

## Research on impact of current economic structure in China on college students

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**ABSTRACT:** The problem of higher education transformed from the original elite education to the present mass education is that the college students' employment difficulties become increasingly obvious. College students' employment problems are one of important tasks to be urgently resolved by governments at all levels, which is related to the overall situation of national social stability. Based on the current perspective of China's economic structure, this paper carries out a comprehensive and detailed research from multi-angles by the use of systematic views, and explores the impact of China's contemporary economic structure on the college students' employment, and also puts forward strategies to solve the college students' employment difficulties.

**Keywords:** economic structure; college students' employment; influence; employment countermeasures

### 1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

China's college students' employment difficulties initially emerged in the 1990s. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the expansion of college enrollment, the employment difficulties became more obvious. In 2008 to 2016, the number of college graduates in China was respectively 559, 611, 631, 660, 680, 699, 727, 749, 765 (unit: 10,000) <sup>[1]</sup>. At present, China's economy is in the transition period, the industrial structure is constantly adjusted, and the mode of economic growth is changing, resulting in an oversupply situation, and even an unoptimistic employment situation <sup>[2, 3]</sup>.

The current state-owned economy is a subject of China's economy. In solving the employment problems, the state-owned large and medium-sized enterprises enjoy the advantages and will get the national preferential policies and financial subsidies, but these enterprises are of little significance on the real growth of employment posts. The small and medium-sized enterprises that really absorb the labor forces are generally private enterprises, which are mostly labor intensive or technology intensive, with financing difficulties, and limited support by the national industrial policy, at a disadvantageous position in the market

competition, and difficult to grow and develop, or create many employment posts. College students' employment difficulties are greatly related with China's long-term over-emphasis on the large-sized state-owned enterprises, but ignoring the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Meanwhile, the imbalance between industrial structure and regional economic development also result in decrease in the college graduates' employment rate year by year. Thus, it is very important to correctly analyze the impact of economic structure on the contemporary graduates' employment and put forward effective solutions on this basis <sup>[4]</sup>.

### 2 FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC RESEARCH STATUS

Foreign research literatures are mainly focused on the relationship between the social and economic environment and employment, but rarely purely specific to the college students' employment. Adam Smith, the founder of Economics founded the "market dominance" on employment, and such theory believes that, under the market economy, the market will automatically allocate the supply of labor forces, in order to achieve full employment, without employment problems <sup>[5]</sup>. The monetarism school represented by Friedman researched the economic stagflation in the

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capitalist countries. He believed that a single monetary policy should be adopted to increase the fixed money supply based on the situation of economic development, in order to ensure the stability of economic growth, thus driving employment. Lewis researched the employment problems of the dual economic model countries, believed that the state must maintain a high economic growth rate to ensure that there are not a large number of unemployed population in the process of industrialization; Ranis further developed Lewis' theory, overcame the shortcomings in Lewis' theory, and believed that there is a need to improve the production efficiency of the industrial and agricultural sectors, thus achieving the transformation of economic structure; Todaro further discussed the transfer of rural labor forces to solve employment problems based on dual structure model of two people<sup>[6]</sup>.

There are many domestic researches on how the economic environment affects the college students' employment. Fan Dawu believed that the demand for college students is constantly increased with the gradual transformation of China's urban and rural dual economic structure, continuous adjustment and optimization of industrial structure. The economically developed areas are more attractive to the college students' employment, and the national policies will also guide college students to engage in some areas of national defense and basic work<sup>[7]</sup>. Wang Yi believed that the capacity of the primary industry and the secondary industry to absorb labor employment shows a steady trend with a slight decline, while the tertiary industry is becoming the main force for carrying the college students' employment<sup>[8]</sup>. Li Yanjun believed that the output of industry has a positive correlation with the quantity and quality of college students' employment; the fixed assets investment in the industry has a positive correlation with the quantity and quality of college students' employment; the industrial labor investment has an unobvious negative correlation with the quantity and quality of college students' employment<sup>[9]</sup>. Huang Jingbao pointed out that, the college graduates' unemployment is not only a manifestation of the progress of market-oriented reform, but also a product of imperfect market. The incomplete labor market, fragmentation of market system and poor market environment and other factors affect the exertion of configuration effect of market mechanism<sup>[10]</sup>. Cui Guoyue analyzed the college students' employment difficulties from the supply and demand side<sup>[11]</sup>. Han Yuhong analyzed college students' employment difficulties, and listed solving strategies<sup>[12]</sup>. Zou Dan analyzed the status quo of the graduates' employment at present stage, and listed the problems encountered in the employment and entrepreneurship<sup>[13]</sup>. This paper mainly researches the impact of economic structure on the contemporary college students' employment, and puts forward some effective and feasible programs on this basis.

### 3 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND EMPLOYMENT THEORY

#### 3.1 *Interpretation of concept of contemporary China's economic structure*

The definition of economic structure in academia has not yet reached an agreement<sup>[14]</sup>. The economic structure in this paper adopts the economic structure commonly referred, that is, distribution of production factors in the industry, region and enterprise, or distribution of total production quantity in the department, region and enterprise. Taking into account the relationship between economic structure and employment structure, the following analysis will be from the ownership structure, industrial structure and regional structure in China's economic structure.

As a basic economic system of society, ownership and its structure is a basis to determine a society's economy and even the political system, which determines the fundamental nature of a society. The 15<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the party pointed out that, common development of diversified ownership economy with the public ownership as a main body is a basic economic system at the primary stage of socialism in China.

The industrial structure refers to combination and composition of each material production sector (including sub-sectors within the department) in the national economic system, and the proportion of each production sector in the overall social production. The industrial policy directly affects the industrial structure of the national economy, and its purpose is to guide the optimal allocation of social resources in the industrial sector and within the industry, establish an efficient balanced industrial structure, and promote the sustained, stable and coordinated development of the national economy.

The regional economic structure refers to the micro-regional economy under the contemporary Chinese economic structure. Since the reform and opening up, irrational economic structure and extensive economic growth mode not only affect the quality of economic growth, but also brings hidden dangers to sustainable development. The adjustment of economic structure is the strategic focus of the current transformation of economic development mode. There is a need to accelerate the adjustment of the distribution structure of national income, accelerate the adjustment of urban and rural structure, accelerate urbanization, achieve industrial upgrading and structural adjustment, and achieve the leaping development of some industries from the direction and basic requirements of investment structure according to the structure of supply and demand.

### 3.2 *Theoretical basis of college students' employment*

Classic writers led by Marxist and Lenin carried out the relevant theoretical discussion on the employment issues. Since the founding of new China, "five generations of central leaders" of the Communist Party of China put forward the employment theory with Chinese characteristics on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, combined with China's actual situations. These theoretical bases are of great significance on guiding the college students' employment in the new period.

#### 3.2.1 *Marx's theory of employment*

Marx elaborated the premise, essential requirement and ultimate goal of the employment. He believed that a rational view of employment is the prerequisite for our employment. When we still feel that we are fit for a job after fully understanding of its nature and difficulty, we should choose it. The essential requirement of the employment is to achieve the unity of human social attributes and natural attributes; the ultimate goal of the employment is to achieve human freedom and comprehensive development.

#### 3.2.2 *Lenin's theory of employment*

Lenin believed that we should choose a job which is fully in line with one's own ability and suitable according to one's own capabilities, so as to fully exert one's own talent in the post, and contribute one's own strength; in the career, young people can appropriately listen to the views and guidance of the elders, so as to be conducive to more smooth realization of one's own life value.

#### 3.2.3 *Employment theory of main leaders of the Communist Party*

- (1) Mao Zedong's employment idea is mainly reflected in solving unemployment problems in early years of the founding of new China, and the unified employment policy under the planned economic system, with the essence of seeking truth from acts, mass line and independence.
- (2) Deng Xiaoping believed that the fundamental way to solve the employment problems is to develop the economy, especially the rural economy. Meanwhile, in the new era of scientific and technological development, there is a need to pay special attention to the development of high-quality workers and high-quality talents' employment.
- (3) Jiang Zemin believed that the college students need to closely integrate personal ambition with the need of people in the process of employment, in order to truly realize their life value.
- (4) Hu Jintao put forward the human-oriented employment theory to do employment and re-employment work well. College graduates employment is the key task of employment work in

the next period.

- (5) Xi Jinping believed that employment is a basis of people for living, and the fundamental to solve employment problem is the development.

## 4 IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STRUCTURE ON COLLEGE STUDENTS' EMPLOYMENT

### 4.1 *Impact of ownership economic structure on graduates' employment*

#### 4.1.1 *Analysis of ownership economic structure*

Since the reform and opening up, China has continuously promoted the reform of economic system, and gradually explored and established a development path of China's socialist market economy, and gradually established and improved the ownership structure with the public ownership as the main body, and co-existence of diversified ownership economy. The nature of China's socialist market economy determines that China's public ownership economy must occupy an extremely important position in the whole economy no matter in its size or relevance to the national security. The forms of ownership economy in China are mainly: ownership economy of the whole people (state ownership economy), collectively owned economy, individual economy, private economy and foreign capital economy and so on. However, with the continuous deepening of China's reform and opening up, the proportion and development of various types of ownership economy have had new changes. Especially since the 15<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the party, the concept of mixed economy has been established, and the division of public and non-public economy can be further clarified. Public economy includes the state-owned and collective components in the state-owned economy, collective economy and mixed ownership economy; Non-public economy includes the private and individual components in the private economy, individual economy, other economies, and mixed economy, as shown in Figure 1.

#### 4.1.2 *Analysis of absorbance of different ownership economies for graduates*

According to the *Best Employers Survey Report* on college students in 2016, the graduates preferred state-owned enterprises and central enterprises in looking for jobs, followed by joint ventures, public institutions and foreign companies, and finally considered private enterprises. Such situation has a great relationship with the current ownership structure in China. Firstly, with the adjustment of China's economic structure, the work of the government or state-owned enterprises has a higher occupational stability, which is rarely affected by the financial crisis, currency devaluation and industry situation. Secondly, the work pressure of the government or

state-owned enterprises is not very high. A high occupational stability reflects a small pressure to a certain extent, and the government and state-owned enterprises do not have a strict performance appraisal and elimination mechanism as the private enterprises and foreign enterprises. Thirdly, the civil servants and staff of the state-owned enterprises have a relatively better remuneration, with invisible benefits, provident fund, pension and so on. Due to its congenital problems, the corresponding private economy makes a lot of graduates unwilling to work in private enterprises. Firstly, some graduates believe that the management mode of family enterprise is single, and person relationship is complex, without a space for personal business growth. Secondly, foreign enterprises and private enterprises have large work pressure and intense competition. Then, the private enterprises have a low stability, and are prone to be affected by the financial crisis and industry situation. Finally, China's social security system is not sound, social insurance and house fund and overtime pay are not guaranteed.

At present, more and more college students want to enter the state-owned enterprises. In a great difference of selection of units by the graduates, it reflects different living conditions of the state-owned enterprises and private enterprises. The public ownership economy has a dominant advantage, or even a monopoly position, so it has more comparative advantages in the competition. Secondly, the biggest difference between the state-owned enterprises and the private enterprises is that the state-owned enterprises are more likely to be "favored" by the government, while the private enterprises often do not have such condition. The living conditions of private enterprises have changed, but their ability to fight against risks is far behind the state-owned enterprises. Unequal remuneration of state-owned enterprises and private enterprises is a main cause for the strange phenomenon of "helpless choice of private enterprises" by graduates, which exposes the following weaknesses: the ability of private enterprises needs to be strengthened, and the government's support policy needs to be further improved. In addition to employment, viewing from a broader level, to support private enterprises and enhance resistance is already an important issue related to China's economic development.

The impact of ownership structure on the college students' employment could not be simply from the perspective of the impact of planned economy on people's thought. More importantly, in real life, different ownership economies have a far-reaching impact on the future career development and quality of life of the employed. Currently, public economy is the major economic power in China, but speaking from the perspective of the college students' employment, non-public economy has a broader space. In fact, the college students entering into the non-public economy is a reluctant choice. Therefore, China's government has a lot of work to do to change the impact of own-

ership economy on the college students' employment.

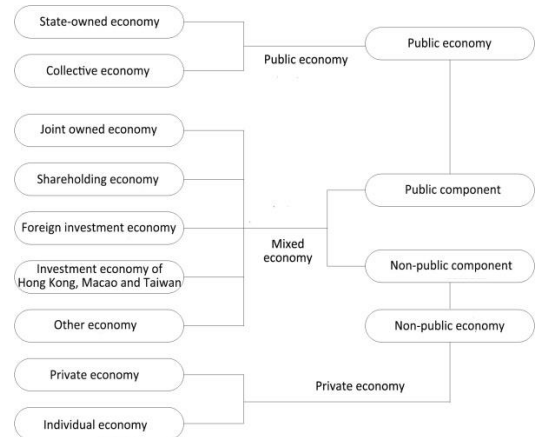


Figure 1. Statistical classification of the national economy

#### 4.2 Impact of industrial structure on graduates' employment

##### 4.2.1 Dialectical unity of industrial structure upgrading and talent structure optimization

First, upgrading of China's economic industrial structure is a historical necessity.

The industrial structure and talent demand structure in a country or region are correlated. On the one hand, the upgrading of industrial structure requires the support of talent structure to adapt. On the other hand, the optimization of talent structure also drives industrial upgrading. The cultural literacy of human resources, knowledge structure and production skills affect the industrial development to a large extent, thus affecting the industrial structure.

Second, upgrading of industrial structure needs to be supported by the optimization of talent structure.

At present, the world economy has developed to the era of knowledge economy, which needs to have a corresponding talent structure. For the upgrading of industrial structure in a country or region, due to the progress in technology and management, the original industry (see Figure 2) will put forward higher requirements on the technology of labor demand.

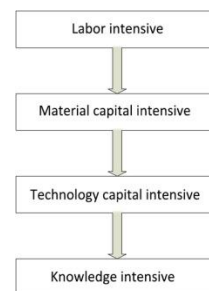


Figure 2. Industrial structure chain

Third, talent structure drives the upgrading of industrial structure.

A good talent structure can upgrade and optimize the original traditional industries. It is actually a misunderstanding that, the local government adopts “sweeping approach” to deal with high-energy, high-input and high-polluting enterprises, but focuses on the development of new energy, new technology, emerging industry and emerging services<sup>[15]</sup>. If high-quality talents enter this field, it not only contributes to the upgrading of the original industry, but also solves the problem of employment difficulties. In fact, there are a relatively small number of college students engaged in these industries, so there is a need for policy support of the state.

Fourth, a new industry and its development are promoted.

The main driving force of the regional emerging industry is from abundant accumulation of talents, especially the improvement of talent quality, which are complemented with each other, with dialectical unity.

#### 4.2.2 *Connectional demand of industrial structure for talents*

The industrial structure in a country directly affects the employment structure of the population. To analyze the college students’ employment difficulties, irrational economic structure and extensive growth mode becomes one of main reasons for affecting college students’ employment. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the industrial structure in China.

The employment groups in the primary industry have a low quality, and fail to form high value-added products. In particular, China’s economy is in the pattern of urban-rural dual economy, and modern industry coexists with the backward traditional agriculture, the industrial economy and agricultural economy are unable to be integrated, and the rural surplus labor forces are not effectively transferred for a long term. With the rapid development of agricultural modernization degree and labor productivity, the demand for labor in the primary industry is declining rapidly, and scale business can create employment opportunities for college students.

The secondary industry mainly relies on the expansion of production scale and increase of resources consumption to achieve profitability. Many companies are only engaged in the weakest processing links in the value chain, and have a very small proportion of demand for college students. But at the same time, for some high-tech industries, such as chip research and development and manufacturing, new energy development, artificial intelligence and other fields, China’s human resources are very weak, and general graduates are incompetent, resulting in a serious shortage of high-tech talents.

For the tertiary industry, from the perspective of internal structure, in developed countries, they are

mainly subject to information, consulting, technology, finance and other emerging industries; in China, they are mainly subject to real estate, wholesale and retail, catering and general services with a low technology and knowledge intensive degree, and the employment demand for college students is relatively low. From the perspective of economic benefit, China’s transportation, post and telecommunications, finance and insurance industry, as well as health, sports, culture and art and broadcasting industry are monopolized by the state. High profits under the monopoly conditions conceal the values contributed by the talents, and the rigid system affects the competitiveness in the tertiary industry, reduces the demand for college students, and strengthens the college students’ employment difficulties.

#### 4.3 *Impact of regional economic structure on graduates’ employment*

##### 4.3.1 *Development pattern of China’s regional economy*

From a macro point of view, China’s regional economy is mainly divided into eastern, central and western economy. The strategy is mainly to take the lead in the east, develop in the west, rise in the central and revitalize in the northeast China. At present, the development of China’s regional economy is uneven. The regional economic structure in the eastern, central and western regions is in a convergent phenomenon and lack of complementary advantages, coupled with the difference in the regional living environment and the social resources and the difference of the national development policies, resulting in a very strong directivity in the college students’ employment flow and uneven flow direction, oversupply talents in large and medium-sized cities, but lack of talents in under-developed regions. In other words, China’s imbalanced regional economic structure has a direct impact on the flow direction of college students’ employment, and artificially creates talent imbalance. At the same time, the asymmetric flow direction of talents affects the development of regional economy, and exacerbates employment difficulties.

##### 4.3.2 *Distribution of China’s college students’ employment and regional economy connections*

Due to the aggregation of Chinese universities and irrationality of the regional economy, the selection target of college students’ employment obviously presents one-way flow trend, most college students choose the first-tier cities, followed by the second-tier cities. For most under-developed areas with an urgent demand for a large number of high-quality talents, the purposiveness of college students’ employment is not strong. Graduates are willing to stay in the cities because there are more development opportunities and more choices of employment in large cities, with a

high income level, complete living facilities, and mature public services and so on.

Meanwhile, there are relatively concentrated colleges and universities in developed areas, while relatively small number of colleges and universities in under-developed areas. With the development and advancement of China's economic reform, the demand for college students in underdeveloped areas will become more and more urgent, while the number of college students to be provided or to be introduced in the local place is relatively low. To fundamentally solve this problem, the government must introduce the corresponding preferential policies to ease one-way flow problem in the college students' employment.

#### 4.4 Basic strategies for solving employment problems

The college students' employment is involved in college students, families, colleges and universities, society and even the whole country. Whether it can be effectively solved is related to the overall situation of national social stability. Many reasons lead to the college students' employment difficulties. Next, some reasonable suggestions are proposed from four aspects: government, enterprise, colleges and universities and college students.

##### 4.4.1 Government

As a national institution, the government should shoulder the responsibility of guaranteeing smooth employment for college students. The macro-control mechanism of the government can be improved from the following aspects:

(1) To strengthen policy evolution and institutional innovation, and promote the deep openness; to actively introduce foreign-funded enterprises to form a development pattern with domestic and foreign linkage of industrial structure and global configuration of the production elements, strive to improve the quality and level of foreign investment, and increase the demand for high-quality talents.

(2) To strengthen the transformation and upgrading of economic structure, and increase the absorption of high-quality talents. The government needs to re-examine the policy of national industrial development, develop a more reasonable industrial development plan, and accelerate the pace of industrial restructuring, thus promoting the expansion of employment market.

(3) To promote the coordinated development of regional economy, and balance the distribution of college students' employment; to vigorously develop small and medium-sized cities, small and medium-sized enterprises and the western regions' construction, increase the efforts to support the college students' employment in grass roots, and expand the total employment.

(4) To speed up the reform of social security system,

and improve the talent flow mechanism. China's social security system includes social insurance, social relief, social welfare and social special care. There is a need to conscientiously implement various systems, and effectively strive for the interests of the masses.

(5) To encourage the construction of the innovation park, and increase the support of business management; to provide a favorable platform for college students' entrepreneurship.

##### 4.4.2 Enterprise

At present, some enterprises have some irrational behavior in the process of employing, thus artificially exacerbating the college students' employment difficulties. The optimization of corporate behavior can be promoted from the following two aspects:

(1) To implement technological innovation and improve employment structure. Innovation is the foothold of the enterprise. Only by strengthening the innovative construction, the enterprise can have long-term interests, really achieve usefulness of capacities, and give full play to the academic superiority and quality advantages of the college students. Meanwhile, after the development of the enterprise and expansion of employment scale, the number of employees of the enterprise can be naturally increased, and employment pressure of the college students can be fundamentally eased.

(2) To cultivate the corporate social responsibility, and optimize the employment system. The enterprises should build a fair competition mechanism, pay attention to the rational use of talents, and timely carry out talent reserve, and regularly train staff, in order to improve the capacity of college students.

##### 4.4.3 Colleges and universities

Colleges and universities are connected with college students' employment, and their function on the college students' employment is more direct and obvious. Colleges and universities should appropriately change the teaching work and management work, in order to better promote the college students' employment.

(1) To reform the curriculum system, and innovate teaching content. Under the new situation, to protect the comprehensive training quality of talents, the school should constantly update the course content, closely keep up with the pace of scientific and technological development, increase the proportion of practical courses and improve the operational ability and innovation capacity of college students.

(2) To improve the quality of teaching, and strengthen the quality control. Colleges and universities should impart knowledge and educate people, educate people through administration, educate people through services, and establish a scientific concept of quality and development, cultivate college students to grow up and become talents, and improve the comprehensive professional quality of students.

(3) To increase the efforts in guidance, and change

the concept of employment. Colleges and universities should penetrate the employment guidance to the whole process of education and teaching, and also strengthen the construction of employment guidance organization to form an employment work system integrated with the employment management, education, guidance and service into one, thus fundamentally improving the employment competitiveness of college students.

#### 4.4.4 Graduates

With the gradual decline in the employment rate of college graduates, some college students produce a negative employment concept. The transformation of the employment concept of contemporary college students is the key to solve the college students' employment difficulties. Liberation of the constraint of traditional thinking should practically complete the following aspects:

- (1) To stand on solid ground, and moderately adjust the employment expectations, and do not give too much expectation.
- (2) To be not limited to targeted major, and strive to exercise ourselves as common talents.
- (3) To abandon the deep-rooted concept of "iron rice bowl", do not blindly pursue into the state-owned units, and have a correct understanding of the "iron rice bowl" and "recruitment".
- (4) To make full use of the national policy to achieve entrepreneurship and ideal value of life.
- (5) To do career planning well to achieve the overall development of the individuals.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Due to the expansion of university enrollment, unreasonable economic structure and unbalanced regional economy, the employment problems of graduates become increasingly obvious. This paper analyzes the impact of China's economic structure on the college students' employment from three aspects: ownership economic structure, industrial economic structure and regional economic structure, and then puts forward the relevant solutions from four aspects: to perfect the macro-control mechanism of the government, to promote the optimization of corporate behavior, to improve the universities to help college students' employment, and to enhance the college students' employment capacities.

At present, China is improving the economic system and promoting the reform of social and political system, and new problems will continue to emerge. Due to limited ability of the author, there are still many problems and shortcomings to be solved: (1) in the analysis of reasons for the social and economic structure, there are correlation researches on the ownership economic structure, industrial structure and

regional economy, but it is very difficult to determine the quantized value of college students' employment, such as the correlation measure between the regional economy and college students' employment; (2) There are many influencing factors of ownership economic structure, industrial structure and regional economy, which need to be further researched.

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