



Current Status and Research Trends on the Employability of College Students in the Context of the Digital Economy

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Abstract. The strong rise of the digital economy has iterated the traditional employment relationship, and new employment forms characterized by flexibility and freedom have flourished, bringing profound structural changes to the labor market. In the highly uncertain employment environment, college students especially need to rely on employability as the core resource to achieve initial employment and continuous employment. At present, there are some problems in the research of employability of college students, such as unclear definition, lack of scientific measurement tools and shallow research on formation mechanism. Based on the above analysis, future research should clarify the concept of college students' employability and develop measurement tools suitable for the Chinese context. To explore the internal mechanism of influencing the formation of employability of college students, so as to provide clearer guidance for the improvement of employability of college students.

Keywords: Employability of college students; Sustainable employment; Research status of employability of college students; Digital economy.

1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the strong rise of the digital economy has iterated the traditional employment relationship, and the new employment forms characterized by flexibility and freedom have flourished, bringing profound structural changes to the labor market. Highly uncertain environment and flexible employment mechanism make it difficult for organizations to provide employees with stable employment opportunities for decades. Lifetime employment system has become a thing of the past, and borderless and variable occupations have become a new development trend [1]. In 2022, the number of college graduates has exceeded 10 million, and the task of stabilizing employment is increasingly difficult, which poses a severe challenge to the training of employability of college graduates. In the unstable and competitive employment environment, employability becomes the core resource for college students to achieve initial employment and continuous employment. In this context, the General Office of

the Ministry of Education issued a number of employment guidance policies such as the Outline of Employment Guidance Policy, aiming to improve the employability of college students through training and help college students make better choices in their future career development.

In view of the employment of college students, the academic community has conducted in-depth research on the employability of college students, mainly from the perspective of colleges and universities to explore the composition and training methods of college students' employability [2]. However, due to the lack of solid theory and scientific deconstruction of the concept of employability of college students, the promotion of employability has not made substantial progress. Improving the employability of college students is not only the responsibility of higher education. In the future, based on the theories of human resource management and integrating the research results of relevant disciplines, the author should comprehensively discuss the path to improve the employability of college students from the perspective of multi-department subjects by focusing on the key factors, internal mechanism and local scale development of employability.

2 The Concept of Employability

Rothwell and Arnold divided employability into internal employability and external employability [3]. Employability indicates the possibility of an individual being employed and reflects the perception of the degree of control over his career development. Internal employability refers to an individual's judgment of his current employability, while external employability refers to an individual's judgment of the labor market. In the field of organizational behavior and human resources, employability focuses on internal employability and the process by which employees are hired and develop their capabilities in employment. The relationship between employees, organizations and society is a dynamic interaction [3]. Due to the development trend of data and globalization, as well as the ever-changing employer-employee relationship, the employment environment faced by individuals has become more complex and the perceived job-hunting pressure has increased. For employers, employability reflects the potential to align human capital with strategic objectives and to help organizations respond effectively to the demands for talent in highly variable internal and external labor markets [4]. Therefore, organizations are eager to attract employable personnel, and invest in the development of employable attributes related to the realization of organizational goals, so that employable ability has become an outstanding aspect of value in the implementation of human resource management strategies. College students are an important group for job hunting. This study further defines college students' employability as their current employment-related ability, which is the key individual resource for achieving employment, sustainable employment and promoting career development.

3 The Research Status and Problems of Employability of College Students at Home and Abroad

3.1 The Concept of Employability Among College Students Lacks Clarity

College students are potential and realistic labor supply subjects who actively seek job opportunities in the labor market, so the research on college students' employability should be rooted in the employability of employees. The research on the employability of college students mainly focuses on the field of education and is based on theories such as pedagogy. British scholars Knight and Yorke [5] pointed out that the employability of college students is the understanding, skills and individual characteristics they show in their job hunting after graduation. Domestic scholars such as Yu et al. [2] believe that the employability of college students refers to the integration of the ability, character, desire, social resources and other characteristics that college students need to choose and obtain employment. Subsequent scholars pointed out that this definition is not an explanation of employability, but only a list of employment-related skills that college students should possess. The concept is vague and employability is not actually defined [6]. Heijde et al. [7] put forward a more comprehensive view, based on the competency view and considering the resource-based view of organizations, that the employability of college students is the vocational competence of college students, and the ultimate goal is to realize the employment of college students. To sum up, due to the lack of theoretical basis, the current definition of college students' employability is superficial, without in-depth exploration of its conceptual connotation, which is not conducive to researchers to carry out further scientific research on college students' employability [1].

3.2 The Absence of Scientific Tools for Assessing the Employability of College Students

The employability measurement tools used in the current research are mainly based on the employability scale of employees. First of all, scholars not only developed a single-dimensional employability scale to measure the perceived possibility of an individual employee to obtain employment opportunities [8]. From different perspectives, a multi-dimensional employability scale has been developed to measure employability in a more comprehensive way: Heijde [7], for example, from the perspective of employers and based on the competency of employees, has developed a scale containing five dimensions such as professional knowledge. In addition, other scholars mainly measure employees' active adaptability to work [6] and their internal and external employability [8] from the perspective of employees. Due to the difference in connotation between the employability of college students and employees, it is difficult to fully reveal the essence of the employability of college students by simply using the employability scale of employees, and it is difficult to explore the deep relationship between the employability of college students and its anthems and outcome variables.

Knight and Yorke [5] focused on the curriculum system of higher education and proposed a USEM model of college students' employability, including four aspects:

subject understanding, skills, self-efficacy and metacognition. However, the measurement tools developed by Knight and Yorke place too much emphasis on the static knowledge and skills that college students should possess, and fail to take into account the variability of the employment environment and the challenges and demands it places on college students.

3.3 The Research on the Formation Mechanism of College Students' Employability is Relatively Shallow

Domestic empirical research on the employability of college students started relatively late. Scholars mainly used Knight and Yorke's USEM model to conduct research on the exploration of the anthems of the employability of college students [5]. First, focusing on the field of school education, relevant research reveals the important role of curriculum Settings and other factors on the employability of college students. For example, learning experience [9] and extracurricular activity experience [10] can positively affect the employability of college students. It is not difficult to find from the above studies that the current anthems on college students' employability mainly explore the influence factors of school education and individuals themselves, but fail to consider the influence of social and family education and other factors, and fail to deeply reveal the internal mechanism of the formation of college students' employability [11]. In addition, the current research also ignores the demand side of talents, that is, the requirement of enterprises on the employability of college students, and fails to comprehensively explore the formation mechanism of the employability of college students by combining the demand-side and supply-side factors.

4 Conclusion

When education is prosperous, the country is prosperous, and when talents are strong, the country is strong, and the employability of talents has become the key to maintaining a competitive advantage. In order to realize the strategy of strengthening the country through talent training, college students trained by colleges and universities must complete the process of being hired and improving their abilities in employment, that is, they need to achieve initial employment and continuous employment in the labor market, and constantly improve their capabilities, so as to become an important human resource guarantee for the prosperity of the organization and the development of the country.

5 Recommendations and Future Directions

In the borderless career era under the digital economy, college students should have a clearer plan for their own career development and shoulder more responsibilities. The employability of college students not only refers to the ability of college students to get a job at present, but also a future-oriented concept, which is the understanding and

judgment of self-development potential (future employment, sustainable employment). Enriching the research on the employability of college students can more clearly guide how to improve the employability of college students.

5.1 Clarify the Concept of Employability of College Students and Develop Measurement Tools Suitable for Chinese Context

Defining the concept of college students' future employability and providing appropriate measurement tools are the basis of studying college students' employability. In the future, according to the theory of strategic human resource management, we can carry out the research on the combination of theory orientation and practice orientation, and the combination of subject and target research. In other words, this paper explores the connotation and dimension of Chinese college students' employability from the perspectives of employers and college students, and develops measurement tools of college students' employability through standardized questionnaire preparation and effective process, so as to promote empirical research on college students' employability with local characteristics. From the perspective of practice, college students from the campus into the society, to enhance professional competitiveness is a successful entry into the labor market. The current individual situation of college students affects their assessment of future employability, and then affects their emotions and behaviors. The development of employability scale can provide a reference tool for college students to evaluate their employability, which is helpful for college students to maintain a good attitude and generate positive job-hunting behavior.

5.2 Explore the Internal Mechanism of Influencing the Formation of Employability of College Students

Although scholars are increasingly interested in the formation factors of college students' employability, the exploration of the internal formation mechanism is relatively scarce. On the basis of clarifying the differences between employability traits and abilities, this paper explores the internal mechanism of the influence of core factors such as social support and employability traits on the formation of employability of college students, Bridges the differences between organizational behavior, psychology and other disciplines in the field of employability, and promotes the development of employability theory. In addition, if we can deeply analyze the successful practices and experiences of some successful organizations and employees in developing and managing employability through field investigation or experiment based on rooted theories, the research results will provide useful references for the formation and development of the employability of college students.

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