



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY
AND COUNSELLING
(IJEPC)

www.ijepec.com



EMPLOYMENT CONCEPTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN
CHINA AND ABROAD: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE
REVIEW

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 10.12.2023

Revised date: 15.01.2024

Accepted date: 20.02.2024

Published date: 13.03.2024

To cite this document:

Zhang, Z., Ahmad, H., & You, Y. (2024). Employment Concepts of College Students in China and Abroad: A Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 9 (53), 246-258.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.953021.

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Abstract:

Currently, the issue of "employment difficulty" among Chinese college students is quite prevalent. The academic community has previously conducted in-depth research on the employment concepts of college students. This paper examines studies conducted by Chinese and foreign scholars on the employment concepts of college students. The study is a preliminary exploration based on literature reviews, readings, surveys, and perspectives, utilizing library resources such as circulars, books, journals, and websites. The results of the preliminary survey indicate that basic theoretical research and assessment methods in China and abroad are relatively mature, yielding rich outcomes. However, there are still significant issues to be addressed. Through systematic review, this article identifies the following urgent research issues. Firstly, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, presenting new requirements for college students. The new connotation of college students' employment views under these circumstances is still unknown. Secondly, the research object of scholars is more concentrated on the graduates, and few people pay attention to the employment view of current college students. Finally, scholars rarely focus on a specific discipline when studying the employment views of college students.

Keywords:

College Students; Employment; Employment Concepts; Employment Difficulty; Japanese Majors;

Introduction

The concept of employment shapes the orientation, choice, and expectations of college students' employment goals, influencing their views, attitudes, and behaviours towards employment. From this perspective, the employment concept of college students plays a guiding role in realizing their employment goals. Therefore, this paper explores existing issues in the study of college students' employment concepts. Students have an objective and correct employment concept, contributing not only to personal value realization and social development but also alleviating the current severe employment pressure. Additionally, it promotes the employment of college students, realizing social stability and harmonious development. (Xi Jinping, 2017) The Arab Spring which was led by a 26-year-old young man Mohamed Bouazizi who failed to find a job due to the economic downturn, under the heavy financial burden of his family, and suffered brutal treatment by local police, leading to protests and self-immolation, highlighted this point. (Zhang Yanjie, 2016) The study holds great practical significance and provides references for the research of ideological and political education and values education in colleges and universities. (Luo Yan, 2010)

The concept of employment for college students has garnered attention from the state and society. (Gong Youhui, 2013) Scholars in China have intensified their research on the concept of employment. It is noteworthy that in this study, the term "Jiu Ye Guan" can be translated as "Employment Outlook," "Employment Perspective," "Employment View," "Employment Conception," "Employment Concept," or "Employment Idea."

Methodology

The research approach that sets itself apart from typical or conventional reviews is the systematic literature review. As more research publications are being digitally indexed and published, taking advantage of this trend can lead to more intelligent and effective research methods. (Felizardo, K. R., & Carver, J. C, 2020) A thorough review of the literature was done in order to compile and comprehend (i) how the employment views of college students is currently conceptualized in the scientific literature, (ii) what gaps and research needs exist. Specific steps as follows:

Define Research Question: The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What is current state of research on the employment concepts of college students in both China and abroad?
2. What are the problems in the current research on the employment concepts of college students in both China and abroad?

Develop Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Specify criteria for including or excluding studies. (Felizardo, K. R., & Carver, J. C, 2020) This study searches "Employment Outlook," "Employment Perspective," "Employment View," "Employment Conception," "Employment Concept," or "Employment Idea." within Article Title, Abstract, Key words, including articles written in Chinese and English. There is no limit on the type of study source and no limit on the publication date.

Conduct a Comprehensive Search: Identify relevant databases and search terms. Conduct a systematic and thorough search using these terms. (Felizardo, K. R., & Carver, J. C, 2020) This study searches in Scopus and CNKI. China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) is one

of China's largest academic literature databases and knowledge service platforms, offering a vast array of academic resources spanning various disciplinary fields. (China National Knowledge Infrastructure, n.d.)

Screen and Select Studies: Apply the inclusion and exclusion criteria to the search results. (Felizardo, K. R., & Carver, J. C, 2020) Initially, screen studies based on titles and abstracts, and then review full texts to make final selections. Due to the understanding that there is very little research on the employment perceptions of college students abroad, there is no requirement for article searches on the Scopus platform.

Data Extraction: Develop a data extraction form to systematically collect relevant information from each selected study. (Felizardo, K. R., & Carver, J. C, 2020) This may include study design, sample size, methodology, key findings, etc.

Data Synthesis: Summarize and synthesize the findings from the included studies. This may involve qualitative synthesis, quantitative meta-analysis, or a combination of both, depending on the nature of the studies. (Felizardo, K. R., & Carver, J. C, 2020)

Interpretation of Results: Discuss the implications of the findings and their relevance to the research question. (Felizardo, K. R., & Carver, J. C, 2020) Identify gaps in the literature and suggest areas for future research.

The following two tables show the file selection process according to the steps above.

Table1: Literature Selection in Scopus

Layer1	Layer2
“Employment” (Title Abstract Keywords) *Internal criteria No annual publication limit. Articles are written in Chinese and English There is no limit on the type of study source. Search within Article Title, Abstract, Key words.	AND “Employment Concepts/views/outlooks/perspectives” (All Fields)

Source: Author’s Own Work

Table2: Literature Selection in CNKI

Layer1	Layer2
Example “Employment” (Title Abstract Keywords) *Internal criteria	AND “Employment Concepts/views/outlooks/perspectives” (All Fields)

No annual publication limit.
Articles are written in Chinese and
English
There is no limit on the type of
study source.
Search within Article Title,
Abstract, Key words.

Source: Author's Own Work

Results

According to the results of the literature review, there has been a great deal of research done on college students' employment abroad and in China. The following table3 shows the number of articles selected in Scopus is 6. The following table4 shows the number of articles selected in CNKI is 30721.

Table3: Number of Articles in Scopus

Source	Scopus
Retrieval Date	13 January 2024
Layer1	359071
Layer2	267
Final	6

Source: Author's Own Work

Table4: Number of Articles in CNKI

Source	CNKI
Retrieval Date	13 January 2024
Layer1	606535
Layer2	64558
Final	30721

Source: Author's Own Work

Discussion

Research On College Students' Employment Views Abroad

There is no specific statement about the employment view of college students in the foreign related research. Few foreign countries appear "Employment concept" this term, the above is in the Scopus platform on the "Employment concept" of the term search results.

And the foreign substitution of this word is occupation, employment, career guidance and so on. "Work Values" or "Occupation Values" appeared in the 1990 book the choice of Occupation by the American sociologist Charles Algernon Parsons, who is thus called the father of career choice. (Yang Xiaohui, 2011) In it, Charles Algernon Parsons argues that a scientific career choice can only be made when there is a reasonable mix of personal and professional factors. In determining career choice, the first task is to fully understand their own, which includes their own interests, hobbies, strengths, etc., this is a prerequisite for making career choice. From the definition of this concept, we can see that the essence and intention of western employment guidance is to guide individuals to choose careers more rationally and

scientifically. Therefore, the study of foreign employment guidance or career guidance can provide some reference for our college students' career outlook education.

In terms of research perspective, foreign universities' employment guidance similarly applies and integrates theories and methods from interdisciplinary fields such as education, sociology, and economics. In terms of research methods, foreign studies place greater emphasis on practical exploration. This aspect holds significant reference value for the research on Chinese university students' employment perspectives, emphasizing the importance of cultivating practical experiences in shaping these perspectives. By addressing issues discovered in practice and elevating them to theoretical heights, a mutually reinforcing relationship between theory and practice can be established.

Research on employment outlook theories abroad typically adopts a combined approach of general and holistic employment theory research. It follows the principle of labour supply and demand being fully regulated by the market. This research has an early start, rich achievements, and a relatively mature system. Of growing interest domestically are the Career Anchor Theory, (Barth, 1993) Trait-Factor Theory, (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Hill, 1989) and Personality Type Theory. (Wheeler, Hunton, & Bryant, 2004) These theories conduct research on career guidance and career choices from different perspectives.

The Trait-Factor Theory was established by American vocational psychologist Parsons based on the analysis of the three elements of career guidance. (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Hill, 1989) The main viewpoint is that everyone has a unique pattern of abilities and personality traits, which are associated with specific careers. Therefore, career guidance should obtain information on the abilities and personality traits of job seekers through psychological tests and other means, and then provide them with matching occupational information. This theory is based on the assessment of job seekers' characteristics, and personality traits are then matched with occupations.

The Personality Type Theory was founded by American career guidance expert Holland in the 1960s. (Wheeler, Hunton, & Bryant, 2004) This theory believes that career choice is an extension of the job seeker's personality reaction. According to this theory, university career guidance counsellors should assess the personality types of college students and help them find career environments that coincide with their personality types.

The Career Anchor Theory was first proposed by the renowned American psychologist Edgar Schein in 1978. (Barth, 1993) He believed that individuals, based on their talents, abilities, values, and other factors, gradually form a clearer self-concept related to a certain profession. With a deeper understanding of themselves, a dominant career anchor becomes increasingly apparent. The career anchor is the most difficult factor for job seekers to give up when choosing a profession and developing a lifelong career. The Career Anchor Theory arranges the factors influencing job seekers' career choices by importance, helping them filter out the most important factors and guiding them to find their favourite careers. According to the Career Anchor Theory, higher education career education should guide students to understand themselves, discover their career anchors, and ultimately find their lifelong careers.

So most Western scholars tend to conduct research on the working population, combining it with fields such as education and sociology. The aim is to guide young individuals toward

better and more fulfilling employment, with less emphasis on ideological and political education.

In summary, the academic community abroad has conducted early research on the employment of college students, focusing on aspects such as career planning and employment skills. They particularly emphasize comprehensive and systematic research on employment education, with a strong emphasis on individual employment perspectives. They highlight the need for employment education to be tailored to individual characteristics. Furthermore, there is a significant emphasis on the practicality of employment education, studying university students' human capital and employment skills from the perspective of businesses. These aspects have certain reference value for this paper in seeking ways to correctly shape the employment perspectives of Japanese majoring students.

However, in terms of establishing employment perspectives, the foreign academic community places a special emphasis on and advocates individualism in content. This inevitably brings about liberalism, and individuals may tend to prioritize achieving self-worth when pursuing employment. This perspective, which neglects social and national values, carries a strong capitalist undertone. From another perspective, it highlights the superiority of our socialist system in China, emphasizing the necessity and progressiveness of studying the employment perspectives of university students and establishing correct employment perspectives.

Research On College Students' Employment View In China

In recent years, the status of college students' employment perspectives has attracted significant social attention, gradually becoming a focal point of scholarly research. Overall, it is believed that higher education has shifted from elite education to mass education, and the employment system has transitioned from "planned allocation" to "market determination and mutual selection." This shift influences college students' employment perspectives, demanding increasingly the realization of self-worth in the context of diversified evolution. Existing research is mainly based on three approaches: firstly, treating college students' employment perspectives as a whole and conducting descriptive studies on the characteristics of the current situation; secondly, subdividing college students based on factors such as gender and major to conduct specific group studies on employment perspectives; thirdly, conducting comparative studies on college students' employment perspectives along dimensions such as time and space. Firstly, there is a descriptive study on the employment perspectives of college students. The employment perspectives of college students involve various fields and disciplines, and scholars primarily focus on discussing non-rational employment views related to the value orientation, regional and industry preferences, salary expectations, and other aspects of students' employment choices. Currently, non-rational employment views manifest in several forms, such as the idealized elite employment perspective, where individuals hold notions like "If it's not in a big city, I won't go," "If it's not a good company, I won't join," "If it's not a good job, I won't take it." There are also views characterized by a high gaze and low skills, including attitudes like "Afraid of hardship, unwilling to work at the grassroots level" and "Won't take a job unless it's a secure position." Additionally, there is a hasty and utilitarian employment perspective with notions like "Would rather die than not secure a position in the establishment," and an indiscriminate employment perspective involving being picky, frequently changing jobs, following trends, and so on. Furthermore, there are passive employment perspectives, such as "Leave it to fate," "Wait for opportunities to come," and "Rely on social connections." Lastly, there are slow employment perspectives characterized by feelings of inadequacy and

negativity, such as "Won't take any job offered" and "Won't sign any job contract," among others.

Looking at the value orientation of college students' employment choices, it is evident that the emphasis is on personal development and material benefits, with a neglect of national and social needs. Wu Hongfu's analysis indicates that although there are differences based on gender, grade, discipline, and hometown, overall, college students tend to have individual and idealistic orientations in their career values. (Wu Hongfu, 2013) Additionally, a longitudinal study initiated in 2013 by Northeast Normal University, as part of the Ministry of Education's development report project in philosophy and social sciences, focused on empirical research on the criteria for employment choices among college graduates. Analysing data from 2013 to 2017, the top five factors considered most important by graduates when choosing employment were "development prospects," "salary and benefits," "interests and hobbies," "job stability," and "work location."

Examining the regional and industry preferences in the employment choices of college students, a utilitarian inclination leads them to prefer economically developed regions, first-tier or coastal cities, and sectors with stability, especially within state-owned enterprises. Due to economic and institutional differences such as regional disparities and the nature of employment, there is a significant overlap in the employment intentions of graduates. They generally prefer the eastern regions, especially large cities, and employment in state-owned advantageous departments (Zhou Boyu, & Li Yuanping, 2010). There exists a prominent stereotype regarding occupations, with a limited range of preferred professions. Particularly, positive attitudes are shown towards coastal areas and developed cities in regional stereotypes, even accepting jobs they dislike in these regions, while holding a negative stance towards county towns. (Hu Zhihai et al, 2004) Tana et al. (Tana Dawangi, 2017) conducted a survey on 400 individuals from relevant groups in Qinghai Province and found that ethnic minority college students generally have a positive employment mentality, lacking awareness of employment competition, having high expectations, objective social cognition, but relatively negative self-cognition. They tend to choose employment in the western region, particularly in stable institutions, and have not yet matured in terms of entrepreneurial awareness.

Examining the salary expectations of college students, there is a general tendency towards higher salary expectations. The actual income often does not align well with the anticipated income, resulting in a significant gap. The idealized elite employment inclination leads to some students voluntarily choosing unemployment. Tohti Aimaiti (Toheti Amaiti, 2017) identified limitations in the employment perspectives of post-90s college students in Xinjiang, including restricted employment choices, outdated employment concepts, and overly high-income expectations. Tao Ying et al. (2019) suggested that, under the backdrop of the new economic normal, college students' employment perspectives are generally realistic and increasingly rational. They show inclinations towards developed regions, large cities, state-owned enterprises, and job stability. A survey of 430 third and fourth-year university students and recent graduates revealed that the factors prioritized in job selection were, in order, "salary and benefits (64.27%)," "development opportunities (52.61%)," "personal interests (31.27%)," "work location (22.58%)," "stability (12.90%)," "social status (12.66%)," "achieving personal ideals and values (7.44%)," "interpersonal relationships (6.95%)," "work challenges (5.46%)," and "contributing to social development (3.47%)". (Wu Min, 2015)

In summary, these findings illustrate the complex landscape of college students' employment perspectives, encompassing their value orientations, regional and industry preferences, and salary expectations. The research underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing the choices and expectations of college graduates in the job market.

Secondly, there is specific group research on college students' employment perspectives. Specific group research primarily involves discussing the employment perspectives of a particular group, analyzing their characteristics, and proposing targeted solutions. This detailed exploration significantly enhances the specificity of research on college students' employment perspectives, providing valuable insights for this study. Currently, within the academic community in China, researchers employ various dimensions to categorize college students into different characteristic groups for research. This includes gender-based divisions into male and female students, education level.

divisions into doctoral, master's, undergraduate, vocational, and technical college students, discipline-based divisions into agricultural, medical, engineering, humanities, natural sciences, and business students, as well as divisions based on professional categories like social work, physical education, and arts. Geographical perspectives are also utilized, dividing students based on regions such as Xinjiang, Guangdong, Beijing, Shanghai, Guizhou, and Eastern, Western, urban, and rural areas. Additional divisions consider the type of institution, categorizing students based on whether they attend undergraduate institutions, local colleges, independent colleges, or agricultural institutions. Age-based divisions include categories like "70s generation," "80s generation," "90s generation," "95s generation," and "00s generation." Ethnic perspectives also play a role, with divisions into Mongolian, Tibetan, and other ethnic minorities. Currently, the research in China focuses on several specific groups, including the "90s generation," ethnic minorities, border regions, economically disadvantaged university students, and female university students.

Thirdly, there is comparative research on college students' employment perspectives, primarily conducted based on three fundamental dimensions: space, time, and demographics. In terms of spatial dimensions, comparisons are made not only between China and other countries but also within different regions within China. Scholars have compared the employment perspectives of Chinese and American, Chinese and Japanese, and Chinese and Russian college students. Examples include studies such as "A Comparative Study of the Employment Intentions of Chinese and American Management Students – A Case Study of Rutgers University and Northeast Normal University", (Lin Zhanglin, et al, 2018)"A Comparative Study of the Employment Perspectives of Chinese and Japanese College Students", (Li Ping, et al, 2016) and "A Comparative Study of the Employment Perspectives of Chinese and Russian Youth during the Social Transformation Period" (Cao Xinran, 2011), among others.

Comparative studies among different regions within China have been more prevalent. Examples include "A Comparative Study of the Employment Perspectives of Urban and Rural Engineering Students in Local Universities", (Ding Liansheng, 2007)"A Comparative Study of the Employment Perspectives of Students from Local Normal Universities in Eastern and Western Regions", (Liu Hong, 2014) and "A Comparative Study of the Employment Perspectives and Adaptation of Tibetan College Students in China – A Survey in Tianjin and Qinghai" (Du Hairong, 2018).

Compared to spatial dimensions, research on the time dimension is relatively scarce and often focuses on significant time points for transitional studies. For instance, "Changes in the Employment Perspectives of Chinese Youth since the Reform and Opening Up – A Discussion Based on a Review of Research Literature". (Liu Nini, 2019)

Comparative studies among different demographic groups mainly involve divisions based on gender, education level, ethnicity, and major. Examples include "Willingness to Practice Medicine in Rural Areas among Medical Students in Western Medical Colleges and Universities – A Comparison Based on Urban and Rural Household Registration Perspectives", (Liu Jinlin & Mao Ying, 2016) "Comparative Analysis of Career Exploration among Vocational College Students and Regular University Students" (Zhou Wanting, 2016), "Survey and Research on the Employment Values of Students Majoring in Engineering, Agriculture, and Medicine" (Pang Jingjie, 2018), and "A Survey of College Students' Employment Preferences: A Gender and Education Level Comparison" (Zhang Xiumei & Liu Haitao, 2019).

From these studies, it can be observed that the status of college students' employment perspectives has both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, there is an enhancement of students' awareness of independent employment and an increase in their competitive spirit. On the negative side, there is a weak entrepreneurial mindset and a lack of proactive risk-taking abilities. Students often struggle to assess themselves well, lack confidence and courage, and may have unrealistic expectations. Dependence on others' opinions, psychological fragility, and vague career goals are also prevalent. The employment perspectives of college students are significantly influenced by factors such as salary and geographic location. However, there is a gradual shift in these perspectives, with entrepreneurship becoming an increasingly viable choice for college students. The employment perspectives of female students have also attracted attention, as gender inequalities in job opportunities and discrimination against women persist in society.

Conclusion

The results of the study based on the preliminary survey showed that the basic theoretical research and assessment method research in China and abroad are relatively mature and have achieved rich results. However, it should be noted that there are still many important problems to be solved around the employment of college students, and there is still a large space for deepening and expanding.

Firstly, there is the issue of the temporal changes in college students' employment perspectives. Temporal changes mainly manifest in changes in the employment environment and the content of perspectives. With China's socialism with Chinese characteristics entering a new era, this represents a new historical orientation for employment perspective cultivation. In particular, the convergence of college students' careers with the "Two Centenary Goals" (Xi Jinping, 2022) presents new requirements for college students' employment perspectives. Under the background of the new era, what is the connotation of college students' employment perspectives in the new era? Currently, there is very little research in this area.

Secondly, at present, the research object of scholars is more concentrated on the graduates, and few people pay attention to the employment view of current college students. To study the employment view of college students, current college students are in a critical period of career

planning, the study of their employment outlook can help schools, counsellors, and related organizations to provide more timely and effective career planning support. Understanding current students' career expectations during school can help them to provide appropriate career advice and guidance in advance so that they can better plan their future career. The research on the employment view of current college students is also helpful to optimize the curriculum of educational institutions. Understanding current students' expectations of the job market can help schools better adjust their professional courses, internships, and other academic activities to enhance students' competitiveness in the job market. Overall, the research on the employment view of current college students can help to build a closer bridge between college and the job market and promote students to enter the job market better.

Thirdly, there is the measurement of college students' employment perspectives in the new era. Although there has been extensive research by domestic and international scholars on measuring college students' employment perspectives, with many methods to draw inspiration from, the main basis still relies on foreign theories of career development. The employment perspectives of college students in the new era are unique to Chinese students and have distinct characteristics. While measurement can draw on career development theories, it is crucial to adhere to the basic principles of Marxism and the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," was proposed by Comrade Deng Xiaoping, the chief architect of China's reform and opening. Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is the result of combining the basic principles of scientific socialism with China's actual conditions, and it has distinct characteristics of the times and Chinese features. The leadership of the Communist Party of China is the most essential feature of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. The theoretical system of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, i.e. the latest theoretical achievement of the Communist Party of China in integrating Marxism with China's actual conditions to achieve the Sinicization of Marxism, includes Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Important Thought of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. (Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, n.d) Therefore, a measurement scale for college students' employment perspectives in the new era should be developed that highlights the characteristics of the times and aligns with the perspectives of Chinese students.

Fourthly, there is a lack of detailed research on the scope of objects in the study of college students' employment perspectives. Current research on college students' employment perspectives both domestically and abroad is either too general, focusing on national college students, or has recently emerged to study the employment perspectives of specific majors, such as English (Hu Juhua, & Xu Jing, 2012) and medicine (Chen Wei, 2007). However, the level of detail is insufficient, and certain majors, such as Japanese, receive little attention.

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by "Hebei Normal University for Nationalities Institutional Fund Project" (Project ID: PT2023017).

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