

Influencing Factors on Career Orientation of College Graduates: A Case Study of Physical Education Majors in J University

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Abstract: With the improvement of the quality of Chinese population, and college students are facing great difficulties in employment, which directly affects their current career orientation. This paper investigates the career orientation of physical education majors in J University through analyzing the influencing factors on career orientation such as personal professional qualities, school employment guidance, and the social employment environment. The study employs a questionnaire survey method to conduct research on physical education majors in J University, aiming to further explore the influence of these factors on the career orientation of physical education majors and to provide better employment guidance for college students'. The research results indicate that: in terms of personal professional qualities, students generally perform well, but there is still a gap between students individual competence; in terms of school employment guidance, students are short of employment information and career planning; in terms of the social employment environment, students pay insufficient attention to the government's supportive employment policies and are unfamiliar with the current employment environment. The study suggests that: professional abilities in physical education should be strengthened in daily learning and practice to enhance career competitiveness; schools should strengthen employment guidance and organize enough career planning activities; society should actively create a positive employment environment, and the government should increase policy promotion efforts to promote student employment.

Keywords: Physical Education Majors; Career Orientation of Students; Employ Ability

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

In recent years, the enrollment scale of universities in China has continued to expand, with a significant increase in the number of university students, who have already become a large and indispensable force in the social labor market. However, this has also led to intensified competition in employment for college students. In 2023, the number of college graduates in China reached as high as 11.58 million, making the employment situation increasingly severe, and the issue of employment difficulties has become an urgent social challenge.

Among various fields of study, the physical education major, with its core purpose of cultivating physical education teachers with professional expertise and teaching abilities, exhibits distinct pedagogical characteristics. This determines its relatively concentrated career orientation and differences in adaptability to other professional employment positions in society. However, research on the factors influencing the career orientation of physical education majors is still relatively limited. Therefore, effectively understanding the current factors influencing the career orientation of physical education majors and providing targeted guidance can enhance the professional awareness and capabilities of physical education majors, and provide a solid foundation and guidance for their employment. This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the employment status of physical education majors, explore the key factors influencing their career orientation, and provide scientific and reasonable guidance suggestions for their future career choices. This holds significant theoretical

and practical importance in accurately grasping the employment challenges faced by students in this major.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Current status of research abroad

College graduates are a key group in employment work, and their employment is the focus of social attention.^[5] A large number of foreign scholars have studied the employment of college students, mainly focusing on the influence of social class on career orientation. Social class is an important indicator for dividing different occupations, and it is a classification standard for different groups abroad. In addition, there are also a large number of foreign studies showing that family factors have a great impact on the career orientation of college students, especially family background factors. In view of the career orientation of physical education students, the research in Japan, the United States and other countries has been more profound, and a series of systematic social employment theories have been formed. Another important aspect of the family factor is the social and economic status of the family, the so-called social and economic status of the family is the economic strength of the family in the society and the resulting social status, and this shows an obvious positive correlation with the vocational orientation of college students, that is to say, the higher the social and economic status of the family, the more positive and favorable the impact on the vocational orientation of college students, and the higher the employment expectations of college students. The professional quality and personal conditions of university students themselves are equally important. We need to reinforce the consistency of quality education as a guiding principle in the process of educational reform.^[6] Vietnamese scholars have found that the physical education program of Hanoi University of Physical Education and Physical Education aims to train physical education teachers with competent skills to meet the overall educational needs of Vietnam. They are expected to have the qualities of honesty, creativity, compassion, and tolerance, and are committed to the education of future generations. Teachers act as role models and show a high sense of responsibility for the development of themselves, their families and their countries.^[7] Foreign scholar Holland

believes that different people choose jobs in different industries because of different personality characteristics. Parsons believes that people's work characteristics and ability characteristics should be highly matched with market demand. It can be seen that one's own conditions also play an important role in the choice of career orientation.

1.2.2 Current status of domestic research

The group of university students is defined as the population of young people who are pursuing higher education. They are about to enter the society and find employment in society, and their career orientation will be affected in various ways at the university level. Most scholars tend to study the influence of family factors on the career orientation of college students, "parents are the first teachers of children", under the traditional Chinese values, parents' values and educational concepts will have an extremely profound impact on the future planning of college students. On the whole, scholars mostly focus on doctoral students, vocational college students and other practice types as the main research objects, and pay less attention to the professional cognition of ordinary college students. At present, there are extensive studies on the influencing factors of college students' career orientation, and most of them analyze the career orientation of college students with different academic qualifications and majors based on the actual situation of each school. On the one hand, it is necessary to strengthen the ability training of students, improve their own quality, and formulate a more scientific and reasonable training program for physical education teaching talents.^[1] However, the career guidance department should change its role, transform the school's administrative propaganda department into a real service department, and do a good job in providing employment services for graduates. Some scholars have proposed that the social factors affecting the career orientation of physical education students are mainly high employment thresholds, job saturation, and job volatility. Therefore, the government should cooperate with employment support policies, encourage self-employment, and improve the employment system.

In summary, Chinese scholars pay more attention to the influence of family factors brought about by traditional values on the

career orientation of college students, and the role of parents plays a key role in it. Foreign scholars pay more attention to the influence of family factors due to socioeconomic status on the career orientation of college students. Comparing the research results of domestic and foreign scholars, we can find that domestic and foreign scholars believe that family factors, self factors and social factors will have a certain impact on the career orientation of college students. Therefore, it can be seen that the existing literature at home and abroad has diversified research directions and research perspectives, but the research content is less in-depth into the influencing factors of the career orientation of physical education students. Although there are few studies on the influencing factors of vocational orientation of physical education students, the research results on vocational orientation are abundant, which also lays a good theoretical foundation for this paper.

1.3 Research Methods

In this paper, the influencing factors of the career orientation of students majoring in physical education in J University were taken as the research object. A questionnaire was distributed to students majoring in physical education in J University (grade 2020 and 2021), mainly for students majoring in physical education in J University in the face of huge employment pressure.

A total of 210 questionnaires were distributed to students majoring in physical education in J University. A total of 196 valid questionnaires have been collected. The effective questionnaire rate was about 93.33%. The effective questionnaires were analyzed and organized, and the SPSS software was used to provide scientific data support for the descriptive analysis of the questionnaires.

2. Survey on the Current Situation of the Career Orientation of Students Majoring in Physical Education In j University

2.1 The Extent to Which Students Have Mastered the Professional Competence in Physical Education

2.1.1 The professional ability of physical education includes the ability of physical education, the ability to organize extracurricular sports activities, and the management ability of

school physical education.

The questionnaire survey showed that the students majoring in physical education in J University performed well in terms of physical education professional ability, and all the respondents already had basic physical education teaching ability. Among them, 48.47% have basically mastered the ability of physical education, and 32.65% have been proficient. In terms of the ability to organize extracurricular sports activities, as many as 41.84% have basically mastered this ability, and only 3.57% have not mastered. In terms of the management ability of school physical education, some students have basically mastered this work skill, as many as 32.14% said that they have mastered this skill, but 11.22% of students still have not mastered it, indicating that the gap between students in management ability is large.

2.1.2 Professional skills refer to the special skills possessed by students majoring in physical education, including ball skills, track and field skills, and traditional sports skills.

The results showed that all the respondents had certain ball skills and track and field skills, and 57.14% were at the middle level of ball skills and 47.45% were at the middle level of track and field skills, both of which were nearly half. But when it comes to traditional sports skills, the picture is very different. Only 27.04% of the students reached the intermediate level, and 8.67% of the students were able to reach the advanced level, most of the students were at the low level, and even as many as 28.06% of the students did not have traditional sports skills.

2.2 Student Engagement with the School's Career Guidance

2.2.1 The survey found that the vast majority of students had not yet learned about the recruitment information, as high as 43.37%. Secondly, 40.31% of students learned about recruitment information through the media (WeChat official account, recruitment website, etc.), ranking second, which shows that online media has a great impact on students' employment and career choice. At the same time, the survey found that the proportion of students who obtained recruitment information through the introduction of classmates and teachers, social job fairs and campus job fairs was similar, which was 16.84%, 25.51% and 23.98%. Additionally, only 62 students have

followed the WeChat public account of J University, less than half, while the proportion of students who have not paid attention is as high as 68.37%.

2.2.2 Through a survey of 196 students majoring in physical education in J University, it was found that the vast majority of students do not have a clear career plan, and only about a quarter of the students have a clear career plan.

2.3 Students' Awareness of the Employment Environment

2.3.1 The survey found that there were only 21.94% of students are aware of the current employment situation and policies, while the vast majority of students are not.

2.3.2 The current career orientation of most students is school physical education teachers, accounting for 72.96%, which is the inevitable result of the teacher's nature of physical education, and the career orientation of the corresponding major must be the first choice of students when choosing a career, followed by sports leading cadres, accounting for 47.96%, nearly half of the proportion, indicates that civil servants and career establishment are also the best choices for students majoring in physical education.

3. Analysis of the Influencing Factors of the Career Orientation of Students Majoring

3.1 Personal Professional Quality

The personal professional qualities of physical education majors have a significant impact on career orientation, mainly including three aspects: physical education teaching ability, the organization ability of extracurricular physical activities, and the management ability of school physical education work.

3.1.1 Strong teaching and organizational skills, but lacking necessary management skills.

Research has found that the vast majority of physical education majors in J University possess good personal professional qualities, with strong physical education teaching and extracurricular physical activity organizational skills, which is closely related to the school's cultivation of students' practical abilities on a daily basis. J University has always placed top priority on the cultivation of personal professional qualities among physical education majors, and as a result, has achieved its current prosperity. However, most lack the

management ability for school physical education work, which may to some extent affect the direction of their future careers.

Therefore, continuously improving one's teaching and organizational skills to maintain advantages, while actively and proactively exercising one's management skills to compensate for shortcomings in personal professional qualities, is one of the key factors for physical education majors to enhance their employment competitiveness.

3.1.2 Possesses a high level of professional skills but lacks mastery of special skills

Professional skills in physical education are the core competencies for students majoring in physical education, helping them secure better job opportunities. Most physical education students in J University have already basically acquired various professional skills, which is inseparable from the rich teaching content of the physical education program in J University.

In the current employment context where teacher trainees are approaching saturation, physical education students face great challenges; however, due to the nation's "double reduction" policy and the continuous advancement of building a sports powerhouse, physical education students are also face unprecedented opportunities. The level of mastery of professional skills affects the career orientation of college students, indicating that students should refine their professional skills and continuously develop new ones to secure better opportunities in the fierce employment competition.

3.1.3 Possesses strong professional qualities and a concentrated career orientation

Currently, the employment situation for college students is not optimistic. On one hand, it benefits from increased national education investment, resulting in a steady output of highly educated talent; on the other hand, it is due to the continuous improvement of population quality and the severe phenomenon of involution. Although the quality of the population is constantly improving, the issue of a large population base remains. Research has found that students with stronger professional qualities are more inclined toward the career of physical education teachers. Moreover, due to the inherent educational and teacher-training characteristics of physical education programs, most students aspire to become school physical education teachers, while other socially-

oriented careers have long been abandoned. However, as educational resources in China continue to be met, the number of college students is approaching saturation, and students from the same major flooding into the same employment direction will inevitably exacerbate career involution, ultimately leading to a grim situation of rising unemployment rates among college students.

Therefore, college students should leverage their high professional qualities to broaden their employment prospects and continuously explore different career paths. Thus, we can see that personal professional qualities play a crucial role in career orientation.

3.2 School Career Guidance

With the continuous development of China's current employment talent market, the demand for the quantity of college students is decreasing, but the quality requirements are becoming increasingly high, even tending towards diversification. Strong professional skills are a major highlight for students in job selection and employment, but students themselves do not know how to leverage their professional advantages to enhance their competitiveness. Lack of employment goals and unclear career planning are currently major pain points in the career orientation of physical education majors.

Universities play a crucial bridging role in college students' employment, holding indispensable significance. On one hand, they need to continuously gather employment policies and recruitment information from society and the government; on the other hand, they must promptly and effectively provide students with career guidance, shouldering important responsibilities and obligations. J University has established a career guidance center and registered an official WeChat account — J University Career Guidance WeChat Official Account, frequently updating employment policies and recruitment information, and conducting career planning activities. However, data shows that students' engagement is often just to "meet performance targets." As a cradle for cultivating high-level talent, the university must take on the responsibility of career guidance for college students, providing a career planning platform that meets student satisfaction, allowing every student to benefit from it. Only with the

university providing correct and positive career orientation guidance can college students establish a proper career perspective and job selection mindset, making more informed choices in employment, truly applying what they have learned to society, and living up to their own expectations. Therefore, it is concluded that the university's career guidance also plays an important role in shaping students' career orientation.

3.3 Social and Employment Environment

The social employment environment refers to the comprehensive combination of subjective and objective environments and social development factors that play a restraining and guiding role in employment in terms of time and space, either directly or indirectly. Only by creating a favorable employment environment can society enable college students to adopt a more positive attitude towards employment rather than avoiding it.

3.3.1. Social employment status

In the early stages of China's educational development, the employment policy adopted was the allocation of jobs upon graduation. However, currently, with the continuous investment in educational resources, a growing number of high-quality talents are emerging, leading to the current situation of college students facing employment difficulties. Independent career choice is both a challenge and an opportunity. With greater autonomy comes a more proactive employment environment. However, the broader social employment environment's impact on college students cannot be ignored, especially for students in physical education, whose employment prospects are relatively limited. Therefore, the influence of the social employment environment is even more pronounced.

3.3.2. The government's employment guidance and support policies

China has yet to establish a fully fair, just, and open employment environment. University student employment support policies have always been the mainstay of the government's employment policies, and the State Council has proposed many key policy measures to promote university student employment. As the state provides policies to promote employment, university students should actively respond to the state's call and apply their knowledge where

the motherland needs them. Most students do not understand the current employment situation and the government's policies, and severe information barriers lead to blindness and confusion for students during employment, resulting in the current employment difficulties. Therefore, the level of understanding of national employment policies is also one of the important factors affecting career orientation.

4. Employment Strategies for Students Majoring in Physical Education

4.1 Enhance Their own Competitiveness and Adapt to the Development Needs of the Times

4.1.1. Enhance personal qualities and leverage individual competitive advantages

University students possess strong professional qualities and technical abilities. As future educators, physical education majors must not only have solid professional skills but also continuously improve their overall capabilities, including moral cultivation, self-character development, and organizational management enhancement. They must seize opportunities firmly in daily life, study, and internships to shape themselves into high-quality, high-level talents capable of adapting to society.

4.1.2. Improve practical skills and enhance personal employment competitiveness

While physical education majors strengthen their theoretical knowledge through professional studies, they also need to acquire broad knowledge and skills. This requires more practical opportunities, emphasizing the improvement of practical skills to develop unique teaching methods. Therefore, physical education students should be adept at discovering various opportunities to enhance their overall strength and comprehensive competitiveness in practice. They must not only keep pace with the times but also continuously raise their own standards, promoting all-round development in morality, intellect, physique, aesthetics, and labor, to form even stronger competitive power. These all require active preparation for practice, participating in social internships, and utilizing practical teaching to accumulate experience and improve personal competitiveness.

4.2 Strengthen the School's Employment Guidance Work, and Strive to do a Good Job

in Serving Students' Employment

4.2.1. Strengthen the functional role of university employment guidance

The employment situation is severe, and university employment guidance work has continuously become a top priority. Currently, universities should firmly eliminate formalism and adhere to whole-process guidance. At the same time, they should continuously strengthen close cooperation and communication with all sectors of society and employers to obtain the latest employment information, filter false information, and isolate the temptation of interfering and harmful information, providing timely, effective, and accurate employment and career choice information to enhance students' employment focus and provide the greatest convenience for their career choices. The affiliated colleges should also actively carry out various employment practice activities, coordinate with the university's employment guidance center, and do well in the functional work of student employment.

4.2.2. Fully play the service and educational role of university employment guidance

The employment guidance center is a specialized institution for serving student employment and must always maintain its professionalism, service-oriented, and educational nature, continuously guiding students' good career orientation and serving them in their employment work. First, universities should adhere to the "counselor plus class teacher" model, closely monitor the employment situation of every student, and firmly do well in service-oriented guidance work. Second, they should hire professional career development planning experts and employment guidance teachers to provide one-on-one training, counseling, and services for students with employment difficulties, helping them establish correct career choice concepts and cultivate accurate and suitable career orientations. Finally, they should set employment role models by inviting outstanding graduates from previous years to return to campus for presentations, helping fresh graduates eliminate uncertainties and stabilize their emotions.

4.3 Create a Good Social Employment Environment and Give Play to the Active Guiding Role of the Government

4.3.1. Improve the market regulation system for

talent and rationally allocate talent resources

At the end of the last century, China had dedicated government agencies to study the employment of university students, with significant results. Currently, China implements a "two-way choice" system between employers and job seekers, establishing an employer-employee cooperative relationship based on voluntary, proactive, mutually beneficial, and win-win principles. Under the market economy system, the employment market is mixed with good and bad elements and highly competitive, requiring continuous strengthening of institutional regulation for the talent employment market, introducing targeted policies, integrating employment supervision into the legal track, improving the regulatory system, and providing a more free and balanced employment environment to enable university graduates to be properly and efficiently allocated.

4.3.2. Create a stable employment environment, improve the employment environment for students

University graduate employment mainly occurs through online and offline interviews via networks, job fairs, and other methods. However, information barriers, a society influenced by personal connections, and capital intervention all have negative impacts on university graduate employment. The talent market cannot achieve complete stability, and it is necessary to continuously improve the employment environment, enhance the core competitiveness of university graduates in employment, and provide them with a relatively optimal and stable employment environment. Society must proactively protect university graduates in employment, strive to create a stable competitive environment, and provide employment opportunities to attract talent.

5. Conclusions

This article based on a questionnaire survey on 196 students majoring in Physical Education in J University to obtain information about their career orientation, and then analyzes the relevant factors influencing career orientation, proposing feasible solutions to promote university students' employment.

The study found: students have a relatively high level of mastery of the professional skills in Physical Education, but there is still some room for development; students' participation in

school employment guidance is relatively low; students' awareness of the employment environment is relatively low. By analyzing the three aspects of personal professional quality, school employment guidance, social employment environment and combining practical situations, the following solutions are proposed: enhance personal competitiveness to adapt to the needs of the times, including improving personal quality, leveraging individual competitive advantages, enhancing practical skills and strengthening personal employment competitiveness; strengthen school employment guidance work and strive to do a good job in serving student employment, including enhancing the functional role of university employment guidance, giving full play to the service and educational roles of university employment guidance; create a good social employment environment and give full play to the active guidance role of the government, including improving the talent market supervision system, rationally allocating talent resources, creating a stable employment environment, and improving the student employment environment.

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