

# Analysis of the Influence of Subject Contests on College Students' Employment

## -- A Case Study of Zhaoqing University

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### Abstract

**Based on the inherent relationship between subject contest and college students' employment, this paper took Zhaoqing University as an example, using the form of questionnaire survey to study subject contest and employment quality of college students from different levels, and analyze the relationship between subject contest and college students' employment awareness and employment quality. Employment quality is examined from two aspects: objective indicators and subjective satisfaction. The analysis results showed that subject contest situation has little correlation with the objective indicators of employment, but is significantly related to the subjective satisfaction of employment. Subject contest plays an important role in job preparation, adaptation, and career success.**

### Keywords

**Subject contest; College students; Employment awareness; Employment quality; Influence.**

## 1. The Introduction

Achieving graduates' high-quality employment is not only the goal of talent training in colleges and universities, but also the requirement of social and economic development. With the promotion of the popularization of higher education in China, the number of college graduates has increased sharply. Coupled with the impact of the economic downturn, the employment situation of college students has become more and more serious. The difficulty of college students' employment has become the focus of the whole society. [1]

Every graduation season, there is often a contradictory phenomenon in the job market. On the one hand, graduates feel uncertain about their future although they are running around but cannot find the job they want. On the other hand, many enterprises are short of talents and still cannot recruit satisfactory talents even given high salaries. The superficial reasons for this phenomenon are the disconnection between school specialty setting and social needs, as well as students' inaccuracy in positioning themselves and high expectations. The deep-seated reason lies in the mismatch between enterprises' ability requirements and graduates' skills.

With the increase of macro employment pressure, the following issues need to attract attention and in-depth thinking: how to accurately position universities, how to establish appropriate talent training model, how to ensure that graduates can obtain high-quality employment, and so on. At present, the employment rate is generally regarded as one of the main indicators to measure the quality of talent cultivation in schools, which is worth discussing. The employment

rate reflects only the quantity of employment, but not the quality of employment (structure, level and nature, etc.). For individual graduate, the quality of employment is obviously more important. Low quality employment, personal comprehensive quality cannot be improved, treatment is naturally difficult to improve, the sense of satisfaction is poor. As enterprises enjoy the benefits brought by cheap labor, they do not pay attention to the investment in the improvement of employees' skills and technology research and development. In the long run, it is inevitable that sustainable development cannot be achieved.

The practice in recent years showed that subject contests are beneficial to the cultivation of college students' innovative practical ability. Many college teachers or educational administrators have carried out researches on the relationship between subject contests and talent training quality, but they mainly focused on the following aspects: effects of subject contest on discipline construction, teaching reform and talent training mode. Existing literature reflects that these studies are mostly generalizations and few empirical studies [1-7]. Based on the internal relationship between subject contest and employment of college students, this paper takes Zhaoqing University graduates as the questionnaire survey object, uses the obtained data to empirical analysis method to study the relationship between subject contest and employment quality of college students, and explores the feasible path for colleges to improve the employment quality of graduates.

## **2. The Internal Relationship Between Subject Contest and Employment**

### **2.1. Their Objectives Are Consistent**

In terms of content and nature, the working objects of subject contest and employment are the same, and they are all college students. Subject contest can test students' mastery and application of professional knowledge, and can play a role in training students' practical innovation and hands-on ability, which is difficult to do in classroom teaching. Through participating in subject contests, students can be inspired to love their major and desire to learn and master professional knowledge, and promote the improvement of students' comprehensive quality and overall growth. The main problems to be solved in the employment of college students are to strengthen students' professional interest, establish professional spirit, recognize the sense of social responsibility, and guide students how to fulfill their post responsibilities after employment. Although they belong to different systems and have different goals and problems to solve [2,3], subject contest and employment work are both targeted at college students and have the same overall goal. They are both committed to cultivating qualified talents to meet social needs.

### **2.2. Their Work Complements Each Other**

The characteristics of college students' employment work are complicated in content, long in front, and wide in scope. Many college students have the problems of self-awareness barriers and low degree of discipline and professional confidence. If the work is not carried out in place and the antenna is not in-depth, it is an extravagant hope to improve the effectiveness of employment work. By introducing quality-oriented education into the whole process of subject contests, students can broaden their disciplinary horizon, activate their thinking mode, exercise their ability to find and solve problems, and cultivate their team spirit and awareness of communication and cooperation through participating in subject contests, which will certainly be of great help to solve the employment problem smoothly [4]. At the same time, in the employment work of college students, the promotion role of the results of subject contests in employment should be paid attention to, and the successful employment cases of students winning subject contests should be vigorously publicized, which can motivate other students

to actively participate in subject contests, improve their comprehensive quality and ability, and enhance their employment competitiveness [5].

The purpose of subject contest is to improve the professional skills and innovative spirit of the participating students and improve their comprehensive quality [6]. Subject contest is not only the carrier to promote students to combine theory with practice, but also the experience and improvement of students' life experience. Excellent results in the contest is gratifying, not ideal results can also be frustrated education. In the process of taking part in the contest, students will continue to improve their comprehensive quality and ability, through efforts to obtain the ideal ranking, will enhance their personal confidence, for the future job interview to lay a good foundation. By analyzing the employment situation of students, colleges can realize that subject contest is an important driver to promote the employment of students, so that colleges can adjust the relevant policies of subject contest, make contest activities track the development of professional industry, and take the improvement of students' professional skills and comprehensive quality as an important consideration of subject contest.

### 3. Analysis of the Impact of Subject Contest on Employment

#### 3.1. Analysis of the Impact of Subject Contest on Students' Career Planning and Employment Awareness

Clarity of career planning largely determines whether college students have clear goals and can keep a clear mind in the process of career selection and employment [7]. In order to analyze the impact of subject contests on college students' career planning and employment awareness, we selected 200 students who participated in different types of subject contests at different levels from sophomore to senior year of mechanical engineering majors in Zhaoqing University (hereinafter referred to as the sample group) , and 200 students who have not participated in any subject contest ( hereinafter referred to as the control group), conducted a questionnaire survey on career planning and employment awareness, and the results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Survey on college students' career planning

grade group	Sophomore	Junior year	Senior year
Sample group	5%	33%	80%
The control group	6%	19%	45%

(The data in the table shows the proportion of students with career planning)

According to the survey data, the proportion of sophomores with career plans is very low (less than 10%), regardless of whether they have participated in subject contests or not. There was no significant difference between the two groups. In the group of junior and senior students, the proportion of students with career planning in the sample group increased significantly, reaching 33% and 80% respectively, both higher than 19% and 45% in the control group. This shows that most of the students who participated in the subject contests at school have relatively clear career plans and know their future career paths.

Table 2 shows the survey results of college students' employment awareness. The results show that students in the sample group have a higher degree of identification with the concept of innovative education, accept the promotion of this concept for employment, and believe that learning and innovation ability is an advantage in employment. In the work practice, we also found that students who participated in subject contests had significantly improved their

innovation consciousness and ability through the contest training process, and these students were more active in choosing careers. It can be seen from Table 2 that 83% of students in the sample group have the idea of starting their own business after graduation, which is significantly higher than 34% of the control group. This situation shows that the students who participate in subject contests have improved their awareness of employment, expanded their thinking of employment and higher confidence in their own ability.

**Table 2.** Survey of employment awareness of college students

Advantages of employment group	The ability to learn	The innovation ability	Human behavior	The independent employment
Sample group	66%	81%	42%	83%
The control group	45%	39%	78%	34%

### 3.2. Analysis of the Impact of Subject Contests on Employment Quality

In order to analyze the impact of subject contests on employment quality, we selected graduates of Zhaoqing University in 2019 who have been employed as the survey object for a questionnaire survey. Two hundred questionnaires were sent out, of which 186 were valid, with a recovery rate of 93%.

#### 3.2.1. Questionnaire Design

Based on literature [8,9], we designed a questionnaire with 10 questions, covering students' basic information, participation in subject contests and current employment quality, etc.

Questions about subject contests are divided into two aspects: one is whether you have participated in subject contests in school, and the other is the level of participation. The level of participation mainly inspects the level, category, times and harvest of the participation. The level of contest is divided into national, provincial and university-level subject contests. The categories include knowledge (such as National College Students Mathematical Contest in Modeling), innovation (such as National College Students Mechanical Innovation Design Contest) and practice (such as "Challenge Cup" National College Students Entrepreneurship Plan Contest). According to the relationship with the employment quality, these indicators are assigned 1-3 points respectively.

The quality of employment is quantified as objective quality indicators and subjective satisfaction indicators. The objective quality indicators are divided into five aspects, namely, major matching degree, monthly salary, working environment, development space and insurance purchase, and assigns 1-4 points according to grade, with the lowest 1 point increasing successively. The subjective satisfaction indicators are divided into satisfaction with the workplace, salary and working environment. The grade is determined according to the principle of less weak and more strong, and the weakest degree is the lowest grade, which is recorded as 1 point and successively increased.

#### 3.2.2. Statistical Description of Sample Data

By calculating the average score and standard deviation of the sample graduates participating in subject contest, the average score of whether the graduates participated in contests was 1.33 (the survey topic was "Have you participated in subject contests during school", No =1 , Yes =2 ).The proportion of students who have participated in at least one subject contest is less than 50% , indicating that the enthusiasm of students to participate in subject contests is not high. The average score of the contest level is 1.89, which is low.

The objective quality and subjective satisfaction scores of sample employment are listed in Table 3 and Table 4 respectively.

**Table 3.** Objective quality description of sample employment

indicators	Counterpart degrees	Monthly salary	The work environment	Development space	Insurance purchased	Average objective score of employment quality
average	2.69	2.11	2.75	2.73	3.08	2.67

**Table 4.** Description of sample employment subjective satisfaction

indicators	unit	salary	The work environment	Mean subjective satisfaction score
average	2.41	2.03	2.62	2.35

It can be seen from Table 3 and Table 4 that the mean values of objective quality and subjective satisfaction scores are 2.67 and 2.35 respectively, and the mean value of overall employment quality is calculated to be 2.51. In terms of the overall sample of graduates, they are basically near the middle site, indicating that the overall employment quality is above the middle level. The mean value of objective quality is greater than that of subjective satisfaction, indicating that the sample graduates have low satisfaction with employment quality. Among them, the satisfaction with salary is the lowest, indicating that compared with other requirements, students have higher expectations for salary.

### 3.2.3. Correlation Analysis Between Subject Contest and Employment Quality

SPSS software was used to analyze the correlation between subject contest and employment quality, and the results are described as follows.

#### A. Correlation analysis of contest participation and employment quality

The Pearson correlation coefficient between contest participation and objective employment quality was 0.051, indicating a weak correlation between contest participation and objective employment quality. The Pearson correlation coefficient between contest participation and subjective satisfaction of employment is 0.198, and the significance index was  $0.00 < 0.01$ , indicating that contest participation was significantly correlated with subjective satisfaction of employment. Students who have participated in subject contests have higher subjective satisfaction of employment. The Pearson correlation coefficient between objective quality of employment and subjective satisfaction of employment is 0.326, and the significance index is  $0.00 < 0.01$ , indicating that the two are significantly correlated.

#### B. Correlation analysis of contest level and employment quality

The Pearson correlation coefficient between contest level and objective quality of employment was 0.021, and the significance index was  $0.615 > 0.01$ , indicating that there was no significant correlation between contest level and objective quality of employment. The Pearson correlation coefficient between contest level and subjective satisfaction of employment was 0.329, and the significance index was  $0.00 < 0.01$ , indicating a significant correlation between the two. The Pearson correlation coefficient between objective quality of employment and subjective satisfaction of employment is 0.408, and the significance index is  $0.00 < 0.01$ , indicating that the two are significantly correlated. Objective quality index affects subjective satisfaction factors to a large extent. The correlation coefficients of the two to the overall employment quality are 0.812 and 0.905 respectively, indicating that subjective satisfaction of employment has a greater impact on the overall employment quality.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. The survey results show that college students' enthusiasm and participation in subject contests are not high. On the one hand, the reason is that students themselves lack of understanding of subject contest, lack of motivation to participate; On the other hand, it may be that colleges do not pay enough attention to subject contests and do not establish a perfect incentive mechanism.

B. Subject contests help students to make clear personal career plans and have a clearer understanding of their future career paths. Students who have participated in subject contests have expanded and improved their employment awareness and thinking, and have stronger confidence in their own ability.

C. According to the statistical results of sample data, the objective quality of employment is 2.67, the subjective satisfaction of employment is 2.35, and the overall quality of employment is 2.51, which is above the average level. The correlation coefficient between subjective satisfaction of employment and the overall employment quality is 0.905, which is higher than the objective employment quality, indicating that subjective satisfaction of employment has a greater impact on the overall employment quality. This situation shows that on the one hand, graduates can find more satisfactory jobs; On the other hand, graduates are still unable to accurately position themselves and find suitable positions in the job market.

D. Whether graduates participate in the contest and the level of participation have little correlation with the objective quality of employment, but have significant correlation with the subjective satisfaction of employment. This shows that employers can not see the level of college students' ability only by the award certificate in the recruitment process, and employers do not pay attention to some contests with low social recognition. Accordingly, if graduates can correctly position themselves and keep a good and peaceful attitude in the process of job hunting, they will have more chances to win in the fierce job hunting contest.

Subject contests can promote the interaction between teaching and learning and stimulate students' initiative in learning. Colleges should establish and improve sound incentive mechanism, actively organize students to participate in subject contests, use contests to stimulate students' self-learning and research spirit to overcome difficulties, develop innovative thinking, establish team awareness and collaborative spirit, and exercise the ability to discover, analyze and solve problems, enhance professional skills, improve their comprehensive quality, comprehensively enhance employment competitiveness, and promote high-quality employment of college students.

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