

Research on the construction and development of vocational college graduates' job market

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Abstract: *Higher vocational education plays a crucial role in cultivating high-quality and skilled talents. The employment situation of graduates from higher vocational colleges has garnered significant attention. Taking the employment situation at Chongqing Polytechnic as a case study, this paper investigates the establishment and development of the graduate employment market through various perspectives such as school-based market, inter-school alliances, win-win collaborations between schools and workplaces, and school-enterprise cooperation. Furthermore, it proposes an effective approach to address the issue of vocational college graduate unemployment at a theoretical level.*

Keywords: *Higher vocational education, graduate employment, market construction, research on development, effective strategies*

1. Introduction

Higher vocational education, as a crucial means of cultivating high-quality skilled personnel, plays a pivotal role in China's educational system. With the continuous development of China's economy and upgrading of its industrial structure, there is an escalating demand for high-quality skilled talents. Consequently, the issue of employment among graduates from higher vocational colleges has garnered increasing attention from society. The employment situation of vocational college graduates not only affects their individual livelihoods but also has implications for national talent cultivation and social development. However, several challenges persist in the current employment landscape for these graduates, including low employment rates, unclear career planning, and unsatisfactory salary levels. To address these issues effectively and provide theoretical support and practical guidance for sustainable vocational education development and graduate employment prospects, this paper takes Chongqing's vocational colleges as an example to focus on constructing and developing job markets specifically tailored to meet the needs of vocational college graduates.

2. Research background and significance

Higher vocational education holds a distinctive position within China's educational system, catering primarily to practical occupations with strong relevance and applicability. The active employment of higher vocational college graduates plays a pivotal role in fostering societal harmony, stability, and economic development^[1]. Moreover, these graduates possess essential vocational skills, professional qualities, and exhibit competitiveness in the job market. However, the multifaceted nature of their employment challenges poses significant obstacles to the construction and advancement of the job market. To comprehensively comprehend and address this issue, an in-depth investigation into the job market for vocational college graduates is imperative to propose effective solutions that further higher vocational education while elevating the quality of graduate employability.

3. Analysis of the current situation of higher vocational education and graduates' employment

3.1 Characteristics and functions of higher vocational education

Higher vocational education refers to the educational system aimed at nurturing professionals with specific vocational skills and knowledge, targeting senior high school graduates or secondary graduates. In comparison to general undergraduate education, higher vocational education places emphasis on fostering practical vocational abilities while highlighting practicality and professionalism.

Graduates of higher vocational colleges typically possess robust professional qualities, strong adaptability, and are capable of swiftly integrating into the workforce to contribute towards societal economy.

3.2 Employment status and existing problems of graduates in vocational colleges

The establishment and maintenance of a vocational employment market not only provides high-quality job opportunities for school graduates, but also reduces the burden of job hunting for students. Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in facilitating students' transition into society, addressing the employment gap faced by enterprises, nurturing talent reserves for enterprise development, contributing to social and economic progress, as well as promoting the healthy growth of vocational colleges themselves^[2].

Although higher vocational college graduates possess certain vocational skills, they still encounter challenges and issues within the job market. Firstly, a common problem is the low employment rate resulting from intense market competition. Some graduates may struggle to secure positions that align with their majors, leading to relatively lower rates of employment. Secondly, unclear career planning is another prevalent issue. Many graduates lack a clear roadmap for their professional development which can result in confusion and instability after entering the workforce. Additionally, unsatisfactory salary levels are also frequently raised concerns among these individuals. Despite possessing specific vocational skills, their salaries tend to be lower due to limited experience and qualifications compared to other candidates. These problems highlight the existing challenges facing the construction and development of job markets specifically tailored towards vocational college graduates.

4. The theoretical basis of vocational college graduates' job market construction

4.1 The composition and characteristics of the job market

The job market serves as a vital platform for employers and job seekers to communicate and exchange, playing a crucial role in achieving labor supply-demand equilibrium. It encompasses various participants, including employers, job seekers, and the government. Key characteristics of the job market encompass uncertainty, dynamism, complexity, and diversity.

Uncertainty is inherent due to macroeconomic fluctuations, policy changes, and technological advancements that can lead to sudden shifts in employment opportunities. Dynamism implies constant evolution and change within the job market necessitating adaptability from job seekers. Complexity arises from multiple factors such as diverse job types, salary levels, geographical distribution among others that contribute to its intricate nature. Diversity acknowledges variations across industries, fields, and regions requiring tailored structuring of the job market.

4.2 Analysis of the characteristics and demands of the job market for graduates of higher vocational colleges

College graduates constitute the primary workforce in China, playing a pivotal role in employment and career decisions. Their professional growth and family well-being are intricately linked to the long-term stability and collective prosperity^[3] of the nation. The job market for graduates from higher vocational colleges exhibits distinctive characteristics that can be harnessed for its construction and development. Firstly, these graduates possess robust vocational skills, practical experience, and adaptability, enabling them to swiftly acclimate to work environments. Secondly, their employment demands span diverse fields and industries encompassing manufacturing, service sectors, as well as information technology; thus necessitating a multifaceted job market.

In addition, vocational college graduates typically possess explicit employment criteria and place greater emphasis on salary levels and career advancement prospects. Consequently, the job market must provide competitive remuneration packages and opportunities for professional growth to attract these graduates. Moreover, vocational college graduates seek enhanced career planning and employment guidance to facilitate informed decision-making regarding their career trajectory.

5. The practical path of vocational college graduates' job market construction

5.1 Develop school-based employment market and build employment platform

Currently, vocational colleges in Chongqing have established institutions for graduate employment; however, a comprehensive mechanism to enhance the construction of the graduate employment market is yet to be developed. Therefore, it is imperative to foster the growth of school-based employment markets in vocational colleges. Firstly, each higher vocational college should formulate a "Plan for Constructing Graduate Employment Markets" tailored to its own developmental needs, ensuring the establishment of robust school-based employment markets from a systemic perspective. Secondly, dedicated teams specializing in graduate employment research should be established within each higher vocational college to analyze national employment trends, enhance students' employability within their respective fields and expand channels for vocational college graduates' job placements - thus opening new avenues for school-based employment markets. Lastly, financial support can be provided by allocating funds specifically designated for employment research and services based on a certain proportion of tuition fees paid by vocational college students - thereby injecting financial security into the development of school-based employment markets.

5.2 Establish an inter-university employment alliance to build an employment base

Vocational colleges exhibit consistency in talent training objectives, and their educational direction is based on their traditional strengths, thereby fostering strong complementarity in professional settings. This facilitates the collective attraction of enterprises' attention, underscoring the necessity of establishing an interuniversity employment alliance for graduate placements. The advantages lie in: strengthening collaboration in graduate employment efforts to construct a cooperative platform that minimizes wastage of employment resources; enhancing research on graduate employment endeavors to establish a research platform that enhances the relevance of these initiatives; constructing a highland for complex skill-based talent resources to build a job market platform and collaboratively establish a base for graduate employability.

5.3 Promote the win-win situation of university-local employment and open up employment channels

Higher vocational colleges and local governments should establish effective channels for technology transfer. In Chongqing, each district and county hosts industrial parks at varying stages of development, housing a diverse range of enterprises. The construction and advancement of these industrial parks necessitate a substantial number of highly skilled professionals. Vocational colleges can proactively engage in collaboration agreements with employers, facilitating internships and training programs while establishing industry-university-research cooperation platforms to offer graduates enhanced practical opportunities, employment prospects, as well as augment their professional aptitude and competitiveness.

5.4 Deepen industry-university-research cooperation and improve employment efficiency

As the core of higher vocational education, vocational colleges should prioritize long-term goals and deepen the reform of personnel training modes in vocational education. They should steadfastly follow a market-oriented approach that integrates production and education, expand school-enterprise cooperation channels, and diversify work-study integration methods. By leveraging the educational mechanism that combines production, study, and research in higher vocational colleges, favorable social capital can be obtained to enhance employment prospects for higher vocational graduates^[4].

Industry-university-research collaboration serves as a pivotal approach to establish the employment market for graduates in higher vocational colleges. Through partnering with industries, higher vocational colleges can gain deeper insights into market demands and provide practical opportunities and career guidance for their graduates. Simultaneously, collaborations with research institutions facilitate the transformation of scientific research outcomes, thereby injecting new impetus into industrial development. This innovative model effectively enhances the adaptability of vocational college graduates to meet market demands while elevating both employment rates and career development quality. Chongqing Industry Polytechnic College and Alibaba have jointly established an "order class," namely the "Chongqing Industry Polytechnic College Alibaba Class," which aims to comprehensively enhance students' overall qualities, professional skills, and job market

competitiveness within vocational college recruitment processes, significantly improving talent training targeting and effectively addressing employment pressures faced by vocational colleges.

5.5 Develop the invisible job market and expand employment channels

Vocational college graduates generally face challenges in the job market, and it is crucial to integrate employment guidance into their educational curriculum. Failure to quickly adapt to their job roles after employment increases the likelihood of elimination^[5]. To enhance career planning for higher vocational college graduates, the provision of employment guidance services becomes imperative. These colleges can offer specialized courses on career planning and provide comprehensive employment guidance services that enable graduates to comprehend their career interests, assess development potential, and formulate effective career development plans. Additionally, collaboration with industry experts and career planners allows higher vocational colleges to deliver personalized career counseling and guidance.

Vocational college graduates are generally in a weak position in the job market, and employment guidance should run through school education. If they cannot adapt to the job position as soon as possible after employment, they are more likely to be eliminated^[5]. In order to help the graduates of higher vocational colleges better realize their career planning, employment guidance service is also very important. Vocational colleges can offer career planning courses and employment guidance services to help graduates understand their career interests and development potential and make career development plans. Meanwhile, higher vocational colleges can also cooperate with industry experts and career planners to provide graduates with personalized career counseling and guidance.

6. Evaluation and enhancement of job market development for graduates in higher vocational colleges

6.1 Determination of evaluation indicators and allocation of weights

To assess the development of the job market for vocational college graduates, it is essential to identify appropriate evaluation indicators and assign corresponding weights. These indicators may encompass employment rate, salary level, employment stability, graduate satisfaction, and employers' assessment of graduate quality. By quantitatively or qualitatively measuring these indicators, we can gauge the level of development in the job market for vocational college graduates. Weights can be assigned based on the significance and impact of each indicator to obtain comprehensive evaluation results.

6.2 Evaluation of market development effectiveness

By evaluating the effectiveness of vocational college graduates' job market development, we can gain insights into the efficacy of improvement strategies. This evaluation should include data collection and analysis regarding improvements in employment rates, salary levels, career advancement opportunities, and graduate satisfaction. Based on these evaluation results, adjustments can be made to optimize the market development strategy further enhancing outcomes for vocational college graduates.

6.3 Strategies for addressing existing issues

Building upon evaluations conducted earlier enables us to propose strategies aimed at resolving problems prevalent within the job market for higher vocational college graduates. For instance, to address low employment rates effectively; collaboration with employers and industries should be strengthened to promote increased internship and training opportunities while enhancing career competitiveness among graduates. Additionally; strengthening career guidance counseling services will assist those lacking clear career plans by helping them develop personalized career goals. In response to the issue of inadequate salary levels, employers can be encouraged to offer more competitive compensation packages, while enhancing transparency and oversight in salary disclosure. By implementing a continuous improvement and optimization strategy, the employability of vocational college graduates can be effectively enhanced.

7. Conclusions and prospects

Through research on the construction and development of the vocational college graduates' job market, this paper unveils the characteristics and demands of said job market, while proposing effective solutions. The prominence of higher vocational education is evident, with broad prospects for the development of higher vocational colleges. With the impetus provided by "double high" construction, Chongqing Industry Polytechnic College has undertaken bold innovations and determined reforms, resulting in a series of fruitful explorations in graduate job market establishment. Graduates' employment quality has witnessed continuous enhancement alongside a significant improvement in their employment rate.

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