

[Open Peer Review on Qeios](#)

Shaping Tomorrow's Workforce: Adapting University Curriculum to Address China's College Graduate Employment Challenges

Wei Zhang¹

¹ Dehong Teachers' College

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Abstract

University students are valuable human resources in today's society, and employment is fundamental to people's livelihoods. Therefore, effectively addressing the employment of college graduates is not only related to various national economic, social, and political issues but is also a significant topic of concern for society, families, and the media. From a societal perspective, the employment of university students is directly related to the success or failure of China's education system reform and also impacts social harmony and development. From the students' perspective, employment issues are closely tied to their personal development, success, and realization of life values. From the perspective of universities, employment issues are connected to their own survival and development. It is evident that addressing the employment of college graduates is crucial for promoting the harmonious development of China's education sector. This paper explores the issue of difficult employment faced by Chinese college graduates and presents some strategies to address this issue.

Wei Zhang*

Dehong Teachers' College, Dehong, China

*Correspondence: wzhang8463@hotmail.com

Keywords: universities; graduates; employment difficulties; studying abroad.

Introduction

A little over a decade ago, university graduates, regarded as the pride of the nation, did not need to worry about finding jobs. However, today the problem of difficult employment for college graduates has become a social reality. While our country has only experienced localized talent surpluses since entering the stage of mass education, a shortage of higher education talent still prevails nationwide. This indicates that higher education talent is unevenly distributed across "localized" areas. Despite the localized issues of graduate unemployment in certain regions and disciplines, a shortage of talent remains a significant concern. Hence, effectively addressing the problem of difficult employment for college graduates under new development circumstances is of paramount importance.

Analysis of the Problem of Difficult Employment for College Graduates

Rapid Growth in the Number of Graduates

The statistics from the Ministry of Education reveal a sharp increase in the number of college graduates in China. In 2002, the number was 1.45 million, which surged to 6.6 million in 2011, 8.74 million in 2020, and exceeded 10 million in 2022, reaching 10.76 million. This means that the number of college graduates in 2022 is more than seven times that of 2002. The rapid increase in the number of graduates has led to a tense situation in terms of social talent demand in various regions and disciplines.

Mismatch between Graduates and Social Talent Demand

Most of today's college graduates belong to the "post-90s" and "post-00s" generations. These generations are characterized by a spirit of hard work and even a sense of adventure. Many believe that they need to move to first-tier cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou to truly showcase their value and capabilities. While large cities offer more job opportunities compared to second and third-tier cities, they also demand higher quality from talents. However, this high concentration of talent in big cities leads to greater employment pressure for graduates. It is evident that first-tier cities are not suitable for all college graduates. Unrealistically pursuing big-city life and relentlessly chasing ideal positions and high salaries while neglecting one's own abilities and vocational skills can easily lead to employment difficulties.

Outdated Career Perceptions and Unrealistic Expectations

Many graduates have unrealistic expectations and place excessive importance on the prestige of their jobs. Some are driven by immediate rewards, seek high salaries, and prioritize comfortable work environments. However, these high expectations often fail to consider whether their own aspirations and abilities match the actual demands of the job market. Consequently, there is a discrepancy between the career choices of college graduates and the needs of the job market. Moreover, many contemporary graduates lack psychological resilience and adaptability. Growing up in well-off families, most of the "post-90s" and "post-00s" generations have developed strong psychological dependency due to prolonged family care. Faced with setbacks in the job search process, they easily experience confusion and helplessness. When confronted with difficulties in finding employment, some graduates experience significant psychological pressure, leading to confusion and anxiety. Even after facing job rejections, they might experience substantial negative emotions, lose confidence in themselves, and doubt their future.

Regional Disparities in Graduate Demand

As China's reform and opening-up policies have deepened, coastal areas and first-tier cities have experienced rapid development, creating an increasing gap with underdeveloped inland regions and second and third-tier cities. These economic disparities have led to an influx of talents, foreign investments, and entrepreneurs in economically developed areas. Graduates who find employment in these regions enjoy better salaries, benefits, and opportunities. While some underdeveloped regions have implemented talent recruitment plans, fiscal limitations and other factors have restricted their effectiveness. Consequently, many underdeveloped regions face challenges in attracting graduates, resulting in a significant shortage of local talent and substantial regional disparities in talent distribution.

Lack of Comprehensive Employment Guidance and Information Services

Presently, many higher education institutions in China still face deficiencies in providing comprehensive employment guidance to students. Some universities do not give adequate attention to employment guidance, resulting in a lack of guidance and information services. Since the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the central government has initiated the "Rural Village Official Program" as part of a comprehensive strategy to recruit university graduates for rural service. However, these policies have not fully addressed the diversification of employment for graduates. The "Western Volunteer Service Plan" and other initiatives encourage graduates to pursue various forms of employment, yet these policies' implementation has not adequately addressed the distribution of graduates across various sectors.

Lack of Self-awareness Among Students

Most college graduates lack a clear understanding of their own career abilities and self-worth from an objective perspective. They often fail to make long-term career plans. Overly high expectations in the job search process lead to hesitation in decision-making. Some students blindly compare themselves to others, focusing on reputation and wealth

rather than career dedication and responsibility. This leads to missed opportunities during job applications.

Strategies to Address the Problem of Difficult Employment for College Graduates

Align Employment with Economic Development and Create Job Opportunities

Addressing employment issues fundamentally requires the advancement of social and economic development. Government bodies should promote positive interactions between employment and economic growth. Economic policies should integrate development, industrial restructuring, economic reform, and employment expansion. Policies should consider both enhancing socioeconomic competitiveness and fostering employment growth, focusing on adjusting and advancing China's economic structure. Structural adjustments in industries should be ongoing, with a particular focus on guiding the service sector. Ownership structures should also be adjusted, prioritizing the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and private businesses. Policies should create favorable environments for small and medium-sized enterprises, remove discriminatory practices in market entry and financing, and stimulate vitality in these sectors.

Improve Employment Policies for Graduates

To guarantee the linkage between employment and economic development, government bodies should integrate the current situation and main tasks of graduate employment into economic policy formulation and adjustments. Legislative actions should clarify and improve the mechanism for graduate employment guidance. Policies and legal safeguards should be established to support and guide graduate employment. These policies should consider both national-level guidelines and the specific development conditions of different regions to formulate localized employment guidance policies.

Enhance Transparency of Student Employment Information

Given the evolving social and economic conditions, graduate employment information exhibits authenticity, variability, purpose, effectiveness, and shareability. Employment information is a crucial factor in the employment process and is a fundamental prerequisite for graduate employment success. Therefore, government bodies should take steps to enhance the accuracy, timeliness, and accessibility of employment information. They should establish mechanisms for coordinating employment information among universities, governments, and enterprises.

Implement Comprehensive Career Education

The value of employment guidance lies not only in helping students secure jobs but also in promoting their lifelong career development. Education regarding career choices should be comprehensive, covering career cognition, career planning, and career management. This education should provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully navigate various career development stages. Graduates should be encouraged to establish a systematic and long-term

career plan that aligns with personal values, interests, and abilities.

Strengthen Vocational Education and Training

To alleviate the difficulties faced by graduates in finding jobs, it is necessary to enhance their vocational skills and occupational abilities. Universities and colleges should establish systems for vocational education and training that integrate theory and practice. These systems should focus on cultivating high-quality, skilled, and adaptable talent that meets market demands.

Promote Entrepreneurship and Innovation

In recent years, the central government has attached great importance to the development of mass entrepreneurship and innovation, proposing a series of corresponding policies. Enterprises should actively participate in innovation and entrepreneurship activities in universities and colleges, and universities should provide corresponding support and services. This collaboration will enable students to better adapt to the market's needs, develop innovative capabilities, and explore various career paths.

Seeking overseas opportunities

I learnt from the news that even students from low-class families can study abroad and work overseas. One student received a fellowship from Hong Kong government and then an offer from Harvard in America. Many people may ask how much you will need to get into Harvard, since it is a world-class university. For your reference of this role model, he is a materials scientist and has published sixteen papers in reputed journals, including publishers of RSC [\[1\]\[2\]\[3\]\[4\]](#), Nature [\[5\]\[6\]](#), ACS [\[7\]\[8\]](#), Wiley [\[9\]](#) and Cell [\[10\]\[11\]\[12\]\[13\]\[14\]\[15\]\[16\]](#). His successful story tells us that even students from disadvantaged backgrounds can dream big with the help of funding overseas.

Strengthen the Cultivation of Psychological Resilience

Universities should strengthen the cultivation of students' psychological resilience and adaptability. This involves creating a positive and open campus culture that encourages students to actively face difficulties and setbacks. Counseling centers and psychological service centers should be established on campuses to provide students with effective psychological counseling services. Students should be guided in building confidence, facing difficulties with resilience, and developing a positive and optimistic attitude towards employment.

Conclusion

Effectively addressing the problem of difficult employment for college graduates is a multi-dimensional issue that requires efforts from multiple stakeholders, including the government, universities, enterprises, and students themselves.

Strategies to address this issue should be comprehensive, encompassing economic development, policy improvements, education reform, vocational training, psychological resilience cultivation, and more. By taking a holistic approach and implementing targeted measures, China can work towards reducing the problem of difficult employment for its college graduates and fostering a more harmonious and prosperous society.

References

1. [^]R. Ni, J. Liu, Y. Chau, *Ultrasound-facilitated assembly and disassembly of a pH-sensitive self-assembly peptide*. *RSC Adv.* 8, 29482–29487 (2018).
2. [^]F. Zhorabek, M. S. Abesekara, J. Liu, X. Dai, J. Huang, Y. Chau, *Construction of multiphasic membraneless organelles towards spontaneous spatial segregation and directional flow of biochemical reactions*. *Chem. Sci.* 14, 801–811 (2023).
3. [^]J. Liu, T. Zhang, X. Liu, J. W. Y. Lam, B. Z. Tang, Y. Chau, *Molecular logic operations from complex coacervation with aggregation-induced emission characteristics*. *Mater. Horizons.* 9, 2443–2449 (2022).
4. [^]J. Liu, R. Ni, Y. Chau, *A self-assembled peptidic nanomillipede to fabricate a tuneable hybrid hydrogel*. *Chem. Commun.* 55, 7093–7096 (2019).
5. [^]J. Liu, B. Z. Tang, *How to drink like a liposome*. *Nat. Rev. Chem.* 7, 5–6 (2023).
6. [^]J. Liu, E. Spruijt, A. Miserez, R. Langer, *Peptide-based liquid droplets as emerging delivery vehicles*. *Nat. Rev. Mater.* 8, 139–141 (2023).
7. [^]J. Liu, F. Zhorabek, Y. Chau, *Nucleic Acids Modulate Liquidity and Dynamics of Artificial Membraneless Organelles*. *ACS Macro Lett.* 11, 562–567 (2022).
8. [^]J. Liu, F. Zhorabek, X. Dai, J. Huang, Y. Chau, *Minimalist Design of an Intrinsically Disordered Protein-Mimicking Scaffold for an Artificial Membraneless Organelle*. *ACS Cent. Sci.* 8, 493–500 (2022).
9. [^]J. Liu, F. Zhorabek, T. Zhang, J. W. Y. Lam, B. Z. Tang, Y. Chau, *Multifaceted Cargo Recruitment and Release from Artificial Membraneless Organelles*. *Small.* 18, 2201721 (2022).
10. [^]J. Liu, R. Feng, Y. Chau, *Large-sized but ready to enter: Micron-sized liquid droplets for versatile intracellular delivery*. *Matter.* 5, 1637–1639 (2022).
11. [^]J. Liu, F. Zhorabek, Y. Chau, *Biomaterial design inspired by membraneless organelles*. *Matter.* 5, 2787–2812 (2022).
12. [^]X. Liu, J. Liu, C. Zhu, *NIR-II organic dyes: Get brighter and see clearer*. *Matter.* 5, 3583–3585 (2022).
13. [^]J. Liu, S. L. Perry, B. Z. Tang, M. V. Tirrell, *Liquid capsules for gastrointestinal drug delivery*. *Matter.* 5, 3107–3109 (2022).
14. [^]J. Liu, *From chemistry to dentistry: Paving my uncommon way to Harvard School of Dental Medicine as a materials scientist*. *Matter.* 5, 2393–2396 (2022).
15. [^]J. Liu, *How art impacts my science*. *Matter.* 5, 4105–4106 (2022).
16. [^]J. Liu, T. Zhang, X. Liu, B. Z. Tang, *Give crucibles to a prokaryote*. *Matter.* 5, 2540–2542 (2022).

