

Research on the employment of college students in Shanghai under the normalization of COVID-19 control

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Abstract: Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the domestic and foreign economies have been facing downward pressure, and employers' demand for the labor force has declined, reducing the number of jobs recruited for college graduates. With COVID-19 control becoming the requirement of normalization, the epidemic's impact on the employment of college graduates will continue. In this regard, this paper analyzes the employment problems and relevant countermeasures of Shanghai college graduates under the current normalization of COVID-19 control. It then puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for employment problems from the perspective of the government and colleges.

Keywords: epidemic prevention, employment, college students, countermeasures

1. Employment issue: facts

1.1 The normalization of COVID-19 control intensifies employment competition

With the normalization of COVID-19 control, the number of college graduates in Shanghai is getting bigger and bigger. The increased employment requirements of enterprises and the reduced recruitment requirements have intensified the employment competition for college graduates. According to the official website of the Ministry of Education, Shanghai had 227,000 college graduates in 2022, an increase of 20,000 from 2021, the most significant increase in the past five years. Affected by the impact of the epidemic and the specific policy environment under the normalization of the epidemic, the bankruptcy and reorganization of small and medium-sized enterprises have intensified, the demand for social posts has shrunk, and the employment situation of college graduates has become more complex. According to the Shanghai Talent Trend Report, during the 2022 epidemic, the year-on-year growth rate of jobs in Shanghai in March and April 2022 was 25% and 56%, respectively. Influenced by the epidemic, Shanghai's colleges and universities continued to close for management, so many offline internships, enterprise presentations, and two-way recruitment were challenging to carry out usually. It can be seen that under the normalization of COVID-19 control, the employment market of Shanghai college graduates exceeds the demand, the recruitment channels are blocked, and the competition in the employment market of Shanghai college students is fierce.

1.2 The ability of college students does not match the market job demand

There is a big gap between the comprehensive ability of many college graduates and the ability demand of market positions, which is challenging to adapt to the needs of enterprises, thus causing the structural unemployment problem of college students. Currently, many colleges and universities pay too much attention to theoretical knowledge and despise students' practical ability in talent training, resulting in students' low cognitive levels and limited knowledge scope ^[1]. Secondly, under the normalization of COVID-19 control, many colleges and universities in Shanghai have long-term closed management. College students cannot conduct activities such as social practice investigation, professional cognition practice, and graduation practice, which has dramatically hindered the improvement of students' practical ability. In addition, in the face of downward economic pressure, enterprises are unwilling to spend too much on training costs for a graduate, which improves the ability requirements of graduates, thus increasing the employment difficulty of college students. In short, under the normalization of COVID-19 control, Shanghai universities have been under closed control for a long time. Then

it is difficult for college students' knowledge, skills, and creative ability to adapt to the changes in social industries, resulting in their ability not matching the demand of the job market.

1.3 Slow employment phenomenon and the increase of the "NEET" group

Under the normalization of COVID-19 control, many college students choose to avoid employment. The employment phenomenon of slow employment and "NEET" groups (not studying, not working, and not attending vocational training) have an increasing trend [2]. Due to the lack of employment knowledge reserve and employment experience, some college graduates cannot adapt to the recruitment form from offline to online recruitment form, and it isn't easy to show their excellent potential in the application process fully [3]. After repeatedly missing employment opportunities, their psychology is frustrated, and their enthusiasm for employment declines, so they choose to avoid employment. Some college graduates who have difficulty finding employment are unsatisfied with the jobs provided by their schools and the government because of their high employment expectations and choose slow hire. In addition, due to family support, and less financial life pressure, some college graduates are unwilling to work and find a job.

2. Reason

2.1 Influence of external factors

2.1.1 As the outbreak of bankruptcy, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises have intensified, and jobs have been reduced

Under the normalization of COVID-19 control, many small, medium, and micro enterprises have limited sales channels, so their supply chains are greatly affected, facing bankruptcy and capital chain rupture, resulting in reduced social jobs. Specifically, Shanghai's economic growth has slowed, the epidemic has rebounded from time to time, and the movement of people has been minimal. Consumer demand and willingness have been relatively low for a long time, dramatically impacting the service sector and small and medium-sized manufacturing industries. At the same time, affected by COVID-19 control, prices rose in the short term, and logistics costs also increased. Many small and medium-sized enterprises are affected by their supply chains, so they must face an inability to repay their debts, become insolvent or go bankrupt directly [4]. In short, under the normalization of COVID-19 control, some small and medium-sized enterprises in Shanghai were forced to go bankrupt, and layoffs and recruitment positions frequently occurred, which greatly affected the employment of college students.

2.1.2 The basic service system of online recruitment is weak and less effective

Under the normalization of COVID-19 control, online recruitment methods have problems of poor interactivity and doubtful effectiveness, which has seriously affected the employment of college students. Currently, many online recruitment websites have issues such as low information authenticity, poor recruitment service system, weak pertinacity, etc. Candidates can not truly and efficiently understand the company and job requirements, and it isn't easy to find suitable job information. At the same time, because the online recruitment form is not as accurate as the offline form, there are information deviations and judgment errors, and the interviewer cannot grasp the valid will of the students. In addition, some enterprises believe that the temperament, image, and professional quality of the students applied for through the online assessment are not accurate, and they choose to delay the assessment of their workability, which increases the risk of default of the graduates [5]. It can be seen that due to the weak basic service system of online recruitment and the inadequate supervision and guarantee mechanism, the efficiency of online recruitment is low, which seriously affects the employment of college students.

2.1.3 The internship plan of college students affected by the COVID-19 control was forced to be stranded

Due to COVID-19 control, college students' holiday internships and graduation internships were forced to be stranded, and most college graduates have almost zero internship experience. Specifically, in everyday COVID-19 control, some enterprises have to reduce the recruitment quota of interns to reduce labor costs. Students who originally planned to go out for internship during the holidays, but the policy uncertainty related to the epidemic is relatively considerable. Moreover, the welfare security provided by enterprises for interns is not sound, and the

rent and living expenses are too large, so the internship plan of college students can only be stranded. In addition, due to the epidemic policy, some office buildings limit the number of workers in their units, making employees unable to work usually and making it difficult for graduates to practice typically ^[6]. In short, the epidemic prevention policies in various regions will change at any time, the offline internship of college students is highly uncertain, the safety and stability are difficult to guarantee, and the internship plan can only be forced to run aground.

2.2 Influence of internal factors

2.2.1 *The university talent training mode does not match the talent demand of enterprises*

Affected by COVID-19 control, the comprehensive ability of many college students does not match the talent needs of enterprises. Colleges and universities have long paid close attention to the theoretical knowledge learning of online courses. They have neglected the cultivation of students' innovative and practical abilities. Specifically, affected by COVID-19 control, many innovative and practice activities of college students integrated with the modern market environment are challenging. The current talent training mode ignores the process of shaping students' specific abilities and cultivating students' specialties for different positions. At the same time, some online courses in colleges and universities do not pay attention to guiding students to expand innovative knowledge, new technologies, and new ideas. Then, teachers often look for online videos without knowledge updates in the classroom. As a result, the knowledge structure of talent is difficult to adapt to the rapidly changing market environment. In short, the university talent training mode under the regular COVID-19 control is difficult to provide innovative talents to meet the development of enterprises, thus affecting the employment of college students.

2.2.2 *College students are lagging behind and weak in receiving employment guidance*

The employment guidance for college students is relatively backward and targeted weakly. Specifically, the reasonable employment guidance arrangement should be a systematic and sustainable education and guidance for college students. However, many colleges and universities tend to improve the initial employment rate as the goal orientation, lack of research on students' employment intention and needs, and open employment guidance courses in the last year of graduation ^[7]. At the same time, college students obtain job information through the school, which is more difficult to select information and lacks personalized and professional employment guidance ^[8]. In addition, the course content of most employment guidance in colleges and universities is often limited to one-time employment guidance, employment information release, and online videos of employment skills. In short, due to the impact of the epidemic, the competition in the job market is becoming more and more fierce, and the lag and weak pertinence of employment guidance cannot meet the needs of students and enterprises, resulting in the low employment quality of college students and the poor job stability of graduates.

2.2.3 *The "slow employment, lazy employment" psychology of college students*

In the post-epidemic era, more and more college graduates have actively or passively become "slow employment, lazy employment" groups ^[9]. First, some college students have biased self-cognition and lack accurate analysis of the employment situation. They have high employment expectations, excessively pursue positions that do not meet their situation, and gradually become a "slow employment" group ^[10]. Second, due to the epidemic, some universities take online courses in isolation and lack interest in professional theoretical knowledge. Their professional theoretical knowledge, practice ability, work skills, and other comprehensive competitiveness did not reach the expectations of a unit of choosing and employing persons, thus missing employment opportunities. They were forced to become a "slow employment" group. Third, some college students lack career planning for the future, are afraid of employment, and then blindly choose to prepare for the exam. In short, under the normalization of COVID-19 control, the psychology of "slow and slow employment and lazy employment" of college students has primarily hindered the employment of college students.

3. Countermeasures

3.1 The government

3.1.1 Adhere to giving priority to employment and introduce a proactive employment policy

The government should prioritize employment and introduce a proactive employment policy to ensure economic development. First, the government should implement a "one-to-one" specialist service mechanism to help the more affected small and medium-sized enterprises. The government can reduce the financial costs of small and medium-sized enterprises through policies such as rent reduction and interest rate cuts to avoid broken capital flow to increase jobs. Second, the government can encourage enterprises to create jobs in emerging industries and increase investment in the Internet, artificial intelligence, and big data industries to increase the social demand for jobs. In addition, the government can increase recruitment positions in grassroots units, community services, and public services and encourage college students to innovate and start their businesses. In short, in the context of regular COVID-19 control, the domestic and foreign economies are under tremendous downward pressure. The government must take multiple measures to increase the demand for social jobs and promote the diversified employment of college students.

3.1.2 Create a national unified and targeted labor force information management platform

The government can establish a national unified and targeted labor force information management platform; enable information interconnection and data sharing among various departments, and help college students to find suitable employment. Specifically, the government plays the bridge between universities and enterprises on the labor force management platform and plays the role of supervision. The platform uses big data analysis technology to collect and analyze students on social platforms and real-time dynamic monitoring systems, accurately depict the "portrait" of job seekers, predict their career development direction, and finally match the needs of the positions in the database. In short, the government can give full play to its service function and use the objective data of the platform to help enterprises and job seekers accurately "match the job" to improve the allocation of labor market resources to solve the problems of insufficient effectiveness and poor interactivity of the online recruitment service system.

3.1.3 Build an accurate and feasible practice and training base, and implement the internship guarantee policy for college students

The government should build an intelligent "online + offline" practice and training base for colleges and universities and select the practice cooperation units for colleges and universities according to the characteristics of colleges and universities. Furthermore, the government can issue supporting detailed management documents and provide employment and internship consulting services. Specifically, the practice and training base should focus on offline practice and take short-term tax reduction, unit promotion, and publicity measures for the practice units receiving university interns. Second, encourage universities to cooperate with excellent enterprises to jointly use VR artificial intelligence technology to build an online virtual simulation internship base while emphasizing the reality of online internship activities. Third, under the normalization of COVID-19 control, the government must actively implement holiday internship subsidies and welfare guarantee policies for college students and urge the internship units to protect the internship students' fundamental rights according to the law. In short, the government should give full play to its service and supervision functions, build an intelligent internship and training base for college students, and actively implement the internship guarantee policy.

3.2 Colleges

3.2.1 Use big data to grasp the needs of social talents accurately and innovate the talent training mode

Colleges and universities should use big data technology to collate and analyze data and information such as economic development and employment situations, accurately grasp the talent demand of social development under normal COVID-19 control, and then innovate the talent training mode according to their own characteristics. Specifically, colleges and universities should fully use big data technology to understand the social talent needs, guide themselves to the social needs, and pay attention to the personalized cultivation of students.

On the one hand, in online courses, colleges and universities should update and impart professional courses according to the new trends and trends of the development of enterprises in the industry so that students can better master professional knowledge and practical skills. On the other hand, colleges and universities should adhere to personalized training according to students' interests and career planning, pay attention to the process of training and ability improvement of college students, and carry out courses and training to shape students' specific professional abilities. In short, colleges and universities should make the courses closer to the needs of The Times, make the talent training mode more personalized and professional, and make the online courses "alive" under the background of the normalization of COVID-19 control.

3.2.2 Accurate analysis of students' employment willingness, effectively docking with employment resources

Under the normalization of COVID-19 control, colleges and universities should consider running employment guidance and planning courses for college students throughout the whole university education accurately analyze students' employment willingness and effectively connect with employment resources to improve employee efficiency and quality of college students. Through the data algorithm model, the information affecting students' employment expectations, behavior mode, and campus experience is sorted out and analyzed to grasp college students' employment willingness accurately. At the same time, external information, such as regional economic development trends and enterprise job demand, is collected and analyzed. Data models are used to accurately match these analysis results with the employment willingness of college students then help college students to find the most appropriate employment resources. In short, universities can provide accurate employment guidance services by analyzing students' employment willingness online and offline methods.

3.2.3 Help students establish a correct career outlook and improve the quality of employment service and guidance

Colleges and universities should help graduates establish a correct sight of choosing jobs and improve the employment services. On the one hand, colleges and universities should carry out related courses to help students objectively understand the gap between their ability and the practical needs of social positions to prevent students from choosing slow employment due to high expectations. At the same time, colleges and universities should guide graduates to discover the potential of emerging careers on the Internet and encourage them to choose innovation, entrepreneurship, and flexible employment. On the other hand, in the employment guidance of graduates, colleges and universities should implement the dynamic management of "one person, one policy," giving full play to the subjective initiative of the instructors and providing students with all-round and whole-process employment guidance, to solve the problem of job-hunting confusion of graduates. In short, colleges and universities should pay attention to the employment service and guidance work of the "slow employment" groups, help them to carry out proper graduation planning and rapid employment, and avoid the waste of high-quality human resources.

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