

Research on the Phenomenon of “Slow Employment” of Chinese College Students

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Abstract: With the rapid development of China’s economy and the increasing popularity of higher education, the problem of college students’ employment has been widely concerned, and the phenomenon of “slow employment” has gradually emerged. This paper discusses the current situation, formation reasons, influence and corresponding countermeasures and suggestions of “slow employment” by means of literature analysis and questionnaire survey. The results show that macroeconomic, education system, personal values, social culture and other factors play a role together to promote the emergence of this phenomenon. Based on this, this paper puts forward some suggestions such as strengthening career education, optimizing employment services, providing entrepreneurial support and improving the employment environment. The purpose is to guide college students to establish a correct employment concept, promote them to achieve employment or entrepreneurship smoothly, and provide reference for the government and society to make decisions.

Keywords: college students; slow employment; employment concept

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Significance

1.1.1. Research Background

In recent years, Chinese college students are faced with the dilemma of “difficult employment”, and some of them choose “slow employment”, that is, they do not rush to find employment after graduation, but choose diversified paths. The reasons for this phenomenon are complex: The employment concept of college students has changed, and they have begun to pay more attention to the balance between ideal and reality. The structure of the employment market has changed, the education system is relatively old, the personal ability is deficient, and the family factors work together.

In terms of schools, too much pursuit of enrollment rate ignores employment guidance, making graduates lack practical ability and experience. In terms of individuals, many graduates seek self-awareness and life experience by means of unemployment, part-time jobs and internships. In terms of families, some parents are not willing to put pressure on their children to find jobs. In terms of society, the number of college graduates has increased. The structure and demand of the job market have changed, and the impact of COVID-19 and the global economic downturn has caused not enough new jobs. All these factors jointly promote the emergence and development of the phenomenon of “slow employment”.

The existence of the phenomenon of “slow employment does not accord with the requirement of national

economic growth and development, has the potential to cause employment should be in the idle state, in the long term may be converted to “no employment” and “lazy employment”, a challenge to social stability and national development, a further study of the phenomenon of “slow employment”, analyzes the causes and give advice, It is of great significance to understand the employment choice of contemporary college students, optimize the education system and employment policy.

1.1.2. Research Significance

(1) Theoretical Significance

The employment quality of college students has a very critical significance. The phenomenon of “slow employment” presents the key point of employment rhythm and individual choice from the aspect of time. The research on it can supplement the shortcomings of traditional theories and build a more comprehensive theoretical framework of employment. It can promote theoretical innovation, provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the government to formulate scientific and reasonable employment policies and build an inclusive and flexible employment environment.

As a new employment form in the new era, the study of “slow employment” can help analyze the values, employment psychology and behavior characteristics of college students, and create a new perspective for in-depth understanding of college students’ employment choices. This research form can also clearly reflect many challenges encountered by college students in the employment process, such as employment pressure, career planning confusion and so on. An in-depth analysis of the causes and impacts of these problems can provide more targeted employment guidance and support for young people. At the same time, it can also insight into the disconnection between college education and the demand of the employment market, provide reference for the reform of the education system, and are of great significance to solve the existing problems and promote social development.

(2) Practical Significance

This study analyzes the current situation and influencing factors of the phenomenon of “slow employment” among Chinese college students by means of questionnaire survey, so as to clarify the reasons behind it and its impact, and put forward corresponding coping strategies. The phenomenon of “slow employment” is increasingly emerging among college students born after 2000. When they face the reality of job competition and college enrollment expansion, In the face of job competition and college expansion, they are more reluctant to enter the society because of the anxiety of “devaluation of academic qualifications”. Research on this phenomenon can enrich the theoretical research of related disciplines, and also provide support for the government, universities and college students themselves.

Study of “slow employment” phenomenon, can help the government and relevant organizations to know and confusion in college students’ employment demand, develop more fit the actual situation of employment policy, to guide the “slow employment” group into the society, encouraging them to establish a correct concept of employment, colleges and universities, according to study results can provide a more accurate career planning guidance, According to the results of the research, universities can provide more accurate career planning guidance and reduce the phenomenon of “slow employment”. To some extent, “slow employment” alleviates short-term employment pressure, reduces the problems caused by blind employment, and guides “slow employment” groups to carry out self-improvement and entrepreneurial preparation, which can inject new vitality into social and economic development and promote the development of the job market in a stable and healthy direction.

1.2. Research Trends at Home and Abroad

1.2.1. Domestic Research Status

Domestic research on the phenomenon of “slow employment” of college students has made some achievements. Wen Qinghong and Hu Hao proposed in 2024 that the phenomenon of “slow employment” is mainly affected by the imbalance [1]. Qiu Tengfei and Dong Shuyan’s research in 2024 refined the specific factors affecting “slow employment”, pointing out that the key degree of fresh graduates, whether they are

willing to engage in the work that does not conform to the major, and the help of colleges and universities for students' employment guidance, all have an impact on "slow employment" of college students, and clear career planning, family annual income have a great impact [2]. These factors involve the individual, family and school and other levels, showing the multi-dimensional influence mechanism of the phenomenon of "slow employment". Liang Jiaxin and Shang Zili pointed out in 2024 that the phenomenon of "slow employment" mainly stems from various factors [3]. This view complements the previous research on the impact of digital and intelligent changes on the job market, highlighting the impact of modern technology development on college students' employment choices.

Domestic research on the phenomenon of "slow employment" of college students has shifted from focusing on macro social structural factors to deepening to the micro level of individual and family factors. The research perspective is no longer limited to a single Angle, but expands the comprehensive analysis field of multiple disciplines. Relying on such research, the complex causes behind the phenomenon can be revealed. Based on such research, it can reveal the complex causes behind the phenomenon, and provide the corresponding theoretical support for the formulation of employment policies. In future study, need to be in groups, long-term influence and policy effectiveness breakthrough, multi-disciplinary perspective to fusion, balance the relationship between the individual choice and social structure, to guide college students to provide a scientific basis for rational employment.

1.2.2. Current Situation of Foreign Research

The current situation of foreign research shows that the phenomenon of "slow employment" of college students is affected by many factors. Yartz, Harris, and Sawatters conducted a 2011 study of the data on "career ambition," and the results showed that career ambition bias is closely related [4]. Chinese college students "slow employment" phenomenon also reflected the students for career planning, inadequate cognition of employment market, lead to delay of employment, both similarity exists in the career planning and employment opportunities. According to the research of Clare and Jonathan (2012), "being easily tired of the current study and confused about the future career direction" is a significant feature [5]. This sense of uncertainty about the future and exhaustion of the current state is also reflected in the phenomenon of "slow employment" among Chinese college students. In the face of employment pressure, many college students may choose to postpone employment to relieve the current study pressure and confusion about the future career direction. In 2002, Binner and Parsons analyzed long-term follow-up data from more than 1600 participants in the British Generation Study database. They found that factors affecting the "NEET" group—young people who are not employed, in school or in education—include physical health, family material conditions, family culture and educational attainment. These factors work together to push some young people into NEET status [6]. In China, similar factors also have an impact on the employment choice of college students. College students with better family material conditions may have more space to choose "slow employment", while family cultural atmosphere and educational achievements may affect the employment concept and career planning of college students.

Relevant studies at home and abroad show that the imbalance between supply and demand in the labor market, the imperfect employment environment, the confusion of college students' career direction, and many other factors such as family and society play a role together are the key reasons for the phenomenon of "slow employment" of college students. These studies can provide a multi-dimensional perspective for people to understand this phenomenon, and will be helpful to formulate more effective employment policies and intervention measures.

2. Relevant Theoretical Basis

2.1. Employment Theory

2.1.1. Classical Employment Theory

The development context of the classical employment theory system reflects the transformation of economic cognition in the process of industrialization: "Market equilibrium theory of new classical school". Labour as a

commodity of homogeneity, emphasis on wage elasticity of supply and demand adjustment, but ignored the system rigidity, the Keynesian theory of “insufficient effective demand is pointed out that the mechanism of involuntary unemployment, lewis model and tower darrow theory focuses on the developing countries the plight of the urban and rural employment, Schultz’s “human capital theory” breaks through the framework of labor factor quantification, and search and matching theory builds the micro foundation of frictional unemployment. Together, these theories form a multi-dimensional explanatory framework. Despite the challenges brought by new business forms in the era of digital economy, they still provide irreplaceable analytical tools.

2.1.2. The Modern Theory of Employment

Based on the classical framework, modern employment theory has achieved a breakthrough in multiple dimensions, and its core points lie in the technological revolution and the dynamic reconstruction of the labor market under the background of globalization: The development of digital technology has given rise to the phenomenon of “skill polarization” and promoted the evolution of employment structure towards the direction of “dumbbell”. The acceleration of globalization has intensified the mismatch of “space-skill” and forced workers to turn to non-standard forms of employment. The rise of gig economy and platform capitalism has reshaped labor-management relations, causing a series of difficulties such as the absence of social security. The human capital theory has formed a “lifelong learning-skill reset” model through continuous iteration, which emphasizes the need for individuals to continuously update their abilities. These changes fully shows that modern employment has broke the traditional static model, begin to pay close attention to technology, institutional change and impact of complicated game relation between individual fitness, its explanation framework also continue to expand in the direction of the interdisciplinary integration.

2.2. *Theories of Social Psychology*

2.2.1. Self-Identity Theory

Xie (2021) pointed out that personal factors have the greatest impact on college students’ “slow employment,” and proposed a coping strategy [7]. This theory holds that individuals need to construct self-cognition and establish identity continuity through continuous reflection and interaction with the outside world. For example, Erikson’s “theory of psychosocial stages” emphasizes the identity crisis in adolescence, and Giddens points out that self-identity becomes a “reflexiveness project” under the impact of modernity. Contemporary studies pay more attention to the remodeling of identity form by digital survival, and the tension between virtual and real identity brings new challenges to self-integration.

2.2.2. Social Support Theory

Social support theory emphasizes that individuals use social relations to obtain corresponding resources to cope with various challenges. The core point of social support theory is the buffering effect of emotional support, guidance support and material support in the process of interpersonal interaction. The theory holds that family, community and organization jointly build a three-dimensional support system, which can relieve pressure. The theory holds that family, community and organization jointly construct a three-dimensional support system, which can relieve the pressure, improve the individual’s adaptability, and promote the process of individual psychological adjustment. When individuals are in crisis, a stable support network can provide them with problem-solving strategies and a sense of belonging, help them to re-establish their sense of meaning, and play a fundamental role in maintaining their mental health and social function.

3. Analysis of the Phenomenon of “Slow Employment” among Chinese College Students

3.1. *Overview of “Slow Employment” Phenomenon*

3.1.1. Definition of “Slow Employment”

“Slow employment” is a phenomenon that has gradually emerged among college graduates in Chinese society in recent years. It means that young people are not eager to enter traditional full-time positions after

graduation, but actively or passively choose a buffer period for self-exploration, skill improvement or career planning adjustment. The active choice is due to the needs of personal development. To postpone employment to carry out internship, participate in study Tours, start a business, participate in volunteer service or receive continuing education, so as to clarify their own direction or accumulate relevant experience. Passive choice is due to the competition in the job market, the scarcity of jobs or the impact of the economic situation, with the help of part-time work, freelance work to transition or rely on family support to wait for employment opportunities, “slow employment” focuses on the delay of employment pace, may include no income.

3.1.2. Characteristics of the “Slow Employment” Group

Wang Peiyun (2025) pointed out that the phenomenon of “slow employment” is mainly caused [8]. The “slow employment” group does not exist in a homogeneous state, and the analysis of its characteristics can be carried out from multiple dimensions:

In terms of behavioral choice characteristics, some “slow employment” people have clear goals and pay great attention to long-term planning. They will improve themselves or accumulate corresponding experience by taking vocational qualification certificates, learning new knowledge content, embarking on travel, participating in volunteer activities, doing internship work, trying low-threshold entrepreneurship and many other ways. While others rely on their family or side jobs to achieve semi-self-reliance, and they prefer non-traditional employment modes.

In terms of psychological and value characteristics, the “slow employment” group emphasizes the balance between work, interest and quality of life. The active choice type has a clear career plan and is willing to bear short-term uncertainty in exchange for long-term benefits. They are positive and confident, and are not sensitive to external evaluation. Passive and accepting people have anxiety due to employment pressure or job mismatch, and choose “slow employment” as a strategy to temporarily escape competition. Without a clear plan, they are easy to fall into a long-term stagnation state, anxious and confused, and have low social identity.

From the dimension of social relationship characteristics, the support given by the family is greater, and the tolerance degree of parents for their children’s delayed employment has been improved, and they will even encourage their children to think about the direction of life. There are contradictions in social evaluation. On the one hand, they will be criticized by some public opinion as “lying flat” and “eating old”, and on the other hand, they are recognized as a rational choice to fight against internal involvement.

From regional and industrial distribution feature dimension, “slow employment” group in a line and a new line of city is relatively rare, more employment opportunities in these areas but also very competitive, family economy stronger buffering capacity. The industry is inclined to emerging industries, such as the Internet, cultural creativity, education and training, while the proportion of traditional manufacturing and construction is relatively low.

3.2. Analysis on the Causes of “Slow Employment”

3.2.1. Macroeconomic Factors

Slowing economic growth has led to a contraction in the job market. In 2023, the unemployment rate of youth aged 16 to 24 will reach 21.3%. The industrial structure has been adjusted, which has created a mismatch between the supply and demand of talents. The easing of employment pressure has also changed the traditional concept of employment, so that people’s sense of urgency when looking for a job has been reduced. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, college students who graduated from 2020 to 2022 are not fully employed, and the scale of campus recruitment by enterprises has been reduced by 30 percent. Coupled with the increase in the number of overseas returnees, the competition for jobs has become more intense.

3.2.2. Factors of Education System

The scale of higher education is expanding but the quality and scale are unbalanced. The training of applied talents lags behind the demand of industrial upgrading. The matching degree of professional setting and market

demand is low. The employment rate of higher vocational college graduates is high but the social recognition is low, the integration of industry and education has the phenomenon of “hot school and cold enterprise”, the social status and salary level of skilled talents are low, and the employment guidance service system has defects.

3.2.3. Personal Factors

Times are changing, and so are values. The better economic conditions of the family have led to a longer employment decision cycle for some people, and Western employment concepts such as “gap years” have also slowly spread in China. Moreover, there is a structural contradiction in employability. Some college students have the phenomenon of “high education and low skills”. Employers’ requirements for soft skills are improved, and the deviation of career cognition leads to difficulties in job adaption. At the same time, the thinking of “going ashore” has made some people continue to prepare for the examination, social media has magnified the workplace anxiety to a certain extent, and some unemployed people have the psychology of “over-preparation”.

The phenomenon of slow employment is the product of the resonance of three factors: the period of economic transition, the period of educational reform and the period of individual awakening. Its essence is the phased adaptation problem in the process of social development. Xu Xin (2022) believes that the phenomenon of “slow employment” is the result of multi-level factors such as society, individuals and universities. Its causes include social and economic development, the expansion of higher education and the contradiction between supply and demand in the market, the change of graduates’ personal values and family support [9]. To resolve this phenomenon, it is necessary to establish a synergistic mechanism of “improving the quality of economy, innovating education and empowering individuals”, and build a more flexible employment ecosystem while respecting multiple choices.

3.3. *Impact Analysis of the Phenomenon of “Slow Employment”*

3.3.1. Impact on Individuals

The impact of “slow employment” on individuals presents two sides. Xu Yumeng proposed in 2018 that “slow employment” has positive aspects, such as improving self-ability and clarifying career positioning, while it also has negative aspects, such as possibly causing disconnection from employment and increasing family economic pressure [10]. On the one hand, some young people can use this time to explore careers, learn skills or participate in social practice, so as to avoid blind employment and choose careers in a more rational way. Those graduates who take the postgraduate entrance examination, certificate examination or vocational training can take this opportunity to enhance their competitiveness. In technology-intensive industries, and under the background of the current fierce employment competition and the situation of “inner scroll” in the workplace, “slow employment” can provide a buffer for some people to prevent the job burnout or psychological anxiety caused by hasty employment. On the other hand, Qin Xing pointed out in 2023 that the phenomenon of “slow employment” is becoming increasingly common. The main causes include social employment pressure, the disconnect between college training and market demand, family economic support and the lack of graduates’ own career planning, etc., indicating that “slow employment” has a negative impact on society, universities, families and individuals. Such as the imbalance of the labor market, the decline of the employment rate of colleges and universities, the increase of family economic burden and the increase of graduates’ psychological pressure [11]. Chronically unemployed status may lead to personal economic source of the interrupt, rely on family support, family conflicts, social traditional idea “graduate work” making it easier for the slow workers questioned, self doubt and anxiety, and depression may occur, the accumulation of experience in the workplace is likely to delay in the process of the individuals in the subsequent job at a disadvantage, The “gap period” may be interpreted as insufficient ability or lack of planning. Long-term detachment from social practice may weaken individuals’ ability to adapt to the workplace, and some “slow employment” may also form inertia due to long-term home.

3.3.2. Impact on Society

Tao Diyu and Li Jie put forward in their study in 2025 that the phenomenon of “slow employment” is caused [12]. It also reflects profound changes in society, economy, culture and other levels, whose impact is complex and multi-faceted. At the economic level, the delay of graduates’ employment will reduce the short-term labor supply, and some industries will suffer from “labor shortage”. Enterprises will have to raise wages to attract talents, and families will pay extra costs, which may exacerbate the phenomenon of educational internalization. If the quality of employment is not improved, public doubts about the value of higher education may increase. “Slow employment” has given rise to new business forms of “transition economy” such as postgraduate entrance examination training. For example, in 2023, the market size of China’s postgraduate entrance examination training has exceeded 20 billion yuan, but we need to be vigilant against the emergence of market bubbles. At the social and cultural level, “slow employment” promotes a socially inclusive and diversified lifestyle, and promotes the transformation of professional values from “stability first” to “self-realization”. However, it is difficult for the older generation to understand this, which leads to more family conflicts. “Slow employment” groups use online communities to share information and vent emotions, which may relieve their loneliness and strengthen their avoidance psychology. At the institutional level, the long-term failure of the “slow employment” population to pay social security may have an impact on the sustainability of the social security fund, so it is necessary to explore a flexible insurance participation mechanism. Excessive concentration of educational resources on the promotion of academic qualifications may lead to insufficient investment in vocational education and exacerbate the problems of “academic surplus” and “skill shortage”. In terms of social stability risks, families with superior economic conditions are more able to support their children’s “slow employment”, while children from poor families may be forced to rush into employment, resulting in class solidification. After losing the long-term competition, some “slow employment” may breed the mentality of “lying flat” and “world-weariness”. Graduates from third-tier and fourth-tier cities and rural areas tend to compete for opportunities in big cities by means of “slow employment” due to fewer local employment opportunities, which intensifies population aggregation and forms the situation of “talent vacuum in small cities”.

However, “slow employment” also contains opportunities for social innovation, for example, it will force enterprises to optimize the employment model, promote the reform of labor system, and stimulate the construction of lifelong learning system.

4. Questionnaire Survey and Analysis of “Slow Employment” Phenomenon

This chapter mainly focuses on the phenomenon of “slow employment” of Chinese college students, and achieves the research objective by means of questionnaire survey and data analysis. The purpose of the survey is clearly determined at the beginning, that is, to find out the actual situation, causes, influences and coping strategies of “slow employment”, and then a questionnaire containing multiple aspects is carefully designed. It includes personal information, the specific situation of slow employment, the influencing factors, personal attitudes and social impact, as well as relevant suggestions and countermeasures. Finally, the frequency analysis method and descriptive statistics method were used to analyze the collected data, so as to describe the characteristics of the sample, analyze the influencing factors, and provide empirical support for the follow-up research.

4.1. Survey Purpose

4.1.1. Respondents

A total of 506 valid questionnaires were collected from Chinese college students, including past graduates, fresh graduates and freshmen, sophomores and juniors. In terms of gender ratio, males accounted for 49.8% (252 people) and females accounted for 50.2% (254 people). In terms of identity distribution, the former graduates accounted for 36.96% (187), fresh graduates accounted for 40.32% (204), and freshmen, sophomore and junior students accounted for 22.73% (115). In terms of school types, 17% (86 students) were from double-first-class universities (including double-first-class discipline construction universities), 23.32% (118 students) from ordinary colleges, 22.53% (114 students) from ordinary second-class colleges, 26.88% (136 students) from ordinary third-class colleges, and 10.28% (52 students) from junior colleges. In terms of family conditions, 21.54% (109 students) were very good,

40.32% (204 students) were relatively good, 18.77% (95 students) were fair, 12.85% (65 students) were poor, and 6.52% (33 students) were very poor.

4.1.2. Survey Contents

This survey covers basic information of college students (gender, identity, school type, family conditions, etc.), basic information of slow employment (whether they plan to slow employment, reasons, accepted time of unemployment, etc.), and influencing factors (competition in the job market, personal career planning, salary and treatment, matching of employment expectation and market demand, changes in social concept, entrepreneurial attraction, economic pressure, and continuing education. Education and skill improvement, employment information asymmetry, etc.), personal attitude and social impact (views on slow employment, parents' attitude, influence on individuals and society, etc.), and suggestions and countermeasures (suggestions on the government, schools and society, personal measures to deal with slow employment).

4.2. Questionnaire Design

4.2.1. Questionnaire Structure

The structure of the questionnaire is reasonable, it contains a number of different parts, among which the first to fourth questions are about the basic information, which aims to understand the basic situation of the respondents. The fifth to seventh questions are about the basic situation of slow employment, with the help of these questions, we can know whether the respondents have the intention of slow employment and the reasons behind it. The questions 10 to 11 involve the influencing factors of slow employment, which mainly analyzes the main reasons for the phenomenon of slow employment and the key qualities that students should have in slow employment. Questions 8 to 9 and 12 to 13 are related to personal attitude and social impact, so as to understand the respondents' views on slow employment and the impact of this view on personal development and society, while questions 14 are about suggestions and countermeasures, mainly collecting the respondents' suggestions for the government, schools and society to deal with the phenomenon of slow employment.

4.2.2. Distribution and Collection of Questionnaires

The questionnaires were distributed to students from different regions, school types and grades through the online platform, and 506 valid questionnaires were finally collected, with a high recovery rate, which means that the questionnaire was distributed and collected smoothly. Statistical software such as SPSS and Excel were used to sort out and analyze the collected data. The collected data were collated and analyzed by statistical software such as SPSS and Excel.

4.3. Data Analysis

In this study, the sample characteristics were comprehensively analyzed, and the results showed that the gender distribution was relatively balanced, with males accounting for 49.8% and females accounting for 50.2%. In terms of identity, fresh graduates accounted for the highest proportion, accounting for 40.3%, while previous graduates and freshmen, sophomore and junior students accounted for 37% and 22.7%, respectively. In terms of school type, the proportion of ordinary third school was the first, reaching 26.9%, followed by ordinary second school, accounting for 23.3%, and ordinary second school, accounting for 22.5%. Double first-class universities and junior college accounted for 17% and 10.3%, respectively. In terms of family conditions, "relatively good" accounted for the most, accounting for 40.3%, while "very good", "average", "relatively poor" and "very poor" accounted for 21.5%, 18.8%, 12.8% and 6.5%, respectively. As for the intention of "slow employment", 66.4% of college students clearly stated that they had the intention of slow employment. 21.5% of them did not, and 12.1% of them were not sure. These sample characteristic data lay the foundation for the subsequent analysis of the phenomenon of "slow employment". The basic information of this survey sample is shown in Table 1.

In the group of "relatively good" family conditions, 68.63% of people chose "yes", while in the group of "average" family conditions, this proportion rose to 72.63%. This indicates that the group with better family

conditions is more likely to accept the option of slow employment.

Table 1. Statistical table of the basic information of the survey sample.

Variables of Interest	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	male	252	49.8
	female	254	50.2
Identity	Past graduates	187	37
	Recent graduates	204	40.3
	Freshman, sophomore, junior	115	22.7
School	Double first-class universities (including double first-class discipline construction universities)	86	17
	Ordinary one	118	23.3
	Regular two books	114	22.5
	Regular three	136	26.9
	Junior college degree	52	10.3
	Very nice	109	21.5
Home conditions	Relatively good	204	40.3
	Average	95	18.8
	Relatively poor	65	12.8
	Very poor	33	6.5
“Slow employment” intended	is	336	66.4
	no	109	21.5
	Not sure	61	12.1

As can be seen from Table 2, the average value of each reason is within the range of 0.32 to 0.54, among which the average value of starting a business, supporting education and preparing for the examination of civil servants or public institutions is relatively high, which reflects that young people pay more attention to personal development and social responsibility, which poses a challenge to the traditional concept of employment. At the same time, it also gives new flexibility and innovation opportunities to the society. The standard deviation is between 0.468 and 0.5, and the dispersion degree of the data is in a moderate state. Different individuals have certain differences in the reasons for choosing “slow employment”.

Table 2. Descriptive statistical results of the 1 reasons for choosing “slow employment”.

Reasons	Numbers	Average	Standard Deviation
Higher education (including junior college, postgraduate entrance examination, study abroad)	506	0.36	0.48
Starting a business	506	0.52	0.5
Volunteer teaching	506	0.54	0.499
Prepare for exams for civil servants or public institutions	506	0.41	0.493
Prepare for certificate skills or continue job hunting	506	0.32	0.468
Take a trip or stay home with your parents	506	0.38	0.486

Under the background of “slow employment”, Chinese college students believe that interpersonal skills, decision-making ability, learning and adaptation ability account for the highest proportion among the key qualities, indicating that college students have higher requirements for comprehensive ability during the “slow employment” period, with particular emphasis on the ability of social interaction, decision-making and learning adaptation. The “slow employment” of college students has a high demand for comprehensive ability.

Among all the respondents, the number of people who choose to accept being unemployed for one year is the largest, accounting for 22.13%. It is followed by 1–3 months and 3–6 months, accounting for 21.34% and 20.36%, respectively. This shows that most fresh graduates have a relatively short tolerance for unemployment.

Among all the options, 28.46% of the respondents believed that slow employment would lead to an increase in economic stress, indicating that economic factors occupy an important place in personal development.

According to the data presented in Table 3, unsatisfactory salary is the main factor leading to the occurrence of slow employment, which fully reflects the importance of job seekers to salary. This factor may have a direct effect on job seekers’ employment intention and choice, followed by the mismatch between employment expectation and market demand, continuing education and skill upgrading. These factors have a great influence on college students’ choice of “slow employment”.

Table 3. Descriptive statistical results of the main reasons for “slow employment”.

Factors	Numbers	Average	Standard Deviation
The job market is competitive	506	0.26	0.44
Personal career planning is unclear	506	0.39	0.489
Salary is not ideal	506	0.48	0.5
Job expectation doesn’t match the market demand	506	0.4	0.489
Changes in social perceptions	506	0.25	0.435
The appeal of entrepreneurship and freelancing	506	0.34	0.475
Financial pressure is relatively low	506	0.23	0.418
Continuing education and upskilling	506	0.42	0.494
There is asymmetric information about employment	506	0.26	0.438

Idle human resources, potential threats to social stability and structural imbalance in the employment market account for the highest proportion, which means that “slow employment” has a wide impact on society, and has given new challenges and adjustment needs in the utilization of human resources, market structure and social stability. At the same time also means that these phenomena have impact on the efficiency of social economy.

5. Problem Analysis and Countermeasures of “Slow Employment” Phenomenon

Based on the survey results, this chapter makes a detailed analysis of the problems of “slow employment” phenomenon, and puts forward corresponding countermeasures and suggestions. In terms of problem analysis, from the perspective of individuals, there are some situations such as unclear career planning, psychological contradictions and social evaluation pressure. From the perspective of society, Have education and does not match the job market, social security and the lag of policy development and class differentiation potential problems such as the challenge. In view of these problems, the countermeasures and suggestions are carried out from two perspectives of individuals and society, and the policy suggestions are elaborated from two aspects of education and employment.

5.1. Problem Analysis

5.1.1. Problems at the Individual Level

In the questionnaire survey on “slow employment”, economic dependence and family pressure are the key aspects. The data show that the family economic situation has an impact on the feasibility of “slow

employment”: 21.54% of the respondents’ family conditions are “very good”, but there are still 12.85% of the families are “relatively poor” or “very poor”. Although 66.4% of the respondents have the intention of slow employment, 28.46% of them think that it will increase economic pressure, which means that the economically vulnerable groups may fall into difficulties due to insufficient family support.

Career planning is not clear and the competitiveness is also a risk of slow employment, the key problems in the survey, 39.13% of respondents think “personal career planning is not clear” is the main reason, slow employment compared to 26.09% of people think that “goal setting and planning ability” is the key quality, Passive slow workers may be due to a lack of clear planning career development lags behind, the follow-up job at a disadvantage because of lack of experience, 19.57% of respondents think slow employment career development delay.

Psychological and social evaluation of pressure also cannot be ignored, 27.27% of respondents think slowly can alleviate the psychological pressure of employment, but only 34.98% of parents “support” rather than “very supportive” slow employment, part of the family was on the concept of conflict, traditional concepts such as “graduate work”, is likely to slow workers produce self doubt, The traditional concept of “graduation means work” may cause self-doubt, and even cause anxiety or depression. 36.36% of the respondents thought that slow employment posed a challenge to the traditional concept of employment and aggravated their psychological pressure.

5.1.2. Social Problems

In the survey on the phenomenon of “slow employment”, several key problems are particularly prominent. There is a structural imbalance in the labor market. The data show that 49.6% of the respondents think that slow employment leads to the situation of “idle human resources”, while 47.83% think that “unsatisfactory salary and treatment” is the main reason for slow employment. Li-ping jiang, yu-wen liu is put forward, with the improvement of social productivity and people’s living standard has increased, college students for high quality employment expectations are also rising, employment expectations and job ability for college graduates to choose “slow employment” has certain influence [13]. Enterprises are faced with “labor shortage”. In manufacturing and other fields, however, graduates choose to delay employment because of salary or job mismatch, which makes the problem of supply-demand mismatch more serious.

The disconnect between education and the job market can also not be ignored. 39.53 percent of respondents said that “employment expectations do not match market demand”, and 35.57 percent said that slow employment reflects “challenges in the education system”. The expansion of university enrollment leads to the depreciation of academic qualifications. Only 17% of the respondents come from double first-class universities, and the lack of investment in vocational education exacerbates the phenomenon of “high education and low skills”. Social security and policy lag is also a key aspect. 42.49% of respondents believe that slow employment is a “potential threat to social stability”, 53.36% call for strengthening career planning education, and 61.46% expect to increase internship opportunities. The current social security system failed to cover the people in the slow employment transition period, and the policy statistical scope was vague. 26.48% of the respondents thought that policy adjustment was needed.

Class differentiation and social justice concerns also deserves attention, 40.32% of respondents family conditions “good”, and the economy vulnerable groups was forced to rush job easier, wealthy families with slow employment to support their children examination or study abroad, may exacerbate class curing, 36.36% of the respondents mentioned the “social concept challenges”.

5.2. Countermeasures and Suggestions

5.2.1. Countermeasures at the Individual Level

When discuss how to deal with this kind of phenomenon, slow employment there are several key points are need our attention, one could strengthen the career planning and enhance ability it is quite critical, data shows that 53.36% of respondents called for strengthening career planning education, 48.62% of respondents felt “ability to learn and adapt to” belongs to the key quality, Colleges and universities should set up compulsory courses of career planning,

introduce tools such as MBTI and Holland test to help students clarify their direction, and encourage students to participate in skills training, so as to improve their employment competitiveness.

Second, it is also meaningful to set the time bottom line and stage goals. Data show that 22.13% of the respondents can accept up to one year of unemployment, and 19.57% of the respondents are worried about the delay of career development. It is suggested to formulate a “transition plan”, clarify the time node of postgraduate entrance examination, public examination or job search, and conduct regular self-assessment. The strategy should be adjusted every three months, and if the goal is not achieved, the flexible employment should be turned to ensure the continuity of career development.

Third, to relieve the economic pressure and mental burden is also cannot be ignored on the one hand, the data show that 28.46% of respondents think the slow employment will increase the economic pressure, only 29.84% of parents “very supportive” slow employment, suggest the economy entails slow workers to apply for special subsidies, use free psychological counseling to cope with anxiety, With the help of part-time jobs and freelancers to obtain income, reduce dependence on family and relieve economic pressure.

5.2.2. Measures at the Social Level

At the social level, in order to deal with the phenomenon of “slow employment”, a variety of measures can be taken to optimize the connection between education and the employment market. According to the data, 35.57% of the respondents think that the education system needs to be reformed, and 61.46% of the respondents support the cooperation between universities and enterprises. Set up enterprise-customized courses and simulated interviews. Establish a mechanism of “mutual recognition of internship credits” between universities and enterprises, let enterprises provide internship positions with salaries, pay attention to vocational education, expand the enrollment scale of technical colleges, promote the “dual system” model, combine theory with practice, and cultivate skilled talents.

It is also crucial to improve social security and policy support. The data show that 42.49% of the respondents are worried about social stability, and 37.15% of the respondents call for the establishment of a tracking evaluation mechanism. It is suggested that transitional periods such as examination preparation and study Tours be included in the scope of flexible employment social security, that fees be deferred or reduced, that employment status be classified in detail, and that assistance policies be formulated precisely. The government should give preferential tax treatment to enterprises recruiting slow employment groups, and encourage the opening of flexible jobs to increase employment opportunities.

It is also meaningful to promote social equity and resource balance. The data show that 40.32% of the respondents have better family conditions, and 36.36% of the respondents worry about class differentiation. It is suggested to set up an “employment guarantee fund for vulnerable groups” to support poor students to conduct skills training or start businesses, encourage enterprises in third—and fourth-tier cities to provide “return employment subsidies” to attract graduates to return, and build a national employment information platform to reduce information asymmetry.

Guide the social concept and culture construction also cannot be ignored, data show that 63.83% of respondents support slow employment, but 36.36% of the respondents think it poses a challenge to traditional concept. It is suggested to rely on media publicity, show successful cases of slow employment, eliminate the stigma brought by “lying flat”, carry out “training on parents’ employment concept”, reduce the conflict in family concept, incorporate “slow employment” into the evaluation index of “youth-friendly city”, and encourage local governments to give support.

5.3. Public Policy Recommendations

5.3.1. Education Policy

Strengthen the career planning and employment guidance system of the matter is critical, career planning courses should become a compulsory course in university, so then you can fit the demand of the respondents 53.36%, helps the student to promote goal setting and planning ability, colleges and universities need to

cooperate with enterprises to develop practical courses, to increase the internship opportunities, 61.46% of respondents expressed support for the practice.

Optimization of professional setting and market demand of docking also is the key. According to the feedback of the job market, colleges and universities should carry out regular evaluation and adjust the professional structure to reduce the phenomenon of “high education and low skills”. 39.53% of the respondents think that the mismatch between supply and demand is the main reason for slow employment. For students from ordinary colleges and universities, 73.68% of students from non-double first-class colleges and universities, vocational skills certification courses should be added to improve their employment competitiveness.

Perfect innovation entrepreneurship education is a key means of dealing with slow employment. In order to encourage the active slow employment workers to turn their ideas into practice, 33.4% of the respondents supported this practice, and 52.17% of them chose entrepreneurship as the way of slow employment. Entrepreneurship education has great potential.

5.3.2. Employment Policy

It is crucial to build a flexible social security mechanism, providing temporary medical insurance and unemployment subsidies for the “slow employment” group, so as to reduce their economic pressure. According to the data, 28.46% of the respondents are worried about economic pressure, while 19.37% are economically vulnerable groups.

Optimizing the structure of the job market is also key. Tax incentives are used to encourage enterprises to increase the starting salary of fresh graduates and attract more graduates to enter the workforce. The data show that 47.83% of the respondents choose slow employment because of unsatisfactory salary. Expanding the supply of grass-roots jobs can alleviate the simultaneous problems of “labor shortage” and “employment difficulty”.

Make accurate employment service platform is also an effective way to deal with slow employment, to establish a national employment data platform, can solve the problem of asymmetric information, demand for graduates and enterprises get a better match. The data show that 25.89% of the respondents think that information asymmetry is the main reason for slow employment.

The establishment of policy incentive and evaluation mechanism should not be ignored, providing subsidies to enterprises that provide internship positions and expanding the recruitment scale of graduates. According to the data, 61.46% of the respondents support internship, establishing a database of slow employment groups and monitoring career paths to provide basis for policy adjustment, and the data show that 37.15% of the respondents support this practice.

6. Conclusions

This study is no longer limited to the traditional view that “slow employment” is simply attributed to individual inertia, but deeply explores its essential characteristics as a unique adjustment mechanism in the stage of social transformation. Under the background of the gradual disappearance of demographic dividend and the shift of economic growth rate, this phenomenon will continue to exist and may give rise to new forms of employment. Therefore, policy makers are required to design a more forward-looking system to guide it. As a social phenomenon, “slow employment” is the result of the joint effect of structural contradictions and the reconstruction of young people’s individual values during the period of China’s social transformation. It breaks the traditional binary opposition framework of “employment and unemployment” and presents three deep driving factors:

The tension of social structure makes the mismatch between supply and demand in the employment market more serious. The expansion of higher education is inconsistent with the pace of industrial upgrading, which leads to the phenomenon of degree inflation. This makes the traditional employment path difficult to meet the higher expectations of the new generation of college students for career development. Recently, the topic of “post-00s” cleaning up the workplace has triggered a heated discussion among the public. However, some people point out that “post-00s” want to clean up the workplace, but there are obstacles even to enter the workplace. This phenomenon reflects the deep contradiction between the current job market and the

employment concept of college students. As a group that grew up in the Internet era, their expectations and requirements for the workplace are quite different from those of the traditional workplace culture. This group pays more attention to the degree of fit between career and interest, the balance between work and life and the realization of self-value. Digital transformation has created a buffer space for the relevant situation. New forms of business such as knowledge payment and “we media” have emerged, which provide transitional options for college students outside the traditional employment. From an objective point of view, it extends the career decision-making cycle.

The essence of “slow employment” is actually a strategic choice made by individuals against uncertainty, which has a double-edged sword effect. Under the background of diversified employment trend, it is necessary for the society to reduce the bias against the “slow employment” group, while individuals need to use dynamic programming to balance ideal and reality. In order to turn the transition period into an opportunity for self-realization of value-added, the phenomenon of “slow employment” should not be easily labeled as negative escape. It is suggested to build a set of “three-dimensional support system”, universities should set up flexible schooling system and career incubation platform, the government should improve the social security policy of employment buffer period, enterprises should explore the “practice-employment” connection mechanism, more importantly, to promote the in-depth connection between higher education and industrial demand, and integrate dynamic adjustment mechanism into the professional setting. The structural employment contradiction should be alleviated from the root. The quality of career development does not depend on “fast or slow”, but on whether to achieve sustainable growth and value creation, transform “slow” into “fast” channel of high-quality employment, realize the transformation of “slow employment” from passive evasion to active promotion, and promote the win-win development of individuals and society.

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