

# Employment Opportunities for Degree Holder in the Post-Pandemic Era: Basis for Manpower Recruitment and Selection Policy

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## Abstract

Since January 2020, a new coronavirus has triggered a global outbreak. As the global economy has expanded outside China, it has grown increasingly unstable and unpredictable, making it challenging to find job and thrive economically and socially. As a result, graduates faced uncertainty in the employment market, particularly during the outbreak. "Employment" was used more than any other phrase in the government's 2020 strategy report. The study advocated for a concerted effort to sustain and grow employment, as well as a tried-and-true framework for stability, employment, and social security. Furthermore, employment was the main goal shared by the "six stable" and "six guaranteed" important works after the pandemic of 2021.

The pandemic impacted students who had yet to apply to graduate school. Parallel to this, contemporary professional progression entailed some degree of uncertainty and unpredictability, making career changes necessary for personal development. Professional adaptation, defined as "the individual's preparedness and coping resources when confronting the uncertainty and complexity brought on by career transformation," has the potential to have a substantial influence on professional growth. Adaptability to changing situations and possibilities was essential for professional success.

Academics provided proof that adaptability was necessary for professional achievement. Furthermore, to address the issue of employment, government and private sector job recruiting practices must be re-evaluated in order to tackle long-term unemployment problems. To fight unemployment, management must focus on job creation and vocational training, as well as enhancing the work environment, growing employment, and optimizing the economic structure. In addition, several research found that when respondents were categorized based on their profile, their estimate of the effect of adopting human resource management remained consistent. As a result, the researcher performed a study to better understand the issue and provide recommendations for potential remedies.

*Keywords: Human resource management, Employment, Career Development, Pandemic, Students*

## Introduction

Since January 2020, the world has been experiencing a pandemic caused by a new coronavirus. Graduates impacted by the pandemic faced many unknowns in today's competitive work environment. The government compiled a report on its goals for the year 2020, and the phrase "employment" occurred more often than any other term. The ability to come up with concentrated effort to sustain and grow employment, as well as the adoption of a tried-and-true framework for providing stability, employment, and social security, were all things that should be done. Also, these things should all be at the top of the list because they deserve it.

Given that, employment continued to be the top priority even after the pandemic that occurred in 2021. It was the only aim that was shared by both the "six stable" and the "six guaranteed" important works. Considering this, it was both theoretically and practically essential to analyze the current employment situation of recent college graduates, considering the current epidemic. This was to identify the obstacles these graduates faced on the job market and to investigate how they could best alter their careers in response

to the situation. In addition, it was essential to analyze the current employment situation of recent college graduates, given the current epidemic. This could be of use in recognizing the challenges that recently graduated students experience, evaluating how best recent grads could obtain jobs, and devising solutions to these problems.

In addition, the expansion of COVID-19 outside of China has made the global economy more unstable and unpredictable. The circumstances for going back to work, as well as those for economic and social progress, were tough and complex, and the challenges faced were unprecedented. Juniors who have not yet submitted their application for admission to a graduating program and seniors were impacted by the crisis.

Creating a career in the modern world involved a significant amount of uncertainty and unpredictability. The ability of a person to adapt professionally, which was described as "the individual's readiness and coping resources when facing the uncertainty and complexity brought about by career transformation," could have a substantial influence on the professional growth of an individual. The ability to make significant changes in one's professional trajectory was a critical talent in establishing oneself. The capability to adjust one's behavior in response to new challenges and openings was among the most essential traits for professional achievement. According to experts, the capacity to adjust well to shifting conditions was the single most important factor in determining professional success.

The China Bureau of Statistics estimated that 8.74 million persons in the country would have their bachelor's degrees or above in 2020. This was a rise of 400,000 graduates over the previous year, making it the largest number of college graduates in the annals of Chinese history. The Chinese government, as part of its commitment to prevent and control the epidemic, moved quickly to establish several employment initiatives to provide graduates with stable job opportunities. The centralized power of the state made it possible for these policies to be implemented quickly on all levels. However, as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 epidemic, China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security has predicted that the country's jobless rate would continue to hover around 4.4% until 2020.

Therefore, policies governing employment in both the public and private sectors must be reexamined to ascertain the most effective means of dealing with the problem of unemployment over the long run. Management tackled other difficulties, such as unemployment, by measures like the development of new jobs and the expansion of vocational training programs. This was in addition to enhancing the employment environment, boosting careers, and optimizing the economy's structure.

## **Methodology**

A research design was the set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analyzing measures of the variables specified in the research problem. The descriptive research method was used in gathering the needed information for this study. This method enabled the researcher to interpret the theoretical meaning of the findings and hypothesis development for further studies.

## **Population and Sample**

The population under study referred to the specific group of individuals to whom a researcher intended to apply the findings and conclusions of the study in a broader context. The term "population" referred to a broad collection of individuals, institutions, or entities that have one or more common traits which served as the subject of research. Also, it referred to a collection of instances or entities that satisfied a given criterion (Kenton, 2019).

## **Research Locale**

The study was conducted in Guangdong, China, in five (5) schools: Guangdong University of Science and Technology, Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology, Guangdong Vocational and Technical University of Business and Technology, Dong Guan Polytechnic, and Shenzhen University. The researcher selected this place since the researcher was a local citizen of the country.

## **Results and Recommendation**

### **1.The Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

1.1.Age. Most respondents belonged to the age bracket of 20-40, with a total frequency of 364 or 91.22%. Meanwhile, only 35, or 8.78%, were 41 and above.

1.2.Gender. Most of the respondents who participated in this study were female, with a total frequency of 204 or 51.13%. Comparably, there were only 195 or 48.87% male.

1.3.Educational Status. This study had 316 respondents, or 79.20%, with college degrees; 71, or 17.79%, with a master's degree; and 12, or 3.01%, with a doctoral degree.

## **2.The Status of Degree Holders in the Post-Pandemic Era**

2.1.Job Market. The status of degree holders in the post-pandemic era based on the job market was highly in-demand. The grand mean of 3.92 implied that most of the respondents agreed that in the job market: (1) The quality of education was a priority; (2) The graduates had an opportunity to explore works beyond their geographical locations; (3) The level of opportunities increased; (4) The digital learning skills were improved; (5) Promoted flexible and adaptable working hour; (6) The job competitions increased; and (7) Enhanced graduates' marketability and adaptability.

2.2.Remote Work. The status of degree holders in the post-pandemic era based on remote work increased. The grand mean of 3.94 implied that the respondents agreed that the following situations happened: (1) The problem of commuting time was eliminated; (2) The college graduates' work productivity increased; (3) The graduates were flexible to adopt remote work; (4) The digital and communication skills were improved; (5) The acceptance and normalization of remote work across industries accelerated; (6) The graduates were encouraged to be more flexibility into work-life balance; and (7) The industry offered a greater workability from the comfort of their home.

2.3.Skills in Demand. The status of degree holders in the post-pandemic era accelerated based on the skills in demand. The grand mean of 3.93 showed that the respondents agreed that the employees could collaborate with others and build good relationships in the company. They also possessed strong written and communication skills and demonstrated strong interpersonal skills. Moreover, they demonstrated proficiency and efficiency in using digital tools, software, and other online platforms. They could easily adopt the dynamic work environment and display the ability to plan, prioritize, and manage tasks. Lastly, employees were able to help create virtual experiences that were similar to those seen in the real world.

2.4.Demand-driven Graduates. The status of degree holders in the post- pandemic era based on the demand-driven graduates increased. The grand mean of 3.97 showed that the respondents agreed that the degree holders could demonstrate skills and adaptability to potential employers. They could also show competitiveness within the job market demands and support changes that improve the company's overall functioning. Further, they enhanced the competencies to accept new work assignments and employed a dynamic and work-based pedagogy to improve competencies. Finally, they could also focus on their skills and increase their desire for career and professional development.

2.5.Networking and Internship. The status of degree holders in the post-pandemic era based on networking and internship was highly in demand. The grand mean of 3.96 confirmed that the respondents agreed that during the post-pandemic era, the degree holders established an online presence through LinkedIn. They connected with professionals from different industries and attended industry events that brought professionals together. Also, they took advantage of the internship opportunity to get work experience in the firm. They engaged with individuals who could provide career suggestions and connect with alums working in the desired company. Lastly, they customized efforts to reflect the current circumstances of the industries.

## **3.The Assessment of the Respondents in the Employment Opportunities of Degree Holders in the Post-Pandemic Era**

3.1.Knowledge. The respondents' assessment of the employment opportunities of degree holders in terms of knowledge increased. The grand mean of 3.92 showed that the respondents agreed that the graduates' soft skills were improved. They prioritized the development of their skills and knowledge gained from school. They also gained knowledge throughout college through online and offline learning delivery methods in their school. Moreover, the classroom learning variables were significant with the COVID-19 effect. Thus, they observed consistency that indicated global learning. Further, the pandemic outbreak improved the current labor market participation and expectations about post-college labor outcomes. Lastly, the knowledge gained in an offline lesson was valuable in an online career and work-from-home activity.

3.2.Skills. The respondents' assessment of the employment opportunities of degree holders in terms of skills improved. The grand mean of 3.91 revealed that respondents agreed on the following situations: (1) Work From Home (WFH) developed interactive skills and improved self-efficacy; (2) Employees demonstrated good leadership while encouraging others and embracing feedback from colleagues and superiors; (3) The pandemic has accelerated the urgent need for specialized digital skillsets to help businesses become more aligned with the multifarious technologies and platforms of the present day; (4) Employees enhanced their individual communication and social intelligence skills for genuine human connection and understanding in all employment capacities; (5) Sustaining a productive schedule, dealing with competing demands, retaining oneself motivated, and keeping up with work was crucial; (6) Improved job prospects for recent graduates by bolstering online application training; and (7) Motivated employees to think outside the box.

3.3.Abilities. The respondents' assessment of the employment opportunities of degree holders in terms of abilities revealed that it improved. The grand mean of 3.97 implied that the respondents agreed on the following situations: (1) Employed emotional intelligence in one's ability to understand and empathize with others; (2) Integrated training or courses in soft skills because of the growing awareness of their relevance to graduates' future career and success; (3) Adopted a mindset of constant learning in today's economy that required continued adaptation of one's skill set; (4) Developed a flexible and adaptable character, which was something one has had to become accustomed to; (5) WFH or the work-from-home programs enabled employees to initiate communication with colleagues and other stakeholders in order to generate ideas and complete tasks that were advantageous to the team; (6) Interacted with people via their gadgets, sharing the same vision, keeping them motivated, problem-solving, and dispute resolution has grown into a major responsibility; and (7) Enhancing the ability to quickly and effectively adapt to new circumstances was a key to success in any field.

#### **4.How the Post-Pandemic Era Affected the Employability of the Graduates**

4.1.Technical Skills. The post-pandemic era affected the employability of the graduates based on technical skills. The grand mean of 4.00 showed that the respondents agreed that the post-pandemic graduates developed their abilities and knowledge to perform practical tasks. They increased production-level creativity and technical proficiency and engaged in work productivity at home. Moreover, the graduates increased their engagement, leading to enhanced employability. They improved their skill set and learned how to utilize engineering tools. Ultimately, they could perform anywhere across the front line, have the versatility to go with pace, energy, and technical skills, and promote commercial and industrial activity.

4.2.Communication Skills. The post-pandemic era affected the employability of graduates based on communication skills. The grand mean of 3.88 ascertained that the respondents agreed on the following activities: (1) The graduates practiced public speaking and active listening to become more effective communicators; (2) They improved their interpersonal and social communication skills; (3) They possessed strong verbal and written communication skills and comfort with sharing their ideas and perspectives; (4) They strengthened one's capacity for rational thought, allowing one to solve difficult issues in novel ways; (5) They enabled graduates to connect with others, demonstrated empathy, found solutions to disputes, and built a network of supporting relationships; (6) They enhanced their understanding and provided more clarity that constituted good communication; and (7) They conveyed their thoughts succinctly and clearly, which made it simpler for them to take part in class discussions, ask questions, and request assistance when necessary.

4.3.Motivation Skills. The post-pandemic era affected the employability of graduates based on motivational skills. The grand mean of 3.97 showed that the respondents agreed that the graduates: (1) Held an innate tendency for personal growth toward self-determination and improvement of behavior; (2) Performed work with unadulterated pleasure and contentment; (3) Participated actively in an activity that was both fascinating and profoundly satisfying; (4) Constantly responded to environmental changes and took corrective action in response to fluctuating conditions; (5) Adapted and maintained well-being in the face of a constantly changing stream of opportunities and threats; (6) Actively looked for ways to stimulate their internal motivation; and (7) Inspired curiosity and prompted search for information in the surrounding.

4.4. Problem-Solving Skills. The post-pandemic era affected the employability of the graduates based on problem-solving skills. The grand mean of 3.87 authenticated that the respondents agreed that the graduates: (1) Encouraged internal motivation and work satisfaction among individuals; (2) Innovated solutions that could assist a team in identifying opportunities and planning for the future, even during difficult times; (3) Demonstrated a character's prowess as a conflict resolution expert; (4) Enabled taking the appropriate actions and influencing outcomes if problems arise; (5) Aided in better understanding a situation and identified where things went wrong; (6) Addressed the issue through rounds of debate until a consensus was reached on the best solution; and (7) Facilitated constructive talks with less argument and more active listening.

#### **5. The Significant Difference in the Employment Status of the Respondents During the Post-Pandemic Era When Grouped According to Profile**

There was no significant difference between the respondents' employment perception when grouped according to the profile. This meant that the respondents' assessment of the employment status during the post-pandemic era was the same. Regardless of age, gender, and educational attainment, they have the same opinion.

#### **6. The Significant Difference in the Assessment of Employment Opportunities of Degree Holders During the Pandemic Era When Grouped According to Profile**

There was a significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of employment opportunities when grouped based on their profiles. This meant that each group had a different assessment of the employment opportunities.

#### **7. The Significant Relationship Between Employment Opportunities and Employment Status**

There was a very small relationship between employment opportunities and employment status, as shown in Multiple R of 0.013815338. Only 0.019% of the points were closer to the regression line, proving the relationship level between the two variables was very small. There was also no significant difference between the two variables, as shown in the ( $F_t = 0.076 < F_c = 0.783$ ), which meant that the employment opportunities did not affect the respondents' employment status.

#### **8. Based on the Findings and Results, What Management Plan could be Instituted for an Improved HR Recruitment and Selection Policy**

The researcher proposes the On-FIERCE as an improved recruitment and selection policy in different schools and industries in China.

#### **Conclusions**

Based on the summary of findings presented above, the researcher formulated the conclusions of this study.

1. Most respondents belonged to the age bracket of 20-40. They were more likely female and college degree holders.
2. The status of degree holders in the post-pandemic era based on the job market, remote work, skills in demand, demand-driven graduates, and networking and internship improved.
3. The assessment of the respondents in the employment opportunities of degree holders in the post-pandemic era in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities enhanced.
4. The post-pandemic era affected the employability of the graduates in terms of Technical Skills, Communication Skills, Motivation Skills, and Problem-Solving Skills.
5. When grouped according to the profile, there was no significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of the employment status during the post-pandemic era.
6. There was a significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of the employment opportunities when grouped based on their profile. This meant that each group had a different assessment of the employment opportunities.

7. There was a very small relationship between the employment opportunities and the employment status. There was also no significant difference between the two variables.

8. The researcher proposes the On-FIERCE as an improved recruitment and selection policy in different schools and industries in China.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. The students must acquire and prioritize the quality of education to make them marketable and have many opportunities to work.

2. The employee needs to adopt the current work trends. The work-from-home (WFH) and digital communications should also be observed.

3. The employee must possess strong written and communication skills and demonstrate strong interpersonal skills. They should also easily adapt to the dynamic work environment and be able to plan, prioritize, and manage tasks.

4. The graduates must focus on their skills development and increase their desire for career and professional development to become competitive in the job market.

5. Graduates ought to take advantage of their internship opportunities to get work experience in the firm. Moreover, they should engage with individuals

who can provide career suggestions and connect with alums working in the desired company.

6. The graduates must improve their technical skills to perform practical tasks and increase production-level creativity and work productivity.

7. The graduates need to connect with others, demonstrate empathy, find solutions to disputes, and build a network of supporting relationships.

8. The graduates must participate actively in fascinating and profoundly satisfying activities. They should look for ways to stimulate their internal motivation.

9. The graduates need to learn about innovative solutions that can assist a team in identifying opportunities and planning, even during difficult times.

10. The proposed On-F.I.E.R.C.E. recruitment and selection policy could be implemented and observed for effectiveness.