational activities by college students, which would provide an important basis for teachers to improve educational methods and content. This ensures that educational reform is more targeted. Thirdly, when evaluating students' learning situation, teachers should not rely solely on the final exam as a means of evaluation; instead, they should add process evaluation to comprehensively evaluate the performance of students and the improvement of their abilities throughout the entire learning process. Fourthly, when evaluating the learning situation, teachers should encourage students to perform self-evaluation first, so that they can understand themselves better and self-reflect. Self-evaluation is a necessary skill for students to land a job. By assisting college students from multiple levels and perspectives, society, schools, and families can take on corresponding responsibilities. College students' employability will improve, and they will be able to cope calmly in the face of today's complex employment environment. There is a need to continuously improve the fundamental system and top-level design as well as identify and solve problems during the policy implementation process. In the guidance process, teachers must communicate and give feedback on problems encountered by students, convey the policy guidance to students, and ensure that every step is carried out smoothly. This will definitely bring a "new spring" to college students' employment.

5. Conclusion

There is a close relationship between higher education quality and college students' employability. In response to employment difficulties faced by college graduates in recent years, universities should actively improve the quality of education, standardize higher education activities through the construction of an education quality management system, and ensure that all educational activities are of high quality and can be carried out efficiently. Teachers should pay attention to strengthening the optimization of education plans, ensuring that the design of educational content and the selection of educational methods meet not only the actual needs of college students, but also the needs of current social development, so as to effectively improve students' employability. In addition, universities should actively strengthen employment guidance for college students, encourage them to establish a correct outlook on employment, and ensure that they have sufficient employability to cope with future employment.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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