

Difficulties Faced by Dance Graduates in Higher Vocational Colleges: An Analysis

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Abstract: With the rapid development of our country has brought opportunities and challenges to dance art education. This study aims to strengthen the education of dance majors, guide them to plan their career development reasonably, and explore new methods to adapt to the needs of the times and students. In recent years, the employment situation of dance graduates has been grim, and enterprises have reflected difficulties in recruitment, the reasons for which involve students, recruiters and college graduates management. Highly efficient expansion of colleges and universities, the number of graduates increased, exacerbating the employment pressure; the art exam boom led to a surge in the student population of dance performance majors, further increasing the difficulty of employment. The employment of dance majors is restricted, competition is fierce, and the prospects of graduates are worrying. Higher vocational dance students are not optimistic about employment prospects and tend to be directly employed, especially in the teaching profession. Employment problems are rooted in the mismatch between students' quality and career needs, the lack of coordination between professional development and market demand, and the inconsistency between social expectations and entrepreneurial atmosphere. The solution lies in improving personal quality, firm beliefs and cultivating innovative thinking. Schools need to deepen reforms, improve students' comprehensive quality and employability, improve teaching methods, and stimulate creativity and curiosity. Employers should change their mindset and the government should provide support.

Keywords: Higher vocational dance major; graduates; employment problems; entrepreneurship; cause analysis; countermeasures.

1. Introduction

According to the Ministry of Education, the number of college graduates will reach 10.76 million in 2022, exceeding 10 million for the first time, making the employment issue increasingly prominent. The General Office of the State Council issued the Notice on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship, pointing out that youth employment is related to people's livelihoods, the economy and the future of the country. 28 times in the State Council's work report in 2023, "employment" appeared, highlighting its importance. Economic development under the new normal is still facing employment pressure. At present, it is a common problem that graduates are difficult to find employment, and this is also true for dance majors. As an art major, the employment of dance is narrow and severe. Therefore, it is crucial for dance education and personal development to study the employment problems of dance graduates and improve their employability and competitiveness.

Because of the current fierce social competition, the difficulty of graduates' employment has become a common problem, and dance graduates are no exception. In addition, as an art major, the employment scope of dance is relatively narrow, and the employment situation of graduates is more severe. Therefore, studying the employment of dance graduates and exploring how to better improve their employability and competitiveness are of great significance to the development of dance education and the personal development of graduates. The present research study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do students' perceptions and expectations of employment differ from when they are actually employed?

2. What are the needs and trends in the current job market in the dance industry?

3. What methods are used to help students solve the problem of difficult employment?

2. Literature Review

Firstly, Cai (2021) pointed out, "In order to give full play to the positive role of dance education in improving the quality of college students; to address the current problems of dance teaching in colleges and universities, and to seek effective measures to improve the effect of dance teaching in colleges and universities" (p. 55). This triggered in-depth thinking about dance education.

Secondly, Gao (2019) mentioned, "At present, there exists a large shortage of professional and technical talents in China's higher vocational colleges and universities, but whether or not higher vocational graduates are able to quickly integrate into the actual working environment is still a problem that needs to be solved. To address this situation, this paper analyses the employment difficulties of higher vocational graduates and makes some suggestions based on the psychological characteristics of higher vocational students and actual teaching activities" (p. 80). This highlights the urgency of the employment problem of higher vocational graduates and the direction of its solution.

Then, Jia (2015) emphasised that "due to the late start of dance education in China, the role of dance education has not been given full play. This paper analyses the significance and problems of dance education in vocational schools and puts forward some countermeasures against these problems, which have certain practical significance" (p. 83). This sheds light on the development of dance education in vocational schools.

In addition, Liu (2015) stated, "Given the development of higher education in China in recent years, higher education has shifted from elite education to mass education. The increase in the number of graduates and the instability of the global economy echo each other. The employment situation of college students is not optimistic. After several years of university career, the ability to find a good job has become the focus of social concern" (p. 109). This emphasizes the severity of the employment situation for university students.

Interestingly, Liu (2015) emphasized that "in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning of dance majors in general colleges and universities, this paper mainly discusses the current situation of dance majors in general colleges and universities, identifies the existing problems, and puts forward corresponding suggestions" (p. 68). This suggests that improvements to the education of dance majors require sustained attention and effort.

The fact is that Liu(2022) mentioned, "On the basis of elaborating the characteristics of the types of dance education in comprehensive institutions, the current status of dance education was analyzed, and the reform strategy of dance education in comprehensive institutions was put forward to further improve the quality of dance education, to enhance the students' aesthetic ability and level, and to achieve the goal of quality education" (p. 111). This calls for in-depth thinking and improvement of dance education in comprehensive institutions.

On the other hand, Lin(2015) argues, "With the continuous expansion of enrolment in colleges and universities, there are a number of problems in higher vocational dance education. This paper analyses the causes of these problems in detail and puts forward some targeted improvement measures. Through the analyses in this paper, the majority of teachers have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the current situation of higher vocational dance education" (p. 101). This prompts us to pay attention to the current situation and problems of higher vocational dance education.

In addition, Lin (2022) emphasized that "through the survey, it was found that the main factors affecting graduates' employment satisfaction included wage income, career matching rate, employment expectation, work rights and interest protection, etc., with high employment expectation and insufficient practice level" (p. 35). This reveals the multiple influences on graduates' employment satisfaction.

In addition, Li 2015) argued that "educating students to pursue a noble spiritual realm is a comprehensive embodiment of truth, goodness and beauty, which can alleviate psychological emotions, enhance aesthetic tastes, and establish a correct outlook on life and self-awareness" (p. 31). This emphasizes the comprehensive goals and impact of education.

In Li(2018) states, "With the popularisation of higher education in China, the enrolment scale of higher vocational colleges and universities has been expanding, and the number of graduates is also increasing. The problem of graduates' employment difficulties has become increasingly prominent" (p. 89). This highlights the urgency of the employment problem of higher vocational graduates.

In view of the above facts, observations and literature on the employment problems of dance graduates, this study aims to examine the challenges, adjustments and manifestations of the employment problems of university graduates.

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. In our research, we aim to explore and address the challenges associated with the employment of dance graduates. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provides valuable theoretical support for research in this field. By applying this theory to the employment research of dance graduates, we can deeply analyze their careers and career development needs. For example, in terms of career development, graduates may need opportunities and resources for self-realization, while in terms of employment, factors such as job stability and income may be more in line with their basic physiological and security needs. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, we can gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted needs of dance graduates in terms of career development and employment. This knowledge guides us to provide more targeted and effective career guidance and support for these graduates.

Aristotle's teleology. His doctrine of "skopos" - the search for purpose and meaning in one's life - has important implications for our research. For dance graduates, their life goals may revolve around becoming accomplished dancers, choreographers, or educators. The research aims to investigate whether these graduates are able to achieve their life goals and to find out what contributes to their success. His emphasis on happiness through self-actualization and the realization of one's potential coincides with the skills and abilities required in the field of dance. Therefore, dance graduates must possess not only superb technical skills, but also innovative and expressive abilities in order to stand out in the competitive job market. In addition, Aristotle's ethical principles emphasize the importance of making sound career choices and adhering to professional ethics, which can have a significant impact on the careers of dance graduates.

Career Interest Theory. Holland's career interest theory divides individuals' career interests into six types: realistic, research, artistic, social, entrepreneurial, and conventional. These types represent the individual's interests and preferences in the work environment. For dance graduates, their career interests may be more artistic, that is, an interest in creative and expressive work.

In the professional field of dance, graduates may be more willing to engage in jobs related to dance creation, performance, teaching, etc., which are in line with artistic career interests. In theory, according to Holland's theory, dance graduates should pay more attention to jobs that match their career interests when looking for employment opportunities, so as to increase job satisfaction and career development prospects.

Self-efficacy theory. Bandura's self-efficacy theory emphasizes the individual's belief in his own ability, that is, the individual's confidence in being able to complete a specific task. Self-efficacy plays an important role in the employment readiness and success of dance graduates. Dance graduates are more likely to actively seek employment opportunities, interview for them, and succeed in their jobs if they believe they have the aptitude and skills to meet employment challenges. Conversely, if they lack self-confidence, they may feel frustrated during the job search process and have a negative attitude towards their employment prospects.

4. Significance of the Study

The research significance of this topic can better expand the research vision of dance vocational education, enrich the research methods of dance vocational education, and enrich the research theory of dance vocational education.

From the perspective of students, it can be found that the employment problem is one of the focuses of each student's attention, especially for the dance graduates who are about to face employment, understanding the employment situation and employment situation in this field has important guiding significance for planning their career

From the perspective of teachers, they can understand the needs of the job market, improve teaching content and methods, help students formulate career plans, and promote students' career development

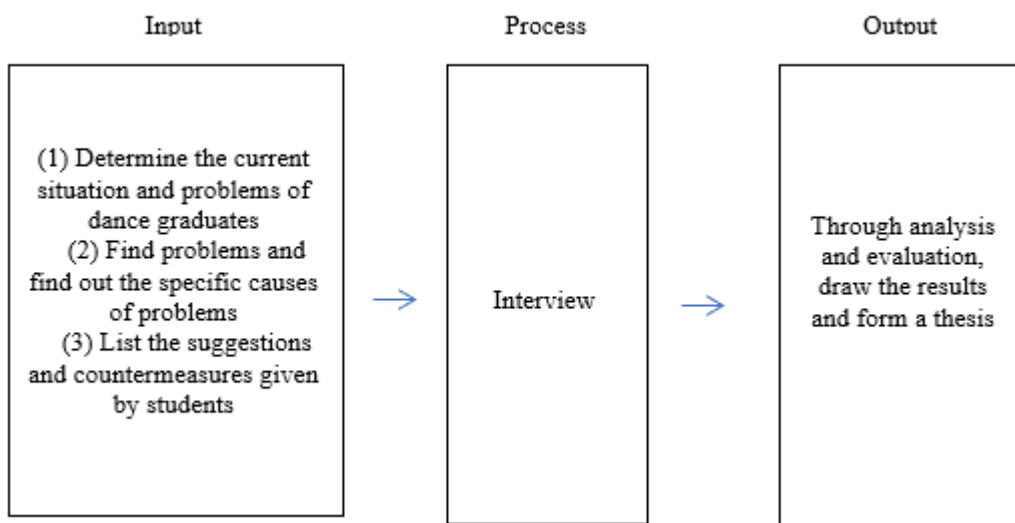
5. Schematic Illustration of the Study

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of the study depicting the

direction of the study on the employment of dance graduates. The study uses the Input-Process-Output model. Under the input box, the study investigates the impact of employment problems of dance graduates on their employment performance. In addition, the study analyzes the factors that influence the employment of dance graduates. In the process box, data will be collected using in-depth interviews. In the output box, the findings of the study on the impact of employment problems of dance graduates and related factors will be produced. The study will make recommendations to improve the employment situation of dance graduates and provide targeted guidance for their employment.

This schematic diagram outlines the overall process of the study, from problem identification and data collection to analyzing the findings and making recommendations for improvement. This helps the researcher and the reader to understand the direction and structure of the study and the relationship between the various parts of the study.

Table 1. Paradigm of the Study



From the perspective of the school, it can improve the quality of education, deeply explore the development trend of the industry, provide better career guidance for students, and enhance the college's sense of social responsibility

From the perspective of employers, understand the employability and quality of dance graduates, bring new ideas and inspiration to enterprises, and promote the innovative development of enterprises. By establishing contact and cooperation with dance graduates, we can open up broader talent resources and provide more talent support and cooperation opportunities for enterprise innovation and development

Conducting research on the dilemmas and analyses of the dilemmas faced by senior dance graduates from the perspective of information dissemination is of great significance in optimizing information transfer, improving graduate employment rates and solving social problems. These findings will help provide better support and guidance to graduates and related organizations, and promote the continuous improvement of the higher vocational dance education and employment environment.

6. Research Objectives

This study has a primary objective of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the challenges that dance graduates face upon entering the job market.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. Determine the current situation of dance graduates (trend, status and others.)
2. Identify the problems encountered by the dance graduates
3. Recommend possible solutions to these problems.

7. Methodology

In the research process of this study, the primary gathering tool will be through the use of the interview, which is the basis for the smooth development of this research topic.

8. Research Design

This paper uses qualitative research to understand the employment perceptions, status and planning of dance students through in-depth interviews with graduates and teachers. Qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding of the issues, taps into subjective experiences, and explores the nature of employment, the process, and the impact on students. Methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions can obtain rich data, understand the complexity, characteristics and patterns of employment issues, and identify participants' subjective experiences and perspectives.

9. Population and Locale of the study

This research will be conducted to 10 teachers and 10 students of Shanxi Vocational College of Art. Teacher participants will include those who have been teaching for the last 2 years. Students of dance majors at Shanxi Art Vocational College who took traditional cultural dance at a legal age will be included in the study. Purposive sampling is utilized in determining the participants of the study.

10. Data Gathering Tool

This article will primarily utilize interview guidance questions that will be sent to participants.

Using several literature databases such as China Knowledge, Pulse Magazine, and Pro Quest, this paper has gained a more comprehensive understanding of the theoretical system of teachers by combing the literature related to teachers at home and abroad. This helps to construct the theoretical framework of this paper and further define the research direction.

At the end of questionnaire collection, the questionnaire content will be converted into electronic text files for further research.

11. Data Gathering Procedure

When collecting relevant data for this study, researchers will first request the dean of Shanxi Vocational College of Arts to conduct the research. After obtaining approval, the researchers will draft a letter to all scholars requesting their consent to conduct interviews and requesting supporting information.

Following approval, data collection will start in accordance with the college's teaching policies. The identified participants' most convenient time and place will be used to administer the rubric. Prior to signing an informed consent form expressing their desire to participate in the study, participants will first get an explanation of the study's goals. Participants have the option to accept or reject the research throughout the entire procedure. For their comfort and convenience, the evaluation rubric will be administered in the participants' preferred language of communication. After collecting data, the researcher will analyze using mean, standard deviation and t-test.

12. Treatment of Data

In order to collect data to achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher will conduct thematic analyses based on the results. The researcher will conduct a thematic analysis based on the results of the interviews.

Interview results are analysed thematically. In addition, textual, content and comparative analyses will be conducted to delve deeper into the root causes of the employment difficulties of advanced dance graduates, providing a wealth of information and details that will provide important references for understanding the problems and developing solutions.

13. Ethical Consideration

The study followed research ethics to ensure informed consent, data confidentiality and participant rights. Prior to data collection, informed consent was explained to the participants and their voluntary participation, knowledge of project details, right to data confidentiality and right to withdraw at any time were confirmed. During the interviews, the researcher handled emotional responses carefully, did not force answers to questions that they did not want to share, and provided breaks. Interviews were conducted in a private place and data were presented using pseudonyms to protect participants' identities.

14. Results and Discussions

Interviews with 20 respondents showed that 91 per cent were concerned about their employment prospects because of intense competition for jobs in dance and limited opportunities for entrepreneurship. Most graduates chose employment over entrepreneurship, preferring direct employment to further studies. They preferred to work in universities, theatre companies or cultural companies rather than start their own business. For art theatres and enterprises, there is a high demand but low satisfaction for dance professionals, mainly focusing on professional and technical positions in the 18-25 age group. However, most graduates have shortcomings in practical experience and comprehensive ability, which cannot meet the market demand, resulting in an imbalance between supply and demand. This shows that despite the market demand for dance talents, the improvement of graduates' practical and comprehensive abilities is still the key. Therefore, dance education and training should pay more attention to the cultivation of practical aspects and comprehensive ability to better meet the market demand. At the same time, graduates should also actively improve their abilities and expand their career choices to cope with the fierce competition for jobs.

15. Conclusion

At present, dance graduates are facing increasingly severe employment pressure, and multi-party co-operation among students, schools, employers and the Government is needed to improve the situation. As the cornerstone of the country's future, college students' choices of career, employment and entrepreneurship are major life decisions. To this end, schools and the Government should provide vocational education, counselling and guidance to nurture high-calibre talents who can adapt to the needs of society, promote harmony between people and work, and stabilise social development.

"Those who are not in constant employment are not in constant employment, and those who are not in constant employment are not in constant employment." Stable employment is the cornerstone of family stability, and all parties in society should work together to solve the employment problem. Schools should improve the quality of

education, deepen reforms, and provide support and guidance for students' employment. Students should improve their own quality and ability, actively participate in practice and increase their competitiveness. Employers should care more about the growth of graduates and provide them with practice opportunities. Only through the joint efforts of all parties can a virtuous circle be formed to achieve better employment for professional graduates and contribute to the stable development of society.

16. Recommendations

Graduates should actively improve themselves and enhance their comprehensive quality. Students should formulate clear career plans and goals during their university years, participate in various activities and practices, and improve their skills, teamwork and professional ethics. At the same time, students also need to change the concept of employment, dare to accept challenges, and may even consider starting their own business. Schools should strengthen education on self-employment and develop students' entrepreneurial awareness and ability to cope with competition in the job market. Students need to build up their beliefs, actively explore their potentials, improve their innovative and unique thinking, and adapt to the needs of the times. At the same time, students should focus on solid learning fundamentals, participating in social practice and planning career development. Early participation in practice helps them understand their abilities and prepare for employment.

Schools should deepen their reforms and focus on cultivating a sense of innovation and practical ability with students' needs at the core. Dance education should innovate educational concepts and modes, balance the teaching of professional knowledge and aesthetic development, and establish a classroom where teachers and students have dialogue and interaction. Dance teachers need to continuously improve the quality of teaching and develop students' skills and emotional expression. Education should be closely integrated with the needs of society, cultivate comprehensive talents, school-enterprise co-operation, enhance students' comprehensive ability and adapt to social employment. Reform should be orientated to the needs of students, closely integrated with market demand, focusing on practice and comprehensive quality training, and comprehensively improve students' comprehensive ability and sense of innovation.

Employers also need to change their concepts appropriately, eliminate all kinds of discrimination, and adjust their recruitment standards according to the actual manpower, so as to help dance students find employment more smoothly. The government should actively introduce employment policies, strengthen targeted enrolment, provide preferential policies for grassroots employment, and establish a training system for grassroots positions to encourage the flow of talents to the grassroots. The government can also formulate entrepreneurship incentive policies, establish a resume sharing platform, provide financial subsidies, improve freelancing regulations and social security systems, and provide technical training and intermediary services for entrepreneurs. The Government should continue to optimize its policy of encouraging dance students to find employment and start their own businesses, promote their integration into society and help them succeed in the field of employment and

entrepreneurship.

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