

Practical Exploration of Intervention in Employment Concepts of Students in Applied Technology Universities

Wenwen Luo

Lanzhou Institute of Technology, Lanzhou, China

Abstract: Against the backdrop of the classified development of higher education and structural changes in the employment market, the deviation in employment concepts among students of applied technology universities has become a key factor restricting high-quality and full employment. Taking Lanzhou Institute of Technology as an example, this paper, based on the orientation of engineering application-oriented talent cultivation, analyzes the current practical dilemmas faced by students, such as vague career positioning, prominent mentality of seeking stability, low recognition at the grassroots level, and insufficient initiative in job hunting. It constructs a four-in-one employment concept intervention system of "course teaching - practical activities - precise counseling - organizational guarantee", and systematically expounds the practical measures taken by the school in terms of employment guidance curriculum reform, visiting enterprises and exploring job opportunities, one-to-one assistance, and the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education. The research shows that systematic employment concept intervention can effectively change students' cognition of career selection and enhance employment adaptability, providing a replicable practical paradigm for similar applied technology universities to carry out employment education and optimize employment concept guidance.

Keywords: Applied Technology University; Employment Concept; Intervention Strategy; Practical Exploration

1. Introduction

Employment is the foundation of people's livelihood, and the employment of college graduates is crucial to social stability and the implementation of the strategy to strengthen the country through talents. As an important

component of the higher education system, application-oriented universities take serving regional industries and cultivating technical and skilled talents as their core mission. The employment quality of their graduates directly affects the implementation of educational positioning and local economic development. Lanzhou Institute of Technology, as an application-oriented university with distinct engineering characteristics in Gansu Province, has 25.69% of its graduates choosing to stay and work in Gansu Province, especially in the campus located in Lanzhou New Area, which has become a frontier position serving local industries. However, some students also face issues such as vague career positioning, low recognition of application-oriented positions, and neglect of employment opportunities in grassroots and emerging industries during the job search process. Therefore, exploring systematic and operable intervention strategies for employment concepts is not only a practical need to enhance the effectiveness of employment education in application-oriented universities but also an important topic in response to the national policy requirement of "accelerating the construction of a high-quality employment service system for graduates of general colleges and universities".

2. Salient Issues in the Employment Attitudes of Students from Universities of Applied Sciences

Based on the characteristics of engineering majors at Lanzhou Institute of Technology and the features of student groups, through questionnaire surveys, interviews, and employment data analysis, it is found that students' employment concepts are not singular and static, but rather present a complex state where tradition and modernity coexist, and rationality and irrationality intertwine. Specifically, they can be summarized into the following six core characteristics.

2.1 The School Advocates the Concept of "Employment First, Career Choice Later"

Facing the competitive pressure in the job market, schools systematically guide graduates in their mindset. They urge students to abandon the misconception of "finding a job once and for all" and establish a rational job-seeking attitude of "getting employed first, then choosing a career" [1]. However, students' acceptance of this concept remains limited. A considerable proportion of students still regard their "first job" as the starting point for their "lifelong career" and adopt a cautious or even procrastinating attitude towards job selection. This concept of "slow employment" has become a pressing issue that needs to be addressed in school employment guidance work [2].

2.2 The "Waiting, Relying, and Demanding" Employment Mindset is Widespread

The mentality of "waiting, relying, and demanding" is prevalent among current graduates in the job market [3]. Taking the School of Materials Engineering as an example, during the employment promotion meeting held by the school, teachers guided graduates to abandon the erroneous mindset of "waiting, relying, and demanding". Specifically, "waiting" refers to passively waiting for the emergence of an ideal position; "relying" refers to excessive dependence on school recommendations or family arrangements; and "demanding" refers to unrealistically demanding a position that is completely "major-matched" without considering market realities. Meanwhile, one of the underlying purposes of the "resume consultation" and "mock interview" coaching activities conducted by the School of Electrical Engineering is to stimulate students' subjective initiative and dispel their dependency mentality by enhancing their hard skills in job hunting. This indicates that there is still considerable room for improvement in some students' job-seeking initiative, and dependency mentality is a key conceptual obstacle that needs to be overcome in current employment efforts.

2.3 Students' Mentality of Seeking Stability in Employment is Prominent

The employment work deployment of Lanzhou Institute of Technology clearly reflects students' preference for civil service and public institution examination. In the special survey on employment work, Vice President Jia Jiehua

required teachers to "clearly explain to unemployed graduates the recruitment policies and procedures for civil service and public institution examination, military enlistment, etc." This work deployment itself reflects that "civil service and public institution examination" is a highly concerned and competitively pursued direction among student groups.

Based on the actual employment destinations of graduates from this school, a high proportion of students, ranging from 48% to 63%, choose to work for state-owned enterprises after graduation. This indicates that students prioritize job stability over market salary expectations, and their preference for state-owned enterprises and positions within the system is the most deeply ingrained component of their current employment attitudes [4].

2.4 The Trend of Cross-Professional Development is Steadily Increasing

In the context of traditional advantageous majors facing adjustments in the job market (such as the civil engineering industry experiencing a cyclical downturn), some colleges have begun to actively encourage students to break through the mindset of "major alignment". The School of Economics and Management encourages graduates to focus not only on whether their "major" aligns, but also on the industries prioritized for development in the national "14th Five-Year Plan"; the School of Foreign Languages explicitly encourages students to "actively explore diversified employment channels such as cross-major, self-employment, western development programs, and military recruitment" [5].

This indicates that under the pressure of changes in the external employment market, the ideological guidance at the school level is transitioning from "major determination" to "competence transfer". Students are beginning to accept the concept that employment competitiveness can be transferred across fields. Although the depth and breadth of this ideological shift still need to be tested over time, the increase in openness is a positive signal.

2.5 Students' Anxiety and Confidence Coexist

The mobilization report presented by the School of Materials Engineering at the 2025 employment promotion meeting pointed out that graduates should not only "face the severe employment situation and challenges" but also

"increase their confidence in employment". The School of Economic Management, on the other hand, urged graduates to "put aside their anxiety" and go into battle with a light heart. This seemingly contradictory expression of psychological construction truly reflects the complex inner landscape of students.

On the one hand, the current severe employment situation has made students fully aware of market pressures, and objective anxiety is widespread. On the other hand, school employment mobilization and successful cases of alumni from previous years are working to maintain students' confidence in employment. This mentality is a "double-edged sword": moderate anxiety can be transformed into motivation for job hunting, while excessive anxiety may lead to passive coping or decision-making mistakes.

2.6 Risk Diversification Awareness through Multiple Simultaneous Preparations

In the counseling activities organized by the School of Electrical Engineering, graduates are explicitly encouraged to "make multiple preparations such as applying for civil service positions, graduate schools, and the State Grid Corporation of China simultaneously". This guidance strategy indicates that some students have broken through the traditional mindset of seeking employment through a single channel and have initially formed a risk diversification job-seeking strategy, that is, making preparations for job hunting in multiple aspects. Students no longer pin all their hopes on a single path (such as simply waiting for recruitment by state-owned enterprises), but instead, based on their own conditions and market information, they are making plans on multiple tracks, including taking the postgraduate entrance examination, civil servant examination, teacher recruitment examination, and job hunting in enterprises. This reflects students' clear understanding of the fierce competition in employment, and also marks the evolution of their employment concept from simple "waiting for allocation" or "single choice" to complex "strategic management", embodying a stronger sense of initiative and planning.

Overall, the employment attitudes of students at Lanzhou Institute of Technology are undergoing a profound transformation. Traditional attitudes (preference for state-owned enterprises, expectation of "getting it right the first time")

coexist with new attitudes (employment first, career choice later, cross-field experimentation) and are in a state of tension. Employment mobilization at the school level is actively promoting the renewal of students' employment attitudes, but students' cognition is constrained by past employment experiences, family, and the market environment. How to effectively shorten this contradiction in attitude transformation is the key to improving the quality of employment work in applied technology schools.

3. Theoretical Logic and Four-Dimensional Framework Design of Employment Concept Intervention

3.1 Connotation and Intervention Logic of Employment Concept

The concept of employment is the value judgment and cognitive mode of College Students' career choice, including the psychological structure of career values, employment expectations, career self-efficacy and so on. For applied technology university students, the core contradiction of employment concept lies in the "positioning of technical and skilled talents" and "career expectation of academic elites". This contradiction stems from three aspects: first, the preference of family culture for work within the system; Second, the social evaluation of vocational education is low; Third, students lack confidence in their own technical ability.

The logical starting point of the intervention of employment concept lies in the plasticity of human concept. According to the concept of social cognitive theory, the individual's professional concept can be changed through experience, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal. This means that systematic intervention strategies can help students reshape their employment cognition, adjust their career expectations and enhance their career identity.

3.2 The Guiding Significance of the Concept of "Three Complete Education"

The connotation of "three complete education" provides a systematic perspective for the whole staff education, the whole process education and the all-round education, and for the intervention of employment idea. From the perspective of full-time education, the intervention of employment concept needs the cooperation of professional course teachers, counselors,

business mentors, peer groups and other multi-body, breaking the narrow understanding that "employment guidance is only the responsibility of graduating class counselors". From the perspective of the whole process of education, the formation of the concept of employment runs through the four years of University, and the intervention work should start from the freshman enrollment, rather than waiting for the "temporary cramming" in the senior job season. From the perspective of all-round education, the intervention of employment concept should be integrated into curriculum teaching, practical activities, campus culture, psychological counseling and other links to form a linkage effect.

3.3 Intervention Model Construction: Four in One Framework

According to the above theoretical analysis, based on the employment practice of Lanzhou Institute of technology, this paper proposes to construct a set of four in one employment idea intervention strategy of "course teaching - practical activities - precise counseling - organizational security". The whole process, precision and personalized guidance will be realized in four aspects: strengthening students' basic cognition through courses, strengthening cognition through practical activities, one-on-one guidance and correction cognition, and system guarantee implementation. So as to enable the students of Application-oriented Undergraduate Colleges to establish the scientific employment concept of "based on engineering, facing industry, employment first and then employment, and serving the local manufacturing industry".

4. Intervention System Design

4.1 Curriculum Teaching: Establishing the Knowledge Foundation for Sound Employment Concepts

Curriculum is the basic carrier of employment concept intervention. Schools should implement the whole process employment curriculum system based on grades and specialties, open up three kinds of classes: general education, professional courses and employment guidance courses, and carry out employment concept enlightenment, concept correction and deepening education in layers.

Freshmen should enlighten students on career

cognition and planning, so that students can get rid of the misunderstanding of professional cognition, introduce the professional industry chain, grassroots technical posts and development path to students through Freshmen's entrance education, career planning and other general courses [6], correct the misconception that "engineering can only work well if it enters state-owned enterprises and large factories, and the front-line technical posts are not developed", popularize the path of flexible employment and independent entrepreneurship, and broaden students' career selection boundary. The sophomores and juniors will carry out the quasi professional oriented training, so that students can be based on the direction of engineering employment, embed the employment standards of enterprise posts that are suitable for their majors into the teaching of professional courses, and correct the idea of choosing jobs based on salary and staffing. During the fourth year of college, we held "alumni face-to-face" and "workplace elite lectures", and invited outstanding alumni who have taken root in grass-roots enterprises and grown into technical backbones to return to school to share, breaking the concept of "supremacy within the system" with real cases. Play an exemplary role in guiding students to choose jobs rationally.

4.2 Practical Activities: Solidifying Correct Employment Concept in Practice

The fundamental change of employment idea needs the support of real professional experience. "Separation of knowledge and practice" is a prominent problem in the current employment guidance. There is a gap between the employment concept students hear in class and the real workplace, which can be effectively compensated through practice empowerment. Therefore, it is necessary to jump out of the classroom teaching and take practical activities such as visiting enterprises, research and learning, competition experience, etc. as the starting point, so that students can enter the industry front line, use the real workplace to break the cognitive bias, and realize the goal of "changing ideas with eyes and choosing jobs with practice". Through the normalization of employment service month and career pilot camp activities, students are organized to visit relevant enterprises on the spot, and closely observe the working environment and promotion

channels of front-line technicians. Break the stereotype of "front-line workshops are hard and unpromising" and recognize the value of manufacturing grassroots posts.

4.3 Precise Counseling: Tackling Employment Misconceptions with Personalized Guidance

Through one-to-one precise assistance, a standing book for unemployed graduates and students with financial difficulties is established. The college leaders, counselors and professional teachers form an assistance group to carry out one-to-one resume polishing [7], post research and judgment, and psychological counseling for students' vague career positioning and unbalanced job-hunting mentality. At the same time, differentiated intervention is implemented for students of different grades and majors [8] -- focusing on career cognitive enlightenment for lower grades, matching guidance between majors and positions for second and third grades, and employment decision-making and psychological adjustment for graduating classes; Focus on strengthening the identification of technical positions for engineering students, focus on serving the grassroots and flexible employment guidance for liberal arts students, and avoid homogenization guidance.

4.4 Organizational Guarantee: Building a Pattern of all Staff Education

The intervention of students' employment concept is not a "personal war" of the graduating class counselors, but requires the participation of the whole school. We should formulate employment assessment methods, bring the idea of employment into the responsibility of teachers' education, and form a working pattern of "joint efforts by colleges and universities, and full participation". At the same time, integrate the collaborative resources of family, school and society: cooperate with parents, enterprises and human resources and social security departments to carry out guidance on the concept of employment, guide parents to change the concept of "system only" employment through parents' meetings, enterprise propaganda, and government, school and enterprise symposiums, and strive for family support for students' grass-roots employment and enterprise employment; Cooperate with local human resources and social security departments to carry out policy propaganda and job promotion,

and build a collaborative education force between family, school and society [9].

5. Conclusion

The deviation of employment concept of Applied Technology University students is essentially the contradiction between "applied talent orientation" and "traditional professional concept". To solve this contradiction, we need systematic intervention strategies rather than scattered activities. The four in one intervention model of "Curriculum Teaching - practical activities - precise counseling - organizational security" constructed in this paper integrates the relevant achievements of cognitive psychology, social learning theory and educational ecology in theory, and responds to the particularity and complexity of the formation of employment concept of Applied Technology University Students in practice. At the same time, it can also effectively change the utilitarian, idealistic and evasive problems of students' job selection, and promote graduates to choose jobs rationally based on manufacturing, facing the grass-roots level. By complementing the existing shortcomings in curriculum, practice, counseling and system, further strengthening the effectiveness of employment concept education and continuously helping graduates to obtain high-quality and full employment are not only the proper meaning of employment education, but also the important mission of the University of applied technology to serve the regional economic and social development.

Acknowledgments

Special Project on "Career Planning and Employment Guidance for College Students" in "the 14th Five-Year Plan" of Education Science in Gansu Province in 2024: A Case Study on the Factors Influencing the Employment Concept of Applied Technology University Students and Response Strategies: GS [2024] GHBZX0046

References

- [1] Zhang Kangsi, Zhu Chen. A Study on the Causes, Impacts, and Governance Paths of College Students' Delayed Employment. *Educational Research*, 2020, 41(07): 112-121.
- [2] Liu Weiwei. A Brief Analysis on How to Stimulate College Students' Employment Awareness. *Journal of Liaoning Normal University (Social Science Edition)*,

- 2022(05): 104-106.
- [3] Li Lijuan. Causes of Job-Seeking Dependency Psychology among Applied Undergraduate Graduates and Intervention Strategies for Employment Guidance. *Chinese Vocational and Technical Education*, 2021(23): 78-83.
- [4] Wu Wei. Tracing the Origins of Institutional Job Preference among Local Applied Undergraduate Graduates and Guiding Strategies. *Research in Higher Education of Engineering*, 2022(02): 187-193.
- [5] Wang Lu. An Analysis of Diversified Employment Guidance Mechanisms for Non-Engineering Graduates in Local Undergraduate Institutions. *Vocational and Technical Education*, 2022, 43(11): 65-70.
- [6] Wu Yunyue, Wang Lei, Lu Weibo. Reflections on Teaching Reform and Innovation of the Career Development and Employment Guidance Course in Applied Universities. *Advances in Education*, 2025, 15(7): 1551-1557.
- [7] Wang Chongxian. Pathways to Enhancing College Students' Employment and Entrepreneurship Capabilities in the Context of High-Quality Employment. *China Employment*, 2021(10): 46-47.
- [8] Qiu Yalan, Ma Yuanyuan. Analysis and Intervention Strategies for Delayed Employment among Higher Vocational Graduates from the Perspective of High-Quality Development. *Journal of Jiamusi Vocational Institute*, 2025, 41(12): 62-64.
- [9] Zhu Lingyun, Chen Zhen, Ou Meng. An Analysis of Collaborative Paths among Family, School, and Society to Optimize Graduates' Employment Concepts from the Perspective of Three-Dimensional Education. *China University Students Career Guide*, 2023(05): 4-8.