Innovation Economics and Management Research (IEMR)
Volume 11, Issue 2 (2026). ISSN：2949-1304

The Continuity and Transformation of Education on University Students' Employment Perspectives in the Context of New-quality Productive Forces

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ABSTRACT
This paper focuses on "new-quality productive forces" as a core variable and systematically explores the interactive relationship between this concept and education on university students' employment perspectives. The study analyzes how the new-quality productive forces are profoundly reshaping the employment landscape and reveals the structural contradictions between the new competency requirements driven by these forces and the current employment attitudes of college students. Building on this analysis and grounded in the dialectical logic of "change" and "constancy," the paper proposes that education on employment attitudes should undergo systematic reform to promptly respond to the developmental demands of the new-quality productive forces, while remaining steadfast in its core educational mission. This approach aims to provide guidance for employment attitude education in higher education institutions.

Keywords: *New-quality productive forces, Education on employment perspectives, Heritage, Transformation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

As the new wave of the scientific and technological revolution and industrial revolution sweeps across the globe, the driving forces behind economic and social development have undergone a transformative leap forward, giving rise to new forms of productive forces. Their root lies in the leading role of scientific and technological innovation [1]. New forms of productive forces, represented by artificial intelligence, biomanufacturing, and the low-altitude economy, are accelerating the evolution and transformation of the employment landscape for university students. In this context, a major challenge facing us is how to guide university students in timely adjusting their views on employment, thereby enabling them to align themselves with the rapidly evolving new forms of productive forces.

2. THE RESHAPING AND CHALLENGES POSED BY NEW-QUALITY PRODUCTIVE FORCES TO THE EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE

The development of new-quality productive forces will inevitably give rise to new requirements and changes in the job market, organizational work models, and worker competencies, as highlighted in the following three aspects:

First, restructure the supply-and-demand dynamics in the job market. This is particularly evident in two ways: first, new-quality productive forces simultaneously replace and create jobs, presenting opportunities for college graduates while also posing unavoidable challenges. Currently, new-quality productive forces—represented by digital technology—have already had a significant impact on the job market, as evidenced by changes in the number of jobs, employment structure, work environment, and employment formats. Their main characteristics include rapid change, innovative

forms, and intelligent operations; moreover, the rate at which new jobs are created lags far behind the rate at which old ones disappear. [2] Second, new-quality productive forces have increased uncertainty and instability in the employment environment, heightening the risks university students face during the job search process. This requires higher education institutions to keep pace with the new realities of the job market by updating their education on students' employment outlooks, thereby guiding students to correctly understand the ever-changing job market.

As a new wave of technological and industrial revolution sweeps across the globe, the driving forces behind economic and social development are undergoing a leapfrog transformation, giving rise to new-quality productive forces, which are rooted in the leading role of scientific and technological innovation [1]. New-quality productive forces—represented by artificial intelligence, biomanufacturing, and the low-altitude economy—are accelerating the evolution and transformation of the employment landscape for college students. In this context, a major challenge facing us is how to guide college students in adjusting their employment attitudes in a timely manner so that they can adapt to the rapidly evolving new-quality productive forces.

Second, transform organizational structures and collaboration models. On the one hand, new technologies and methods are driving new ways of operating within organizations. New-quality productive forces have given rise to many new business formats, models, and scenarios, profoundly impacting employment practices. This is most evident in emerging industries creating new jobs and professions; new-quality productive forces are leading to more flexible employment relationships, and platform-based recruitment is continuously improving employment efficiency. [3] On the other hand, organizational culture places greater emphasis on rapid responsiveness and human-machine collaboration. In particular, the development of artificial intelligence is empowering various industrial scenarios, accelerating organizational growth and significantly enhancing operational efficiency. This requires college students to promptly understand and identify market opportunities and future industry trends, as well as proactively adapt their employment mindset and attitudes to new work arrangements—such as remote work, flexible employment, and human-machine collaboration.

Third, upgrade the standards for talent competencies and qualities. Amid the rapid development of new-quality productive forces, on the one hand, enterprises have an increasing demand for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary talent. New-quality productive forces require advanced scientific knowledge, technology, and strong innovative capabilities, which necessitates that college students cultivate a strong thirst for knowledge and exploratory skills during their studies, enabling them to demonstrate strong adaptability and creativity when facing new employment scenarios. On the other hand, the development of new-quality productive forces places new demands on college students' humanistic literacy, scientific literacy, and, in particular, their artificial intelligence literacy. General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that "new-quality productive forces are, by their very nature, green productive forces" [4]. This requires college students to embrace green technology and sustainable development concepts, as well as to possess a deep sense of patriotism and a steadfast commitment to the ethical principle of "technology for the common good."

3. ANALYSIS OF THE MISMATCH BETWEEN THE DEMANDS OF NEW-QUALITY PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND COLLEGE GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT PERSPECTIVES

The vigorous rise of the new-quality productive forces marks a profound transformation in the paradigm of economic development, imposing unprecedented, high-level demands on the structure and quality of human capital. However, the current state of employment readiness, value orientations, and career decision-making logic among college graduates have not yet achieved effective synchronization or deep alignment with this historic transformation. The systemic tension between the two constitutes a key aspect of the core contradiction in the current job market. This contradiction is not a one-dimensional imbalance but a complex phenomenon deeply embedded in the talent development system, individual cognitive structures, and the operational mechanisms of the labor market. It can be analyzed specifically from the following two key dimensions.

First, there is a structural contradiction between the supply of skills and industrial demand,

manifested as a significant gap between "inadequate preparation" and "rising requirements."

From an objective, macro perspective, a significant mismatch in pace and a disconnect have emerged between the rapid iteration of the technology chain, the transformation and upgrading of the industrial chain, and the cultivation and supply of the existing talent pool. Adjustments to college major catalogs, updates to course content, and reforms to practical training systems often lag behind the pace of emerging industries—such as artificial intelligence and green energy—in both speed and depth. This has led to a structural mismatch between the qualifications and skills of graduates and the actual demands of cutting-edge market positions, which is the underlying institutional cause of the "frictional unemployment" experienced by some graduates.

At the same time, from a micro, individual perspective, many graduates also face challenges in terms of their own initiative. The long-standing inertia of exam-oriented education has caused some students to develop an awareness of career planning relatively late and lack the motivation for independent exploration. Their skill development is often confined to a single disciplinary field, leaving them lacking the interdisciplinary knowledge integration skills, digital tool application abilities, and critical innovative thinking necessary to tackle complex problems. This "narrowing" of their knowledge structure and "shortfall" in core competencies leave them feeling ill-equipped when faced with new professional roles—driven by new-quality productive forces and emphasizing versatility and creativity. Consequently, the negative effects of macro-level structural mismatches are amplified in their individual job-seeking experiences, creating a mutually reinforcing friction between talent supply and demand.

Second, roots in the fundamental conflict between value systems and industry characteristics, this manifests as an inherent tension between a "mindset of stability" and the "essence of change."

The essence of new-quality productive forces lies in disruptive innovation and dynamic uncertainty; it requires practitioners to possess a pioneering spirit—one that embraces change, dares to make mistakes, and delights in exploration—along with entrepreneurial resilience. However, a look at the collective employment mindset of today's graduates reveals an increasingly strong preference for risk avoidance and stability. According to the "2024 College Graduate Employability Survey Report" released by Zhaopin, as many as 51% of surveyed graduates listed "stability is most important" as a key consideration in their job search—a figure that has risen sharply by ten percentage points compared to the previous year [5]. This clearly reflects a strong desire to seek "safe havens" within the public sector or traditional positions characterized by monopoly status and job security, against the backdrop of increasing economic uncertainty. Alongside this, the phenomena of "slow employment," "delayed employment," and even "non-employment" are becoming increasingly prominent, reflecting the wait-and-see and hesitant mindset among some young people—driven by unclear goals and a lack of confidence—as they face a rapidly changing professional landscape. This widespread risk-averse mentality stands in sharp contrast to the inherently high-risk, high-growth, and highly fluid nature of emerging industries.

Furthermore, the report reveals that as many as 71.2% of graduates prioritize "compensation and benefits," highlighting a pronounced short-term utilitarian orientation in their career decisions. This strong demand for immediate financial returns may create a profound conflict with emerging strategic fields—such as basic R&D, the development of core components, and sustainable development projects—where breakthroughs and returns require long-term knowledge accumulation, technical expertise, and patient capital investment. Furthermore, some graduates have unrealistically high expectations regarding starting salaries, job status, and work environments, creating a psychological disconnect with the realities of emerging industries during their startup and growth phases. This not only risks causing them to miss valuable windows of opportunity for development but also exacerbates distortions in the allocation of human resources across industries and regions, hindering the smooth flow of talent toward key innovation sectors.

In summary, the characteristics required of new-quality talent for new-quality productive forces stand in stark contrast to the employment mindset prevalent among some current graduates—marked by "inadequate preparation, a preference for stability over change, and a focus on short-term gains"—creating multiple contradictions ranging from skills to mindset.

4. THE CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION OF EMPLOYMENT EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW-QUALITY PRODUCTIVE FORCES

In 2022, during an inspection tour in Yibin, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that "college graduates should approach employment with a down-to-earth attitude, comprehensively considering their own qualifications and societal needs, and avoid being too picky to settle for anything but the best." In 2024, while presiding over the 14th collective study session of the Political Bureau of the 20th CPC Central Committee, General Secretary Xi Jinping profoundly pointed out that we must begin by resolving the issue of "jobs available but no one to fill them" in order to address the problem of "people available but no jobs for them." The General Secretary's remarks have charted a course for college students to develop rational and pragmatic employment perspectives and for resolving employment challenges. Therefore, in light of the new landscape shaped by the new-quality productive forces, we must, on the one hand, ensure continuity in the cultivation of college students by upholding fundamental educational orientations and standards; on the other hand, we must adapt to the times by fostering employment perspectives aligned with the new-quality productive forces.

First, we must remain steadfast in the fundamental principle of fostering virtue through education and deeply instill the ideals and convictions of serving the nation and achieving personal excellence. In the face of global technological competition and industrial transformation driven by the development of new-quality productive forces, employment education in higher education institutions must first lay a solid ideological foundation, ensuring that the mission of "educating students for the Party and cultivating talent for the nation" is upheld throughout the process. The core lies in strengthening patriotism and mission-oriented education in the new era, guiding students to deeply understand the intrinsic unity between national strategic needs and their personal career development. We must inspire young students to keep the "greater good of the nation" in mind and proactively integrate their personal ideals into the nation's endeavors. In particular, they should, with a strong sense of responsibility toward the times and a mission to build a strong nation, courageously throw themselves into tackling innovation challenges in key fields such as integrated circuits and high-end equipment. This not only provides the talent needed to overcome "chokepoint" technological challenges but also serves as the strategic cornerstone for cultivating individuals capable of shouldering the great responsibility of national rejuvenation and supporting the construction of Chinese-style modernization.

Second, we must uphold our values and cultural foundations to build a strong professional ethos for the new era. The core socialist values serve as the overarching framework for guiding social trends and shaping individual choices, while the fine traditions of Chinese culture provide the rich soil for nurturing the spirit and carrying forward moral values. In the face of changes in the professional environment brought about by new-quality productive forces, career education must firmly uphold these two cornerstones of value, guiding students to deeply understand the specific requirements of core values—such as dedication, integrity, and kindness—in professional contexts, and to consciously draw inspiration from traditional wisdom such as "unceasing self-improvement," "virtue bears all things," and "the harmonious balance of righteousness and profit." Particular emphasis must be placed on the fundamental and noble nature of professional ethics, organically integrating the artisan spirit of hard work and pursuit of excellence—as well as a sense of responsibility that unites personal development with social contribution—into professional studies and career practice. Only in this way can we cultivate workers who not only master advanced skills but also possess a solid core of values and a proactive, hardworking attitude, enabling them to navigate the rapidly changing industrial landscape with integrity and achieve long-term success.

Third, we must foster a mindset that embraces change in employment and put the concept of lifelong learning into practice. In the face of the rapid restructuring of the professional world driven by new-quality productive forces, employment education must guide students to move beyond their traditional reliance on single positions and fixed career paths, and proactively adopt the concept of a "boundary-less career." This means that career development will no longer be confined to a single organization or profession but will instead take the form of dynamic exploration and the accumulation of competencies that span functions, industries, and even geographic regions. To this end, the focus of

education should shift toward cultivating students' high level of career adaptability—that is, the psychological capacity to remain attentive, in control, curious, and confident in the face of uncertainty—enabling them to proactively identify opportunities, flexibly adjust their plans, and courageously pursue career transitions. The foundation of all this lies in internalizing "lifelong learning" as a core way of life and a professional habit. Against the backdrop of rapid technological iteration, new-quality productive forces require students to shift from one-time employment to continuous learning and growth. To maintain their competitiveness and adapt to new employment landscapes, students must be encouraged to embrace the concept of lifelong learning.[6]

Fourth, guide students toward a self-constructed perspective on career development and help them shape their future through proactive engagement. The key to addressing the new-quality productive forces lies in encouraging students to shift from passively receiving employment information to actively constructing their own career paths. Universities should systematically increase the proportion of internships and practical training in cutting-edge industries—not merely by extending their duration, but by enhancing the "cognitive depth" and "constructive effectiveness" of these experiences. Project-based internships should be designed to simulate real-world scenarios in emerging industries, placing students in frontline environments such as artificial intelligence R&D, green technology applications, and high-end manufacturing, where they can gain firsthand insight into the operational logic, competency requirements, and value orientations of the new-quality productive forces while solving practical problems. Through this immersive practical experience, students can move beyond abstract concepts and, through "learning by doing," gradually internalize a corresponding employment mindset—understanding that flexibility is preferable to stability, the value of innovation outweighs repetitive labor, and lifelong growth is more important than short-term compensation. At the same time, education must reinforce the concept of "early preparation," guiding lower-year students to begin career exploration early on and purposefully accumulate interdisciplinary skills and project experience. In this way, before the new-quality productive forces are fully rolled out, students will have already achieved the critical alignment between their personal knowledge systems and career mindsets, thereby taking the initiative in their career development.

In summary, in the face of profound transformations driven by new-quality productive forces and the entirely new demands placed on talent in the new era, college students' attitudes toward employment urgently need to keep pace with the times. This requires higher education institutions, in their education on employment values, to not only accurately uphold the "constant" nature of their original mission in nurturing talent but also proactively respond to the "changes" brought about by the times, thereby seeking a dynamic balance between the constant and the changing.

5. CONCLUSION

In summary, the rapid development of new productive forces is currently reshaping the employment landscape, which will inevitably place higher demands on employment-oriented education in higher education institutions. In response to this contemporary challenge, it is neither appropriate to simply extend the inertia of traditional approaches nor to remain confined to providing rigid guidance on concepts; rather, systematic innovation is required in educational philosophy, content, and methodology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding Project: General Research Project for the Employment and Entrepreneurship of College Students in Beijing Higher Education Institutions in 2026, "Research on the Alignment Between the Supply and Demand for the Employment Competencies of Foreign Language Majors in the Era of Artificial Intelligence—An Empirical Analysis Based on Surveys of Employer Needs" (Project No. jycy202640); Principal Investigator: Qu Na

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