

Original Paper

Research on Key Influencing Factors and Willingness of “Slow Employment” of College Students

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Abstract

After years of expanding the enrollment of college students in China, a large number of college students graduate every year. Starting from 2022, the number of college graduates will exceed 10 million, and both the society and universities are faced with the problem of how to arrange the employment of college graduates. The phenomenon of delayed employment of college graduates has gradually become a “slow employment” problem studied by scholars. Through the investigation of internal and external influencing factors such as society, school, family and individual, this paper finds that the external factors of family and internal factors of income expectation are the key factors leading to the “slow employment” intention of undergraduate college graduates. The corresponding discussion and suggestions are given.

Keywords

college students, slow employment, the key factor, willingness

1. Introduction

According to the Ministry of Education of China, the number of college graduates in the class of 2023 is expected to reach 11.58 million, an increase of 820,000 year-on-year (People's Daily, 2022). The employment of college students has become a hot concern of the society. The Ministry of Education and relevant departments have held various job fairs for this purpose. Education departments at all levels and colleges and universities will continue to hold various job fairs and online recruitment in the spring and summer of 2023, focusing on solving the employment problem of graduated college students. But there will still be a lot of college students will not be able to find a job, forced to postpone employment. How difficult is it for college students to find jobs now? In 2021, the employment rate is

30%; in 2022, 10.76 million college students will be employed, with only 4 million employed, and the employment rate is only 37% and less than 40%. In 2023, 11.58 million college graduates are expected (Tencent, 2023), and it is not known how much the employment rate is. College graduates outside the statistics of employment rate will inevitably become an active or passive group of college graduates with slow employment. Therefore, many university scholars pay attention to the slow employment of college students. In the research, the attribution of “slow employment” is generally analyzed from the perspective of society, school, family and individual. In the specific representative analysis, Li Ning believed that it was the influence of factors such as employment situation, career evaluation, career planning and job search expectation (Li, 2019). Through factor analysis, Zheng Dong et al. found that the reasons for college students to choose “slow employment” include further study, career planning, self-efficacy, employment quality, peer influence, network media and family support (Zheng & Pan, 2019). Most studies have explored the influencing factors of delayed employment in view of the phenomenon of “slow employment,” and discussed from the aspects of government, society, school, family and individual factors, and put forward corresponding solutions. However, there is no focus on the root cause of the formation of “slow employment,” and the most critical “slow employment” factor is not found. Therefore, this paper will seek the most critical factors for the “slow employment” of application-oriented undergraduate college graduates through investigation, and provide effective traceability support for the employment guidance of college graduates.

2. Theoretical Basis and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Theoretical Basis

2.1.1 Theoretical Model of Rational Action

The theory of reasoned action proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) believes that a person's performance on a particular behavior is determined by his behavioral intention to perform the behavior, which is determined by an individual's attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms. This theory holds that individual behavior can be inferred from their behavioral intention, so many scholars use this model to analyze the relationship between individual attitude, behavioral intention and individual behavior.

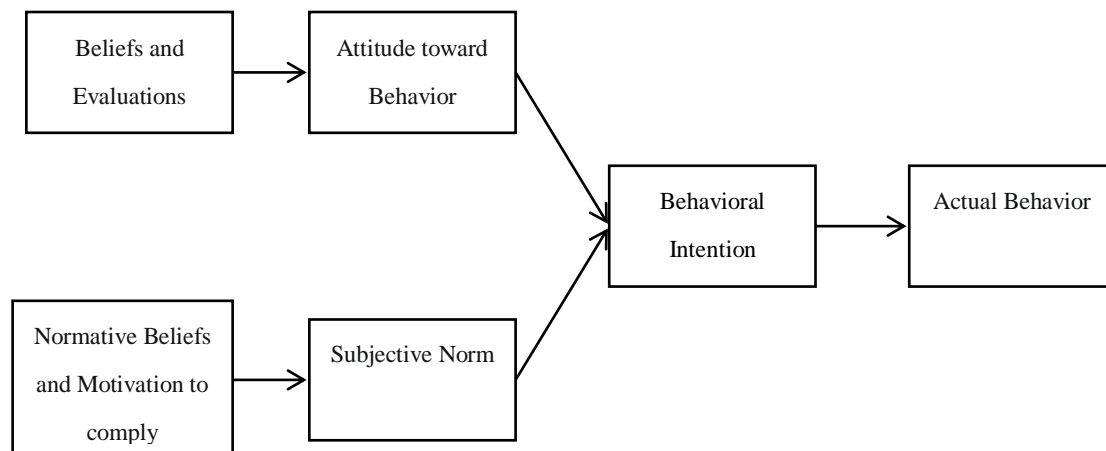


Figure 1. TRA (Theory of Reasoned Action) Model

2.1.2 Lutz's Relational Model (Lutz, 1981)

This model lists the possible factors that affect attitudes and the relationship between attitudes and actions. Key factors influencing certain behaviors can be sought through analysis.

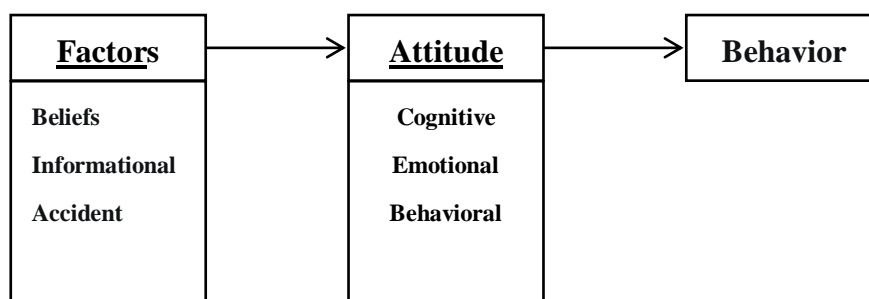


Figure 2. Lutz's Relational Model Diagram

2.2 Research Hypothesis and Model

As an intellectual who has received higher education and has certain rational choice ability, college graduates should have rational cognition and choice in the choice of employment or not. Therefore, the theoretical research model and hypotheses of this paper are set by referring to Lutz's relational model and combining with TRA's rational behavior model.

2.2.1 Research Hypothesis

There are many factors that affect the employment of college graduates, but they can be classified according to the individual perspective, and such factors can be divided into external factors and internal factors. External factors refer to all kinds of objective factors that affect individuals externally, including society, school and family, while internal factors mainly refer to individuals' subjective

perception factors. These factors also include many subdivided factors, so the following assumptions are made according to the influencing factors.

First of all, for external factors, we distinguish social, school and family factors. Therefore, the influence of external influencing factors on the employment intention of college graduates is assumed as follows:

H1: Social influencing factors have a significant impact on college graduates' slow employment intention

H2: School influencing factors have a significant impact on college graduates' slow employment intention

H3: Family influencing factors have a significant impact on college graduates' slow employment intention

Secondly, the internal factors affecting the employment of college graduates are mainly the perceived factors of personal requirements, which can be divided into unit requirements, position requirements, ability improvement requirements and income requirements. Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H4: The influencing factors of unit requirements have a significant impact on the slow employment intention of college graduates

H5: The influencing factors of position requirements have a significant impact on the slow employment intention of college graduates

H6: The influencing factors of ability improvement requirements have a significant impact on the willingness of college graduates to slow employment

H7: The influencing factors of income requirements have a significant impact on the slow employment intention of college graduates

The above internal and external factors will directly or indirectly affect the attitude and willingness of college graduates for employment, and affect their behavior of postponing employment. Therefore, it is assumed that:

H8: College graduates' slow employment intention significantly affects their employment behavior.

2.2.2 Theoretical Model

The theoretical model of the relationship between the key influencing factors of college graduates' employment and their employment intention and their impact on employment behavior is constructed as follows in Figure 3.

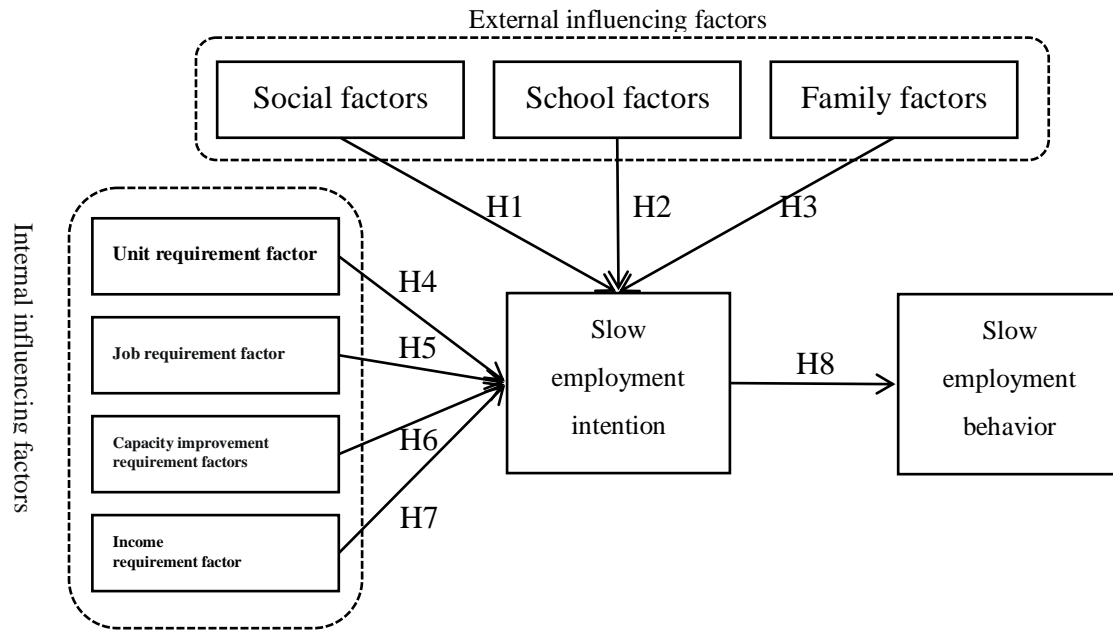


Figure 3. Research Model of Key Influencing Factors of Slow Employment Intention Behavior

3. Questionnaire Design and Data Sources

3.1 Questionnaire Design

3.1.1 In this paper, the 5-level Likerts scale is adopted, with 1-5 indicating strong disapproval, disapproval, general, approval and strong approval respectively. The specific measured variables and contents are shown in Table 1.

3.1.2 For the measurement of slow employment behavior, only two measures are selected, that is, yes or no.

Specific variable design: Is the interval between your graduation and employment more than 6 months?
No ☐ Yes ☐.

3.2 Data Sources and Sample Characteristics

3.2.1 Source of Datas

From the end of 2022 to March 2023, a survey was conducted on students who had graduated from a number of undergraduate universities in Nanning, Guangxi, China, with students who had recently graduated more than one year as the respondents. Through the graduate group of the school, the questionnaire is set up on the questionnaire star survey website, and the way of network remote survey is carried out. A total of 577 questionnaires were collected, 120 questionnaires from junior college students were sorted out and removed, and 457 valid questionnaires from undergraduate students or above were obtained. The effective rate of the questionnaire on slow employment of undergraduate students is 79.2%, which generally meets the requirements of the questionnaire survey.

Table 1. Design of Variables and Measurement Index

Variable		Number of entry	Number of entry
External Influence Factors	Social factors (SO)	3	The state's graduate employment policy affects timely employment. Impact of social and economic development. The impact of intense competition for jobs.
	School factors (SC)	3	The curriculum meets the employment requirements. Good pre-employment training is provided. Provide appropriate employment channels and information recommendations.
	Family factor (FA)	3	The family has a good economic foundation to support not to rush to employment. Parents support deferred employment for good reasons. Family and friends can provide employment assistance to support postponing employment.
	Unit requirement factor (UN)	3	Hope to stay in economically developed areas or cities to work. Hope to find administrative institutions or state-owned enterprises. So can high-income private firms.
Internal influencing factors	Job requirement factor (JO)	3	I hope the job position is established. Hope the work is easy. Easy promotion and promotion.
	Capacity improvement requirement factors (CA)	3	I hope I can learn new knowledge at work. I hope my work ability will be improved. Have the opportunity to exercise and study outside.
	Income requirement factor (IN)	3	Want to earn more than the average income level. The benefits are good. It's better to have hidden income.
	Slow employment intention (SI)	3	Willing to take an examination of public or study, support teaching and other not anxious employment. Willing to wait for better employment opportunities. Willing to work with classmates or friends to find better employment opportunities.

3.2.2 Basic Characteristics of the Sample

Among the respondents, gender distribution: 66.74% were female; Age distribution: 18-30 years old accounted for 95.40%, others accounted for less than 5%; Education level: all of them are undergraduates or above, accounting for 98.47% of the total. In line with the survey object for undergraduate staff mainly requirements.

Table 2. Basic Structural Characteristics of the Valid Samples

basic feature	class	number of people	Scale(%)
Gender	Male.	152	33.26%
	Female	305	66.74%
Age	Under 18 years old	11	2.41%
	18-30 years old	436	95.40%
	Over 30 years old	10	2.19%
Level of education	Undergraduate degree	450	98.47%
	Master and Doctor	7	1.53%

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Reliability and Validity Test

4.1.1 Firstly, the reliability and validity of variables such as internal and external influencing factors and the willingness to slow employment are analyzed. The test was carried out using SPSS23.0 software.

Through the test, the results show that the lowest α coefficient is 0.817, which is higher than the acceptable standard of 0.7, indicating that the scale has good reliability. The lowest KMO test value is 0.650, which is greater than the acceptable standard of 0.5, and the significance of Bartlett test value is $P=0.000$. Therefore, the questionnaire in this paper has good reliability and validity, which is suitable for further test and analysis.

Table 3. The Reliability and Validity Test Results

Measurand	Number of terms	Cronbach's α	KMO	Bartlett's test
SO	3	0.911	0.696	0.000
SC	3	0.921	0.751	0.000
FA	3	0.915	0.760	0.000
UN	3	0.855	0.734	0.000
JO	3	0.817	0.650	0.000
CA	3	0.910	0.718	0.000
IN	3	0.908	0.724	0.000

SA	3	0.863	0.727	0.000
SI	3	0.836	0.686	0.000

4.1.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis Was Conducted

This paper conducts exploratory factor analysis on external and internal influencing factors. The test results show that except for the factor loadings of JO1 and CA3, which are 0.550 and 0.648 respectively, the factor loadings of other tests are greater than 0.7, and the explained variance is greater than 80%. It shows that the scale of internal and external factors has good structural validity (Table 4).

Table 4. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variable	Item	Factor loading				Explained variance %
		1	2	3	4	
External influencing factors	FA	FA1	0.922			30.16
		FA2	0.900			
		FA3	0.899			
	SC	SC2		0.888		29.27
		SC1		0.865		
		SC3		0.862		
	SO	SO3			0.897	29.15
		SO2			0.893	
		SO1			0.839	
Internal influencing factors	IN	IN3	0.801			23.50
		IN2	0.790			
		IN1	0.763			
	UN	UN2		0.836		23.10
		UN1		0.778		
		UN3		0.731		
	JO	JO2			0.851	19.62
		JO3			0.781	
		JO1			0.550	
	CA	CA2				0.761
		CA1				0.728
		CA3				0.648

The second is a confirmatory factor analysis of each factor. The analysis uses AMOS21.0 to verify model fit, and selects indicators such as absolute fit index, relative fit index and parsimonious fit index

for evaluation. The results are shown in Table 5: the test values all meet the standards, so the proposed reference model meets the requirements of model adaptation.

Table 5. Model Fit Tests

Specific indicators	Bear fruit	Recommended value
CMIN/DF	3.353	<5
RMSEA	0.072	<0.08
RFI	0.913	>0.90
NFI	0.929	>0.90
TLI	0.937	>0.90
CFI	0.949	>0.90
IFI	0.949	>0.90
PNFI	0.754	>0.50
PCFI	0.770	>0.50

4.2 Data Analysis and Results

Therefore, the path test can be carried out, and the model analysis results are as follows: As shown in Table 6, only SI←FA and SI←IN path correlation test results are significant, while other path relationship tests are not significant.

Table 6. Test Table of the Impact of Internal and External Influencing Factors on Slow Employment Intention

Path	Estimate	t	P	Hypothesis testing
SI←SO	0.047	1.260	0.208	Reject
SI←SC	0.056	1.153	0.249	Reject
SI←FA	0.402	8.364	***	Accept
SI←UN	0.099	1.140	0.255	Reject
SI←JO	0.080	0.360	0.719	Reject
SI←CA	-0.019	1.362	0.174	Reject
SI←IN	0.300	3.538	***	Accept

Note. *, **, *** indicate the significance levels of 0.1, 0.05 and 0.01, respectively.

Therefore, the test shows that the influence of external factors SO and SC on employment intention is not significant, H1 and H2 are not valid, while FA has a significant influence on employment intention, and H3 is valid.

Among the internal influencing factors, UN, JO and CA are all rejected, and only IN has a significant effect. Therefore, hypotheses H4, H5 and H6 are not valid, and H7 is verified.

Since AE only has the option of whether or not, the regression analysis is conducted directly with the effect of SI on AE. The test result is: the standardized coefficient $B=0.069$, $t=1.474$, $P=0.141$, and the result is not significant. In other words, there is no significant influence relationship between employment intention and employment action, and H8 fails the test.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

5.1 Conclusions

The results show that among the external influencing factors that affect the slow employment behavior of college graduates, the influence of society and school is not significant. The family influence factor is the key factor affecting the employment intention of college graduates, which has a significant impact on the employment intention of college graduates. Therefore, family plays an extremely important role in influencing students' various behaviors and ideas, no matter from primary school, middle school or university. Giving full play to the important role of family in education is to guide college graduates to treat employment correctly and play an important role in promoting active employment.

Among the internal influencing factors, among the internal needs of college graduates for job hunting, the needs of unit, position and ability improvement are not significant for college graduates' willingness to job hunting. Only the requirement of income has a significant effect on the job search of college graduates. The direct pursuit of income requirements is the cognitive change of the whole young generation and the cognitive embodiment of the economy and society. The income issue is the first consideration for the employment of college graduates. If the income is up to expectations, then the requirements for the organization, the position, and the ability to improve are not a problem. Therefore, increasing the salary of college graduates is the key factor to improve the employment rate and solve the problem of slow employment.

The relationship between employment intention and positive employment behavior is not significant. This shows that even if college graduates are willing to be employed, they may choose different slow employment behaviors due to various other reasons. As a result, there are many college graduates who may be forced to delay employment even if they have strong employment intentions because they do not have family support or for personal reasons. In other words, only employment intention cannot achieve the purpose of positive employment, but also need to have employment channels to achieve the purpose.

5.2 Discussion and Suggestions

The number of college graduates is increasing every year. Employment has become an important topic in society, and it is also a difficult problem for many families and college graduates. Therefore, finding

an effective way of employment is the ultimate goal of our research. In the study, the conclusions we obtained through the survey also prompted us to further discuss this.

First of all, in the process of employment education and training for college graduates, we have not considered the corresponding training and education for family members. If we continue to correct the employment concept of family members, it may improve or promote the employment situation of college graduates, and whether the problem of slow employment can also be better solved.

Secondly, the direct pursuit of income by college graduates is, of course, the inevitable result of economic and social development. However, whether this perception of excessive pursuit of economic interests reflects the emergence of collective social cognition problems in university education. Employment solely for economic benefits may deviate from the general perception of the public. This may require university administrators and teachers to think carefully about the impact of this cognition on the country and society.

Third, this study only focuses on students who have graduated from bachelor's degree or above, and students from junior college and secondary vocational schools are not analyzed. This can be refined again in future research to have a deeper understanding of the employment status of students graduating from all types of schools.

Fund Item

Guangxi Education Science "14th Five-Year Plan" 2022 Special Project "Research on the Root Cause and Solution Path of the Phenomenon of 'Slow Employment' for Graduates of Application-oriented Undergraduate Colleges (No.2022ZJY1645)"

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