

# Employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness among Chinese university students

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## Abstract

China's education system prioritizes the employment quality of college graduates, as the gross enrollment rate increased from 45.7% to 59.6% between 2018 and 2022. This has resulted in a dire employment scenario for graduates, who frequently pass up prime work possibilities owing to poor career planning and a lack of practical skills. Universities and academics are incorporating more employment information into talent training to assist graduates in adjusting to society and laying a solid basis for future professional advancement. The purpose of this study was to determine employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness among Chinese university students in order to propose an enhanced student career development program. Specifically, it sought to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, year level, school type and major; determined the respondents' employment outlook as to industry demand, employment concept, and vocational goals; explored the respondents' employment skills in terms of basic skills, thinking skills and competency; identified the respondent's employment competitiveness in terms of practical experience, teamwork ability and skill level; tested the differences in responses when grouped according to profile variables; tested the significant relationships between employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness; and proposed an enhanced student career development program. Participants in this study were 425 out of 22,636 junior year and senior year undergraduate students from 8 different majors in 8 colleges and universities in Shanxi Province, China. The researcher used purposeful sampling because the participants belonged to a specific category, namely, undergraduate students in their third and fourth years with prior employment experience to participate in this study. Majority of the respondents were male, senior year, major in law, and from urban area. Chinese university students generally agreed in employment outlook in areas of group demand, employment concept and vocational goals. They generally agreed in employment skills in areas of basic skills, thinking skills, and competency. And also they agreed in employment competitiveness in areas of employment competitiveness, teamwork ability and skill level. There was no significant differences when variables of the study were compared according to profile. However, there was a significant relationship among the three variables

which indicates that the better is the employment outlook, the better is the employment skills, and the better is the employment competitiveness, the better is the employment outlook. The student development plan was designed to address the least responses from the employment outlook, employment skills and employment competitiveness.

**Keywords:** skills, vocational goal, competence, university students

## Employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness among Chinese university students

### 1. Introduction

In China's education system, the employment quality of college graduates is a top priority in measuring the quality of talent training. According to data released by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China at the National Education Work Conference in 2023, China's gross enrollment rate in higher education rose from 45.7% to 59.6% from 2018 to 2022, meaning that the total number of college students enrolled in schools has exceeded 44.3 million people, of which the average size of general undergraduate schools is 16,366. As the enrollment rate continues to grow, the employment situation of college graduates has become increasingly severe. The state, government, enterprises, schools and individual graduates are increasingly concerned about the employment issue. Many graduates, when facing the job market, often miss ideal job opportunities due to unclear career planning for the future and lack of vocational skills and competitiveness required in the modern workplace. In order to cope with this challenge, universities and researchers have begun to pay attention to the quality of talent cultivation and the employment of graduates. They try to integrate more employment knowledge into the talent training process to help graduates familiarize themselves with the workplace environment and employment situation in advance, so as to enhance their employability. This will not only make graduates realize the importance of employment, but also enable them to better adapt to the needs of society after graduation and lay a solid foundation for their future career development.

Employment outlook refers to the situation that a person with the ability to work may face when looking for gainful employment in the future. Employment refers to the gainful use of labor or the willingness and ability of an individual to have a job. Prospects, on the other hand, represent an upcoming sight or situation, that is, one that has not actually happened yet (Duan, 2019). For college graduates, their job prospects can be evaluated at two levels: the individual level and the professional level. At the individual level, graduates predict and evaluate their future employment prospects, which mainly reflects their subjective feelings. On the other hand, at the professional level, the evaluation and prediction of graduates of a particular specialty on the future employment situation of that specialty reflects the overall trend of future employment in that specialty (Huo et al., 2023). Fresh graduates are more in need of guidance on employment prospects than those who already have work experience. These fresh graduates should build a good foundation in their majors, cultivate the basic competencies required by the industry, and try to combine their personal interests or market demands to develop outstanding competitiveness in a particular field of specialization (Zhou et al., 2021).

Huo (2021) emphasized that it takes the concerted efforts of all sectors of the society to enhance graduates' employment prospects. Graduates should set up correct concepts and continuously improve their comprehensive quality and core competitiveness; colleges and universities should actively build their own brands to improve the employment competitiveness of graduates; and the government should formulate relevant employment assistance policies and join hands with colleges and universities to build a perfect employment platform, in order to positively influence the employment of graduates, increase their employment rate, and promote the healthy and stable development of the profession. Employment skills do not just refer to a single skill, but are the competencies that students acquire through their studies and comprehensive quality development during their school years to be able to realize their employment aspirations, meet the needs of the society, and realize their own value in social life. These skills are not just technical but a combination of competencies (Xiong, 2022). Employability is a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labor market participants should have to ensure that they are able to play an effective role in the workplace for their own, their employer's, and the wider economic interests (Cai, 2022).

Employability skills education for university students encompasses a number of areas, including basic skills, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, problem solving, self-awareness and effective communication.

Such education not only improves students' psychosocial adaptability, but also develops their problem-solving and problem-handling skills, as well as divergent and creative thinking (Long, 2020). Improving the level of students' employability skills is the key to improving the quality of workers themselves (Bao et al., 2020). Nowadays, many Chinese colleges and universities have developed an employment-oriented schooling philosophy that focuses on cultivating students' employability skills (Yu, 2021). These colleges and universities are student-centered, and by explaining theoretical knowledge in examples, they dig deeper into teaching content that can enhance employment skills. At the same time, colleges and universities continue to collect employment information of graduates and adjust the teaching content according to market and social needs (Zhao et al., 2022). Nonetheless, graduates still face dilemmas such as declining initial employment rate, low employment quality, fickleness of mind and lack of ability. These dilemmas are not only caused by society and colleges and universities, but more importantly, graduates need to change their employment concepts and improve their employment skills (Wang, 2019).

Employment Competitiveness is the core criterion for assessing the quality of students' employment as well as their actual working ability, which comprehensively embodies students' personal qualities in the job-seeking stage (Jiang, 2022). Yin (2023) explicitly pointed out that Employment Competitiveness actually refers to a kind of comprehensive ability demonstrated by college students in the job-seeking process, and this ability directly affects whether they can successfully enter their desired positions. Employment Competitiveness not only embodies the students' internalization and integration of the knowledge they have learned, but also forms a unique set of knowledge and skill system and a unique set of moral and ethical skills. a unique set of knowledge and skill system and moral cultivation, but also in practical application, it relies more on the individual's practical hands-on ability, language and communication skills, teamwork and coordination ability, and skill level. This ability gives individuals a unique competitive advantage in the job market and highlights their irreplaceable value (Wang et al., 2023). In order to enhance students' Employment Competitiveness, some Chinese universities have taken a series of innovative measures. They have not only strengthened the cooperation and communication with enterprises, but also paid more attention to cultivating students' practical operation ability and innovative thinking. This educational model realizes the organic integration of theoretical teaching and practical teaching, so that students can exercise and improve their core professional qualities in practice. This not only eliminates the problem of information asymmetry between schools and enterprises, but also provides students with more channels to understand the market demand and job-seeking information, helping them to better plan their career and thus enhance their employment competitiveness (Yao et al., 2023).

To summarize, an in-depth study on the quality of talent cultivation in student-oriented Chinese universities, especially on employment outlook, skills and competitiveness, is not only necessary but also of far-reaching significance. Therefore, this study expects to provide specific policy recommendations for universities to help graduates better adapt to the needs of the society and the workplace by exploring these three key variables in depth. This will not only help to improve the employment quality of Chinese college graduates, but also help to optimize the quality of the higher education system in general.

In China, although many colleges and universities have realized that the employment problem of graduates is becoming more and more serious, effective solutions are still insufficient or are still in the exploratory stage. How to improve the quality of talent cultivation in colleges and universities and solve the contradiction between market demand and talent capacity has become the top priority of employment work in colleges and universities (Li et al., 2022). Although the state has issued a series of policies on employment aiming to support graduates' employment, in the actual implementation process, local governments are often too rigid and lack of standardized supervision, which leads to the fact that these policies cannot really be put into practice to provide practical help and support for students (Wang, 2023). Some colleges and universities have difficulties in balancing the quality of teaching and the level of talent training, and fail to fully understand the current needs and development trends of society. This has led to difficulties in exposing students to the latest professional skills and knowledge, as well as a lack of practical opportunities to test what they have learned. This phenomenon leads to a serious disconnect between graduates' professional knowledge and social needs, and they are unable to

meet the employment needs of enterprises, which in turn affects the employment rate and employment quality of graduates (Xia, 2022).

In addition to the influence of external environment and factors, the comprehensive quality of graduates themselves is also a key factor affecting their successful employment. Comprehensive quality includes professional skills, theoretical foundation, practical ability, innovation ability and other aspects. Some graduates have misconceptions about employment, fail to set up a correct view of employment and lack long-term planning for their careers. This leads to their lack of preparation in the job search process, and there is a big gap between the expectations of career choice and social needs, which in turn affects their employment effects (Yue et al., 2023).

This study hypothesized that optimizing employment outlook, skills and competitiveness can significantly improve the employment quality of Chinese college graduates. In the process of talent cultivation, colleges and universities must attach great importance to the career development of students to ensure that they have the skills and competitiveness to adapt to the needs of the future workplace. This is a key factor influencing graduates to stand out in the fierce competition in the workplace. Aiming at the current employment status and problems of college graduates, this paper puts forward a series of substantive suggestions aimed at solving the employment dilemma of graduates and providing strategies and methods for their career development. More importantly, by delving into these key variables, this study also offers a proposal for enhancing students' career development programs, aiming to help colleges and universities cultivate graduates with a high degree of employment competitiveness, to further enhance the quality of talent cultivation, and to promote the sustained development of China's higher education sector. The relevance of this study stems from its ability to address the critical issues confronting Chinese university graduates. This research, which examines employment prospects, skills, and competitiveness, can guide policies and practices targeted at increasing graduate employability. Understanding the factors that influence job outcomes can help to shape curricula, improve career services, and foster industry-academia collaboration. Furthermore, the findings might offer light on the changing employment market and the abilities needed for success, preparing graduates to succeed in a competitive global economy. Finally, this study can help to shape policies for closing the gap between higher education and the labor market, resulting in better-prepared graduates and a stronger economy.

**Objectives of the Study** - The purpose of this study was to determine employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness among Chinese university students in order to propose an enhanced student career development program. Specifically, it sought to determine the respondents' employment outlook as to industry demand, employment concept, and vocational goals; explored the respondents' employment skills in terms of basic skills, thinking skills and competency; identified the respondent's employment competitiveness in terms of practical experience, teamwork ability and skill level; tested the significant relationships between employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness; and proposed a propose an enhanced student career development program.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - This study utilized a descriptive research design that aimed to scrutinize the current employment outlook, assess existing skill sets, compare all possible data on the impact of employment enhancement on the quality of talent development, and assessed the overall competitiveness of Chinese university students. Descriptive research is a unique type of inquiry that takes a single individual or group of individuals as the object of study and does not compare them with each other. The central goal of such studies is to reveal in depth the characteristics of the research subjects and how these characteristics are associated with quality. Descriptive research is therefore of irreplaceable value in the process of constructing and testing hypotheses (Yi & Duval, 2022). Through exhaustive observations, surveys, and possibly interviews, this study endeavors to paint a comprehensive picture of the various factors that influence the employment prospects of these students. Emphasis is placed on gaining insight into the students' skills, their perceptions of the job market, and the factors that influence their overall competitiveness. This descriptive approach provided valuable insights

into the complex dynamics of Chinese college students' job prospects, revealing the demand for specific skills, prevailing attitudes toward employment, and the factors that influence their competitiveness in the job market.

**Participants of the Study** - Participants in this study were 425 out of 22,636 Junior year, Senior year undergraduate students from 8 different majors in 8 colleges and universities in Shanxi Province, China. With a confidence level of 95% (Z-score of 1.96) and a margin of error of 5%, the ideal sample size for this study is 378. Participants were selected by means of purposeful sampling. Purpose sampling refers to the intentional identification of participants based on their specific attributes (Etikan, et al., 2016). The researcher used purposeful sampling because the participants belonged to a specific category, namely, undergraduate students in their third and fourth years with prior employment experience to participate in this study. To ensure the representativeness and credibility of the sample, stratified sampling was adopted. First, a certain number of students were randomly selected from different areas of specialization to ensure that each area is properly represented. Secondly, sampling was conducted in different grades to ensure the time span and development of the study.

**Data Gathering Instrument** - A survey questionnaire was used in the data gathering of this study. It was derived from published research, but some modifications have been made to ensure the scientific validity and soundness of this study. There were three main instruments used in the study. First was the Assessment of employment outlook (Li,2022). The questionnaire is composed of 30 items measured in three factors. It has four-point scale: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Another one was the questionnaire on employment skills compiled by University of Oregon (2014). This consists of three subscales and 30 items in total. It has a four-point scale: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The third questionnaire that was utilized was employment competitiveness which was adopted from the study of Wang (2013) and Liang (2020). The questionnaire consists of three subscales and 30 items in total. It has a four-point scale: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). These questionnaires were then evaluated for validity and reliability after they had been modified to reflect the new information. The questionnaire was tested on 30 students as part of a pilot study, which enables the researcher to verify its validity. With the results of the pilot testing in hand, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. As indicated in Table 1, the results of the reliability test, which was used to assess the internal consistency of the scales employed in the questionnaire, were found to be satisfactory.

The Cronbach- $\alpha$  coefficient for industry demand shows a 0.931 Cronbach- $\alpha$  coefficient which is excellent, while employment concept and vocational goals which are indicators of employment outlook are 0.876 and 0.945 respectively, which shows good internal consistency among items. For indicators of employment skills, basic skills and thinking skills are 0.881 and 0.897 Cronbach- $\alpha$  coefficient which is good, while institutional has a Cronbach- $\alpha$  coefficient of 0.939 which is excellent. The indicators for competitiveness show the following Cronbach- $\alpha$  coefficient: practical experience and teamwork ability are 0.896 and 0.855, both good, skill level 0.923, which is excellent. The referenced questionnaire uses the same test to show that employment outlook and competitiveness with coefficients of 0.954 and 0.977 respectively showing high reliability among the items.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The data for this study was obtained through a well-designed questionnaire. To ensure the validity and accuracy of the survey, the researcher edited the questionnaire into the SoJump platform and distributed it through Wechat, a widely used communication tool. All questionnaires were distributed randomly to guarantee the scientific, authenticity and reliability of sampling. Each participating Chinese student was asked to complete a four-part questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire asked for a description of the student's sex, year level, major and place of origin, while the second part contained 30 questions about the student's perception of employment outlook. The third section contained 30 questions about the employment skills that the students possessed. The fourth section contained 30 questions on the assessment of students' employment competitiveness. Upon completion of the questionnaire, all the data collected were imported into an Excel spreadsheet for subsequent analysis and processing.

During the data importation process, the researcher double-checked each piece of data to ensure its accuracy. In addition, in order to prevent invalid questionnaires, the researcher provided detailed and accurate guidance notes for the questionnaire to ensure that participants could fully understand the content and requirements of the questionnaire. The survey was used for academic research purposes only and was completed anonymously to ensure the privacy of the participants. At the same time, the researcher set a reasonable amount of time to complete the questionnaire to ensure that participants had enough time to answer each question carefully. This measure aimed to maximize the quality and meticulousness of questionnaire completion. In this way, this study hopes to gain a comprehensive and accurate understanding of Chinese students' perspectives, skills and competitiveness in employment, so as to provide a valuable reference basis for relevant policies and educational practices. After data collection, the researcher organized the data, eliminated invalid data, and constructed basic variable models. Answers were coded in Excel format and sent to the research center for decoding and analysis by statisticians using specialized statistical software. Next, statistical methods such as factor analysis are used to analyze the relationship and impact between data. Based on the data results, the researcher explores the relationship between employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness in Chinese universities and its impact on the quality of talent cultivation in Chinese universities. The researcher has provided a table of findings to assist in the narrative and interpretation of the findings.

**Data Analysis** - Weighted mean and ranking was used to determine the respondents' employment outlook as to industry demand, employment concept, and vocational goals; explore the respondents' employment skills in terms of basic skills, thinking skills and competency; and identify the respondent's employment competitiveness in terms of practical experience, teamwork ability and skill level. Pearson's r correlation was used to test the significant relationships between employment outlook, skills and competitiveness. The following Likert Scale was used in assessing the variables: 3.50-4.00-Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49-Agree; 1.50-2.49-Disagree; and 1.00-1.49- Strongly Disagree. In addition, all data were treated using a statistical software known as SPSS version 26 to further interpret the result of the study using an alpha level of 0.05.

**Ethical Considerations** - Ethical consideration is in effect in the data gathering procedure, the researcher was aware of the importance of respecting and protecting the rights and interests of the participants and took a variety of measures to ensure the ethicality and compliance of the study. Firstly, full communication and explanations were given to the students at the university who participated in the study to ensure that they clearly understood the purpose and process of the experiment and participated voluntarily and in a fully informed manner. The researcher respected their wishes and maintained their anonymity at all times, ensuring that their personal information was protected and would not be disclosed or used for other purposes. Second, the principle of privacy protection during data collection and processing was strictly adhered to. At the data collection stage, participants were asked to sign a data privacy permission form explicitly authorizing the study to use their relevant information, and the study collected only necessary data directly related to the purpose of the study and took strict confidentiality measures to ensure that these data would not be leaked or disseminated. In addition, during data processing and analysis, it was ensured that all data were handled in an aggregated and anonymized manner and that no modifications or modifications of any kind were made to the data. Only strictly authorized personnel were used to process the data and the necessary measures were taken to ensure the security and confidentiality of the data. To summarize, ethical practices were strictly followed during the research process, and the rights and privacy of the participants were fully respected and protected. The researcher believes that more accurate and reliable findings can be obtained in this way, contributing to the improvement of employment outlook, skills, and competitiveness of Chinese college students. The researcher also thanked the students of the participating universities for their trust and support to the researcher.

### 3. Results and discussion

**Table 1**

*Summary Table on Employment Outlook*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Industry Demand	3.21	Agree	3
Employment Concept	3.22	Agree	2
Vocational Goals	3.25	Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.23	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 1 summarizes the assessment of Employment Outlook among Chinese University students in terms of industry demand, employment concept, and vocational goals. Based on the result, the composite mean of 3.23 presented that the Chinese university students agreed of employment outlook among of the three indicators in general. In terms of the three indicators, respondents agreed in vocational goals (3.25), employment concept (3.22) and industry demand (3.21) with a very small difference respectively.

When it comes to job chances, Chinese University students tend to emphasize similar things. They appreciate the need of balancing individual objectives (vocational goals) with flexibility (employment idea) and awareness of industry developments (demand). The highest mean stressed the importance of students having a defined career goal that guides their job search and professional development. This score indicates that students agreed on the need of adapting and taking a flexible approach to navigate the changing job market. While there was widespread agreement on industry awareness, the somewhat lower score may reflect a realistic realization that market trends must be handled with individual strengths and goals. When it comes to job chances, students tend to emphasize similar things. In addition, Cai (2022) mentioned that nowadays employability has become a hot topic of discussion in the society and is one of the core indicators in the quality framework of higher education. This makes students have similar and common thinking about job chances.

**Table 2**

*Summary Table on Employment Skills*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Basic Skills	3.23	Agree	3
Thinking Skills	3.32	Agree	1
Competency	3.25	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.27	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 2 summarizes the assessment of Employment Skills among Chinese University students in terms of basic skills, thinking skills, and competency. Based on the result, the composite mean of 3.27 presented that the Chinese university students agreed on the employment skills among of the three indicators in general. In terms of the three indicators, respondents agreed in thinking skills (3.32), competency (3.25) and basic skill (3.23) with a very small difference respectively.

The ranking is anchored in the study of Chen (2023) and Xiong (2022). Chen (2023) pointed out his framework on employability skills which consists of three dimensions: basic skills, higher-order thinking skills and affective skills. In addition, Xiong (2022) mentioned the two dimensions of Employment Skills which are basic professional knowledge and techniques, and job application skills. These frameworks further suggest that Universities may guarantee that their curriculum covers all three skill areas in order to prepare students for the job. In addition, it may integrate classes that teach fundamental skills such as communication, writing, and critical thinking. Furthermore, it may provide chances for problem-solving, decision-making, and self-directed learning to improve thinking abilities (Di et al., 2018).

Table 3 summarizes the assessment of Employment Competitiveness among Chinese University students in



terms of practical experience, teamwork ability, and skill level. Based on the result, the composite mean of 3.31 presented that the Chinese university students have agreed of employment competitiveness among of the three indicators in general. In terms of the three indicators, respondents agreed in skill level (3.34), practical experience (3.31) and teamwork ability (3.28) with a very small difference respectively.

**Table 3**

*Summary Table on Employment Competitiveness*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Practical Experience	3.31	Agree	2
Teamwork Ability	3.28	Agree	3
Skill Level	3.34	Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.31	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

The findings highlight the necessity of institutions including skill development opportunities throughout the curriculum to better prepare students for the job. This may further suggest offering internship programs, to have project-based learning experiences, or to have volunteer opportunities to help students get practical experience. Encouraging collaboration and teamwork in academics and extracurricular activities may also suggest to help students improve their teamwork abilities.

**Table 4**

*Relationship Between the Employment Outlook and Employment Skills*

Industry Demand	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Basic Skills	.817**	0.000	Highly Significant
Thinking Skills	.710**	0.000	Highly Significant
Competency	.809**	0.000	Highly Significant
Employment Concept			
Basic Skills	.790**	0.000	Highly Significant
Thinking Skills	.686**	0.000	Highly Significant
Competency	.773**	0.000	Highly Significant
Vocational Goals			
Basic Skills	.803**	0.000	Highly Significant
Thinking Skills	.672**	0.000	Highly Significant
Competency	.789**	0.000	Highly Significant

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01*

Table 4 displays the association between Employment Outlook and Employment Skills. The computed r-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that there was significant relationship exists and implies that the better is the employment outlook, the better is the employment skills. This research implies that students who have a more optimistic attitude on their future prospects may regard themselves to have greater employment abilities. This self-directed growth might result in a significant improvement in their skill level. A optimistic view may instill confidence and self-efficacy in pupils, leading them to overestimate their existing ability level.

Table 5 shows the association between employment outlook and Employment Competitiveness. The computed r-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that there was significant relationship exists and implies that the better is the employment outlook, the more competitive the employment is. This suggests that students who have a stronger foundation in job skills are perceived as more competitive in the labor market. LinkedIn looked at how technology is changing the talent acquisition environment. It implies that internet platforms and access to a larger pool of skilled people might enhance competition for employment, especially in high-demand fields. Moreover, Zhao et al. (2019) discovered that students with a growth mindset were more likely to participate in proactive career development activities such as internships and professional development courses, hence improving their skill set and competitiveness. A positive mindset may encourage students to actively explore professional development options that will improve

their abilities and competitiveness. Hence, potential employers may see confidence derived from a positive mindset, making the application more competitive.

**Table 5***Relationship Between English Reading Motivation and Employment Competitiveness*

Industry Demand	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Practical Experience	.788**	0.000	Highly Significant
Teamwork Ability	.784**	0.000	Highly Significant
Skill Level	.921**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Employment Concept</b>			
Practical Experience	.762**	0.000	Highly Significant
Teamwork Ability	.743**	0.000	Highly Significant
Skill Level	.899**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Vocational Goals</b>			
Practical Experience	.788**	0.000	Highly Significant
Teamwork Ability	.767**	0.000	Highly Significant
Skill Level	.913**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

This technology advantage makes these occupations more competitive as workers attempt to satisfy the needs of a changing employment market. Their findings show a direct link between improved career prospects and greater competitiveness for these positions. The study emphasizes the relevance of skill development in remaining competitive in the labor market.

**Table 6***Relationship Between Employment Skills and Employment Competitiveness*

Basic Skills	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Practical Experience	.726**	0.000	Highly Significant
Teamwork Ability	.698**	0.000	Highly Significant
Skill Level	.827**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Thinking Skills</b>			
Practical Experience	.616**	0.000	Highly Significant
Teamwork Ability	.605**	0.000	Highly Significant
Skill Level	.687**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Competency</b>			
Practical Experience	.703**	0.000	Highly Significant
Teamwork Ability	.938**	0.000	Highly Significant
Skill Level	.802**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Table 6 presents the association between Employment Skills and Employment Competitiveness. The computed r-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that there was significant relationship exists and implies that the better is the employment skills, the more competitive the employment is. This demonstrates that pupils with a stronger foundation in work skills are seen as more competitive in the labor market. McKinsey Global Institute investigated the effects of automation on the workforce. According to the findings, individuals with great abilities and agility will have an advantage in competing for employment in an automated future.

In addition, World Bank suggested that graduates with relevant skills and experience will have a competitive advantage in the job market. Enrico Moretti's book investigates the link between workforce skills and regional economic success. He discovered that towns with a higher concentration of talented workers are more competitive in the global economy. The book contends that a trained workforce attracts additional enterprises, resulting in a virtuous cycle of job creation and competitiveness. Moretti's findings support the idea that improved employment skills correlate with higher employment competitiveness. This emphasizes the value of investing in education and training to improve regional economic prospects. The Global Competitiveness Report published by the World Economic Forum emphasizes the importance of labor skills in determining a country's

competitiveness. It demonstrates that governments that invest in skill development programs tend to fare better economically. The research presents evidence that link better skill levels to increased employment competitiveness. This emphasizes the importance of constant skill development to stay up with economic changes. The data demonstrate the substantial link between employment skills and job market competitiveness. Moreover, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published *Lifelong Learning and the Future of Work* in 2019 paper investigates the importance of lifelong learning in retaining employment competitiveness in a rapidly changing labour market. It underlines the importance of continual skill development for workers to remain competitive. The report focuses on numerous lifetimes learning initiatives and their favorable effects on employment outcomes. Regions may maintain a competitive workforce by encouraging a culture of continual learning. This lends weight to the idea that enhanced work abilities contribute to a more competitive labor market.

**Table 7**

*Proposed Student Development Program for Chinese University Students*

Key Result Areas	Strategies	Success Indicator	Persons Involved
<b>Employment Outlook</b>			
<p>Program: Skill Development Workshops</p> <p>Objectives: Equip students with the skills and information they need to compete in the job market, meeting the industry's demand for competent graduates.</p>	<p>Provide training on data analysis, project management, communication, and design thinking that are suited to specific sectors.</p> <p>Provide instruction in industry-standard software packages applicable to a variety of disciplines.</p> <p>Connect students to industry professionals who can provide guidance and assistance for skill development.</p>	<p>90% of Chinese University Students develop crucial industry-required skills across many disciplines.</p> <p>95% create possibilities for practical application and portfolio development.</p>	<p>School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students</p>
<p>Program: Building Your Future: Cultivating an Adaptable Employment Mindset for Chinese University Students</p> <p>Objectives: Empower university students to create a forward-thinking and adaptive work perspective, preparing them to manage an ever-changing labor market.</p>	<p>Facilitate talks about the future of work, including growing employment marketplaces, evolving skill needs, and the value of lifelong learning to enhance self-esteem.</p> <p>Analyze real-world examples of firms and individuals that have effectively adjusted to workplace changes.</p> <p>Invite specialists in future work trends and adaptation to offer their perspectives.</p>	<p>90% of Chinese University students increase knowledge of trends that will shape the future of employment, such as automation, globalization, and the gig economy that would make them brave.</p> <p>Encourage 95% of students to think critically about the skills and attitudes required to prosper in a dynamic workplace.</p>	<p>School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students</p>
<p>Program: Charting Your Course: A Vocational Goal Setting Program.</p> <p>Objectives: Empower students to set clear and attainable occupational goals that are consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals.</p>	<p>Teach students about SMART goal formulation, emphasizing clarity, feasibility, and effective action plans.</p> <p>Give students access to internet tools, databases, and career advice materials so they may learn about various professions and employment needs.</p> <p>Provide individual counseling sessions with career consultants to assist students refine their occupational aspirations.</p>	<p>Equip 90% of students with the tools and strategies to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) vocational goals.</p> <p>Help 95% of students translate self-awareness into actionable career aspirations.</p>	<p>School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students</p>
<b>Employment Skills</b>			
<p>Program: Building a Strong Foundation: Essential Skills</p> <p>Objective: Provide students with the core skills required for academic achievement and professional preparedness in a worldwide workplace.</p>	<p>Offer customized training in academic writing, corporate communication, and resume writing.</p> <p>Give students opportunity to work on difficult issues alone and in groups, encouraging critical thinking and collaborative abilities.</p> <p>Incorporate debate and discussion activities into current courses to enable students to critically evaluate arguments and defend their</p>	<p>Enhance 90% of students' analytical thinking skills, ability to solve complex problems, and make informed decisions in written form.</p> <p>95% of students develop creative thinking and the ability to approach problems from different perspectives in written form.</p>	<p>School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students</p>
<p>Program: Sharpen Your Mind: Developing Advanced Thinking Skills</p> <p>Objectives: Provide students with advanced thinking skills that promote flexibility, problem-solving, and critical decision-making in a dynamic and information-rich society.</p>	<p>Offer training on active listening skills, and avoiding interruptions. Teach clear and concise communication techniques to ensure messages are understood effectively.</p>	<p>Provide 90% of Chinese students with the capacity to break down complicated issues into smaller, more digestible chunks.</p> <p>95% promote creative and inventive problem-solving solutions.</p>	<p>School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students</p>
<p>Program: Building a Thriving University Community: Fostering</p>	<p>Create online courses that teach university regulations in an interesting manner, including</p>	<p>Increase of 90% of student understanding of important</p>	<p>School administrator,</p>

Awareness and Engagement Objective: Empower students to comprehend university regulations, actively contribute to a healthy school atmosphere, and develop into responsible members of the university community.	quizzes and situations to reinforce comprehension. Organize events that link students with volunteer opportunities and service learning initiatives that benefit the institution and the larger community.	university regulations and resources including academic integrity, student behavior, student support services, and student rights. Promote 95% a sense of connection and duty to the campus community.	school heads, faculty members, university students
<b>Employment Competitiveness</b>			
Program: From Intern to In-Demand: Building Employability Through Experiential Learning Objectives: Enhance students' employability by providing them with hands-on job experience, instilling resilience and problem-solving abilities, and encouraging reflection on their professional development.	Organize work shadowing sessions so that students may watch professionals in their preferred areas. Provide training on professional communication, workplace etiquette, and project management skills. Connect students with seasoned professionals who may offer advice and assistance throughout their internships or part-time jobs.	Assist 90% of students in finding internship and part-time work opportunities that are related to their academic majors and professional goals. 95% of employers prioritize abilities such as teamwork, communication, time management, and problem solving.	School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students
Program: Building Powerful Teams: Fostering Effective Teamwork Objectives: Empower students to become self-assured and competent team members capable of fruitful collaboration, initiative, and team leadership.	Facilitate simulations and role-playing activities that expose students to varied collaborative settings while requiring them to develop good communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills.  Teach students how to use project management tools to efficiently distribute responsibilities, measure progress, and foster cooperation.	Raising 90% of student understanding of various cooperation styles, communication tactics, and potential problems in group work. 95% of students are preapred to communicate effectively, actively listen, and assign work within a team.	School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students
Program: Building Your Competitive Edge: Developing In-Demand Skills Objetive: Equip students with a solid foundation of professional skills that companies value, increasing their competitiveness in the labor market.	Analyze employment market trends and employer data to determine the most sought-after professional talents in various industries. Provide training on key professional skills such as communication (written and oral), project management, data analysis, and time management.	Increase 90% of student understanding of the most important professional skills in various sectors. 95% of students provide with vital professional skills such as communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and digital literacy.	School administrator, school heads, faculty members, university students

Table 7 is the proposed student development program for Chinese University students. To increase the least item indicators in area of Employment outlook, the following program may propose “skill development workshops”, “building your future: cultivating an adaptable employment mindset” and “charting your course: a vocational goal setting program”. These programs may address the gaps and problems found in the study in the area of employment outlook. Furthermore, to increase the least item indicators in area of employment Skills, the following program may propose, “building a strong foundation: essential skills”, “sharpen your mind: developing advanced thinking skills” and “building a thriving university community: fostering awareness and engagement”. These programs may address the gaps and problems found in the study in the area of employment skill. Moreover, to increase the least item indicators in area of employment competitiveness, the following, “from intern to in-demand: building employability through experiential learning”, “building powerful teams: fostering effective teamwork”, and “building your competitive edge: developing in-demand skills”. These programs may address the gaps and problems found in the study in the area of employment competitiveness.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Chinese university students generally agreed in employment outlook in areas of group demand, employment concept and vocational goals. Chinese university students generally agreed in employment skills in areas of basic skills, thinking skills, and competency. Chinese university students generally agreed in employment competitiveness in areas of employment competitiveness, teamwork ability and skill level. There is a significant relationship among the three variables which indicates that the better is the employment outlook, the better is the employment skills, and the better is the employment competitiveness, the better is the employment outlook. The student development plan was designed to address the least responses from the employment outlook, employment skills and employment competitiveness.

Minister of Education in China may integrate this understanding into curriculum design to ensure that graduates have the most applicable skills and knowledge for their chosen industries. High leaders and school administrator may collaborate with industry leaders to better understand current and future skill demands. Chinese University Professors may encourage collaboration, share decision-making and help their students to enhance their basic and talented skills. Chinese University students may look for opportunities to learn practical skills and real-world experience through internships, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities. School administrator, school heads, faculty members, and university students may utilize the suggested student development program and may be tabled for discussion and implementation.

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