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An Empirical Study on the Influencing Factors of "Slow Employment" of Higher Vocational Graduates Based on Correlation Test and Structural Equation Model

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Abstract

China is in a new era of rapid economic development, and the popularization of higher education is at a critical stage for college graduates to choose a career. Based on the current higher vocational graduates and the students graduated from 38 higher vocational colleges in Zhejiang Province from 2019 to 2021, this study used correlation test and structural equation model verification methods to analyze the factors that can influence the "slow employment" of higher vocational graduates. The results show that social factors, family attributes, college education and personal characteristics have a significant impact on the phenomenon of "slow employment" of higher vocational graduates. Based on this, this paper provides suggestions for effectively coping with the "slow employment" of higher vocational graduates.

Keywords: Slow employment, Higher vocational graduate, Influencing factor, Vocational education

1. Introduction

China is in a new era of rapid economic development, the popularisation of higher education, in the critical stage of college graduates' career choice. The current imbalance of supply and demand in the employment talent market, the political system reform, and the expansion of colleges and universities have had a huge impact on college students' employment. As of 2022, college graduates reached 10.76 million people, according to the data, the number of 2022 freshmen posting different echelons of the city increased year-on-year, accounting for 88.41%. According to the '2023 College Student Employability Research Report' by Wisdomlink Recruitment, the proportion of people choosing 'slow employment' increased from 15.9% in 2022 to 18.9%, an increase of 3.0%. According to the video conference on the employment and

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entrepreneurship work of graduates of national colleges and universities in 2024, the number of college graduates is expected to reach 11.79 million in 2024. The growing number of graduates has led to an increase in employment pressure, which has led to a gradual increase in the number of 'slow employment', which has been studied in the literature, focusing on undergraduate and postgraduate students, whose reasons for choosing 'slow employment' mainly include increased pressure to find a job, and changes in the educational environment, The reasons for their choice of 'slow employment' mainly include increased job-seeking pressure, changes in the educational environment, and unclear career planning, etc. However, as a special part of college graduates, the logic of 'slow employment' and the mechanism for solving the problem are not clear.

The Ministry of Education has instructed colleges and universities around the world to set up working accounts to help graduates with employment difficulties, and local departments have strengthened the implementation of policies to ensure that work is constantly on schedule and services are constantly available. For graduates who are 'slow to find employment', many regions have issued policies and regulations to support employment. Therefore, on the basis of existing research, this study will clarify the employment concept of high vocational graduates who are slow to find employment, and study what factors cause high vocational graduates to choose 'slow employment', so as to provide high vocational graduates with employment assistance. The study will also provide recommendations on employment of higher vocational graduates, so as to promote high-quality employment of higher vocational graduates.

2. Literature Review and Modelling

2.1 Literature Review

Existing research on 'slow employment' mainly focuses on the definition of the concept and influencing factors. First of all, 'slow employment' is embodied in foreign countries by the 'gap year' and 'nits'. Gap year mainly refers to the six-month to one-year travelling of college students after graduation through working for accommodation or volunteering in youth hostels, etc. The 'Nyet tribe' refers to the young people who have no stable jobs, no further education, no vocational skills training and are dependent on their families. At present, the domestic academic community has not yet given a unified academic definition of 'slow employment'. Some graduates are neither actively looking for jobs nor continuing their studies after graduation, but are in a long-term "career gap". During this period, they choose to teach and stay at home (Hu, 2022).

In the study of the main influencing factors of slow employment, focusing on domestic research process, scholars more often attribute the problem of 'slow employment' to a variety of factors, not just the personal reasons of college graduates. The causes and countermeasures of "slow employment" of college graduates are discussed from five aspects: severe employment situation, distorted career evaluation, backward career planning and education, high personal job search

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expectations, and side effects of family umbrellas (Li, 2019). The study is mainly carried out from the society, colleges and universities, families and students' personal characteristics.

2.2 Research Hypotheses and Modelling

2.2.1 Research Hypotheses

1) Social factors and slow employment:

The social requirements for higher vocational graduates are gradually increasing, and the social factors are divided into three sub-dimensions: high education level, market supply and demand requirements, and policy support. The requirement of high education level is reflected in the expansion of the society's demand for talents, and the urgent need for higher quality people, so higher vocational graduates need to continue to study to improve their academic level to meet the society's requirements for academic qualifications; The change in market supply and demand requirements refers to the oversupply of graduates, and enterprises have a large choice in recent years, so enterprises can adopt differentiated marketing strategies to increase the requirements for higher vocational graduates; Due to the improvement of economic conditions and the reduction of social pressure, government policies can provide more resources for higher vocational graduates to realize the re-improvement of personal value. Therefore, this paper will propose the following hypotheses:

- H1: Social factors have a important positive influence on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.
- H1a: The educational level requirement has a significant positive impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.
- H1b: Market supply and demand requirements have a significant positive impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.
- H1c: Policy support has a important positive influence on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

2) College education and slow employment:

Universities should reasonably carry out career planning courses and career guidance courses for their students. Construct a curriculum system that meets the needs of society and especially meets the needs of college students' career planning. Dynamically track career planning of university students and guide them to plan (Wang, 2023). In addition, the employment atmosphere of colleges and universities is related to the employment choice of higher vocational graduates, and schools are usually the first step for graduates to contact the society, and schools should actively guide students to find positive jobs. The address of higher vocational colleges can also affect the employment choice, and the educational resources in first- and second-tier cities are superior, which can support graduates to study abroad, etc., and the number of slow employment is also relatively high. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H2: Higher vocational college education has a crucial negative impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

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- H2a: Career guidance has a vital negative impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.
- H2b: School employment atmosphere has a vital negative impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.
- H2c: The location of the school has a crucial negative impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

3) Family attributes and slow employment:

Among the factors of family background, family socioeconomic status significantly and positively affected graduates' preference for "gradual employment", while families with higher socioeconomic status significantly inhibited their preference for "gradual employment" by promoting the accumulation of graduates' explicit human capital (Gao, 2022). Family economic conditions have a good impact on the concept of family employment, and higher vocational graduates with better family economic conditions are often more likely to choose "slow employment". The more families support direct employment, the less likely graduates are to choose "slow employment". On the contrary, the higher the degree of support from families for deferred employment, the more likely graduates are to choose "slow employment, the more likely graduates are to choose "slow employment". Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: Family has a significant good impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

H3a: Household economic foundation has a important positive influence on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

H3b: Family employment concept has a significant positive impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

H3c: Family support has a significant positive impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

4) Personal traits and slow employment:

With the improvement of the country's economic level, people turn to the satisfaction of higherlevel needs, and higher vocational graduates begin to pursue the realization of self-worth, but the understanding of self-value of higher vocational graduates is biased, self-centered, and ignores external pressure (Wang, 2022). With the gradual increase of employment competitiveness, in the face of severe social employment pressure, higher vocational graduates are prone to ignore their own ability problems, only consider their own employment expectations, and have a certain misunderstanding of the value they can create. In addition, the obstacle of psychological factors will become the cause of "slow employment" to a certain extent, so as to escape from the difficulties of reality, and thus enter the state of "slow employment". The career planning and career guidance courses offered by colleges and universities are more inclined to theoretical and universal education, and the actual teaching process lacks pertinence and practicality, and due to the lack of professional and personalized career guidance, students' employment confidence is obviously insufficient (Xie, 2021). Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

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H4: Personal traits have a significant positive impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

H4a: Competitiveness has a important positive impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

H4b: Employment expectation has a remarkable negative impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

H4c: Career planning has a conspicuous positive impact on the slow employment of higher vocational graduates.

2.2.2 Structural Equation Modelling

The hypotheses of the structural model are intended to form a theoretical framework for statistical hypothesis testing, describing the positive or negative relationships between latent variables, and expressing them in the form of road maps. In the evaluation of the impact of social factors on the slow employment of high school graduates in the new employment situation, it is affected by a combination of multiple variables, so it is hypothetical that it is necessary to focus on the relationship between each variable and how to verify it through measurable data. The specific structural model is organised in Fig. 1.



Figure 1. Figure title (Structural equation model

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3. Research Design

3.1 Reliability and Validity Analysis

According to the official website of the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Education, a total of 49 higher vocational colleges in Zhejiang Province were selected as the research objects, and the number of higher vocational schools in each city was sampled according to the official website of the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Education. In view of the validity of questionnaire recovery, the sample size was determined to be n=500 and the sampling ratio was 1.3%.

Through the reliability analysis of SPSSAU software, The following conclusions can be drawn: the overall reliability of the questionnaire is 0.988, which is greater than 0.8, indicating that all items in the questionnaire have good consistency, and the data reliability is ideal, which can be used for further analysis. The KMO value was 0.959, the observed value of the Bartlett spherical test was 26330.701, and the probability of significance p=0.000<0.05 was used for the validity analysis of the scale generated by the questionnaire, indicating that there was a close correlation between the variables and indicating that the questionnaire had structural validity.

3.2 Data Analysis

3.2.1 Correlation Check

The Pearson correlation coefficient was selected as the measurement index selected in this study. 1) Correlation analysis of predictive influencing elements with "social factors":

The results of three social factors: policy support, high education level requirements, and market supply and demand requirements are analysed in Table 1.

factors")		
Pearson related - standard format		
Social factors		
Policy support	0.982*	
High level of education required	0.992*	
Market supply and demand requirements	0.977*	
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01		

Table 1. Table title (Correlation analysis of predictive influencing elements with "social

The correlation coefficient between social factors and policy support was 0.982 and showed a significance of 0.01, and the correlation coefficient between social factors and the requirements of high education level was 0.992, and showed a significance of 0.01 level, and the correlation coefficient value between the market supply and demand requirements was 0.977 and showed a significance of 0.01 level, indicating that there was a significant positive correlation between social factors and policy support, high education level requirements, and market supply and demand requirements.

2) Correlation analysis of predictive influencing elements with "family attributes":

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The correlation analysis between three factors in family attributes, namely family economic base, family employment concept and family support, and family attributes, is shown in Table 2.

 Table 2. Table title (Correlation analysis of predictive influencing factors with "family attributes")

Pearson related - standard format	
Family attributes	
Household economic basis	0.985**
Family employment concept	0.985**
Family support	0.972**
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01	

The correlation coefficient between family attribute and family economic base was 0.985 and showed a significance of 0.01, the correlation coefficient between family employment concept and family employment concept was 0.985 and showed a significance of 0.01, and the correlation coefficient between family support and family support was 0.972 and showed a significance of 0.01 level, indicating that there was a significant positive correlation between family employment concept, family support and family economic base.

3) Correlation analysis of predictive influencing factors with "higher education":

The results of the correlation analysis between the three factors in college education, namely school employment atmosphere, career guidance and school area, are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Table title (Correlation analysis of predictive influencing factors with "higher education")

education /		
Pearson related - standard format		
Higher education		
The employment atmosphere of the school	0.986**	
Career guidance	0.975**	
Regions where schools are run	0.982**	
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01		

The correlation coefficient between college education and school employment atmosphere was 0.986 and showed a significance of 0.01, the correlation coefficient between college education and employment guidance was 0.975 and showed a significance of 0.01, and the correlation coefficient between college education and school employment atmosphere was 0.982 and showed a significance of 0.01, indicating that there was a significant positive correlation between college education and school employment guidance and school region. 4) Correlation analysis of predictive influencing factors with "personal traits":

The three factors of personal characteristics, competitiveness, career planning and school location, are correlated with employment expectations, and the results are shown in Table 4.

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Table 4. Table title (Correlation analysis of predictive influencing factors with "personal

traits")		
Pearson related - standard format		
Personal traits		
Competitiveness	0.976**	
Career planning	0.989**	
Employment expectations	0.988**	
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01		

The correlation coefficient between personal traits and competitiveness was 0.976 and showed a significance of 0.01, the correlation coefficient between personal traits and career planning was 0.989 and showed a significance of 0.01, and the correlation coefficient between personal traits and employment expectations was 0.988 and showed a significance of 0.01, indicating that there was a significant positive correlation between personal traits and career planning, employment expectations and competitiveness.

3.2.2 Structural Equation Model Validation

According to the correction principle of the structural equation, the insignificant causal paths in the model are deleted, the parameter paths are corrected according to the correction index values of the Modification Indicators option, and the modified model is tested again, and the fitness test indexes are obtained as shown in Table 5.

Fitness test index	Ideal standard	Model results	Whether it meets the standard
Chi-square	P > .05 (not significant)	0.758	Meets standard
CMIN/DF (Chi- square Degrees of Freedom Ratio)	< 2.00	0.698	Meets standard
RMSEA	< .05	0.000	Meets standard
GFI	>.90	0.725	Meets standard
RMR	< .05	0.038	Meets standard
CFI	>.90	0.800	Meets standard
IFI	>.90	0.820	Meets standard
PGFI	>.50	0.546	Meets standard

Table 5. Table title (The fit of the model is re-tested after the model has been modified)

The probability value of the model p=0.758>0.05 is not significant, and the ratio between chisquare and degrees of freedom is 0.698<2.000, indicating that the model has a good fit. According to the analysis results, the overall adaptability of the modified model is good, and the adaptability of the model and the data is acceptable.

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1) The path coefficient of the model:

The purpose of this study was to verify the path influence relationship of the regression coefficients among the four main categories of 12 categories: "social factors", "college education", "family attributes" and "personal characteristics". The results of the coefficient calculation with the Amos software are shown in Table 6.

$X \rightarrow Y$ Non- normal path coeffic	ised SE	z (CR value)	р	Normalised path coefficients
Social factors \rightarrow "Slow Employment" 0.224	0.006	36.982	0.000	0.235
Higher education \rightarrow "Slow 0.160 Employment"	0.006	28.704	0.000	0.170
Family attributes \rightarrow "Slow 0.112 Employment"	0.008	14.196	0.000	0.113
Personal traits \rightarrow "Slow 0.046 Employment"	0.007	6.616	0.000	0.049

Table 6. Table title (Summary table of model regression coefficients)

Note. \rightarrow *indicates that the path affects the relationship.*

From the above table, it can be seen that the four main categories have a significant impact on the choice of "slow employment" of higher vocational graduates, which is manifested in the following ways:

When the factors of social factors affect "slow employment", the value of the standardized path coefficient is 0.235>0, and the path shows a significance of 0.01 level (z=36.982, p=0.000<0.01), which indicates that social factors will have a significant positive impact on "slow employment", so the assumption H1 is true;

When the factors of college education affect "slow employment", the normalized path coefficient value is 0.170>0, and this path shows 0.01 level significance (z=28.704, p=0.000<0.01), which indicates that college education will have a significant negative impact on "slow employment", so the assumption H2 is true;

When the family attribute element affects "slow employment", the normalized path coefficient value is 0.113>0, and the path shows a significance of 0.01 level (z=14.196, p=0.000). <0.01), thus indicating that the factors of family attributes will have a significant positive impact on "slow employment", so the hypothesis H3 is true;

When the factors of personal characteristics affect "slow employment", the normalized path coefficient value is 0.049>0, and the path shows a significance of 0.01 (z=6.616, p=0.000<0.01),

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which indicates that the factors of personal characteristics will have a significant positive impact on "slow employment", so the hypothesis H4 is true.

2) The factor loads of the explicit variable:

The greater the factor load value, the greater the variation that the model can explain. In this model, the factor load value is between 0.50 and 0.95, which indicates that its basic adaptability is good. The index factor can represent the constructive characteristics it needs to observe. The factor loads in this study are shown in Table 7.

 Table 7. Table title (Factor loads of the explicit variable)

Regression paths	Scheme 3
Competitiveness \rightarrow Personal traits	0.668
Career guidance \rightarrow College education	0.590
The economic foundation of the family \rightarrow Family attributes	0.597
The level of education required \rightarrow Social factors	0.595
Market supply and demand demand \rightarrow Social factors	0.753
The concept of family employment \rightarrow Family attributes	0.621
The employment atmosphere of the school \rightarrow College education	0.653
Employment expectations \rightarrow Personal traits	0.648
Family support \rightarrow Family attributes	0.598
Regions where schools are run \rightarrow College education	0.572
Policy support \rightarrow Social factors	0.731
Career planning \rightarrow Personal traits	0.666

3) Covariance coefficient between independent variables:

In this study, there are only two independent variables, so there is a covariance path, the covariance coefficient is 0.139, and the significance P value is 0.006 to reach the level of 0.01, which indicates that there is a close correlation between the independent variables, which meets the basic requirements of the structural model for correlation between variables. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Table title	(Covariance	coefficient)
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Covariance paths	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Р
Social factors \rightarrow "Slow Employment"	0.661	0.180	4.729	.001
Higher education \rightarrow "Slow Employment"	0.282	0.167	1.923	.003
Family attributes \rightarrow "Slow Employment"	0.465	0.190	2.879	.000
Personal traits \rightarrow "Slow Employment"	0.253	0.146	2.174	.000

4. Conclusion

According to the study, society, families, colleges and individuals all cause the "graduate underemployment" of higher vocational graduates. Social factors have a positive influence on the

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underemployment of higher vocational graduates, the higher the educational level requirements, the higher the market supply and demand requirements, the greater the degree of policy support for the re-study of higher vocational graduates, and the more people choose "graduates' underemployment". The better the family economic foundation, the more cutting-edge the concept of family employment, the higher the degree of family support, and the more people choose "graduates' underemployment". College education shows a adverse impact on the "graduates' underemployment" of higher vocational graduates, and the more inclined college education is to employment, the more perfect the employment guidance, the stronger the employment atmosphere, and the smaller the number of people who choose "graduates' underemployment". Personal characteristics will also positively affect the "graduate underemployment" of vocational graduates. The more competitive an individual is, the higher their employment expectation, the more complete their career planning, and the more people choose "graduate underemployment".

5. Countermeasures and Suggestions

1) Give play to the important functions of the government and maintain a good environment: Society is a complex system. The economic development of the society, the public opinion and the policy will have an impact on the career choice concept, and "slow employment" of graduates is positively guided, which requires all sectors of society to form a joint force under the overall planning of the government, introduce relevant policies, provide employment opportunities, create a fair and standardized employment ecosystem, and help higher vocational graduates find high-quality and rapid employment,^[4] to ensure that employment services are uninterrupted and work is uninterrupted. Build an employment service technology platform, accurately find out the base number of "slow employment" graduates, and realize accurate job push. In addition, it is necessary to unblock channels for rights protection, build a solid legal barrier for employment equality, and create a fair employment environment.

2) Combine the characteristics of higher vocational education to expand the employment channels reasonably:

College education needs to update the concept of employment work, implement precise policies, do a good job in employment guidance and employment services, and arrange career development courses. Further optimize the indicators of employment quality assessment, and help college students enter the society smoothly through scientific and effective methods. Colleges and universities should focus on the contradiction between supply and demand of talents, adjust disciplines and majors based on demand, and reform the professional curriculum system and update the teaching content in line with demand. At the same time, we will deepen school-enterprise cooperation, and collaboratively improve students' practical application ability. In addition, career education and employment guidance should be strengthened to help students understand themselves deeply and plan their careers reasonably.

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3) Promote career planning with the help of the home-school linkage mechanism:

In order to promote the active employment of graduates, it is inseparable from the strength of families and family members, collect information from various sources, help graduates do a good job in career planning, establish a correct outlook on employment from their original families, carry out good parents' understanding of employment, and integrate employment outlook education into family education. At the same time, we should give our children enough respect, keep pace with the times and set employment expectations, and transform "slow employment" into "fast employment". Strengthen the effective position of reasonable education in the family, so as to further guide the employment and career choice of higher vocational graduates.

4) Stimulate the motivation of higher vocational employment and enhance core competitiveness: Reasonably guide "slow employment", and higher vocational graduates should actively consolidate the rational choice of "employment first and then choose a job" in terms of employment goals; In the process of receiving higher education, higher vocational graduates should change their personal employment requirements according to the changes in the current employment situation, and should evaluate their personal abilities correctly and reasonably.

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