

Research on the Development of Employment Market and Countermeasures of Personalized Career Guidance for Music Majors

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ABSTRACT

As an integral component of arts education, the employment outcomes of music majors not only impact individual career trajectories but also influence the preservation and innovation of musical arts. This study examines the current employment landscape for music students in regional universities through a Marxist theoretical lens. It emphasizes guiding students to incorporate contemporary characteristics and social values into their musical creation, performance, and pedagogical practices, while fostering appropriate professional perspectives. The research advocates for the integration of personal career development with societal needs, thereby achieving the unity of individual and social value realization. Through comprehensive investigation, the study analyzes the root causes of employment challenges and proposes targeted, forward-looking career guidance strategies based on the principle of theory-practice integration. The ultimate objectives are to establish a scientific and rational career service mechanism, contribute novel theoretical perspectives and practical approaches to music graduate employment research, facilitate the realization of professional value in competitive job markets, and promote coordinated development between music education and the music industry.

KEYWORDS

Music majors; Employment market; Personalized guidance

1 Introduction

In the context of the new era, college graduates, as an important part of human resources, shoulder the important mission of promoting economic and social development. Music majors, with their unique artistic literacy and professional skills, have broad development prospects in the field of culture and art. However, in recent years, with the continuous increase in the number of applications for music majors and the dynamic changes in the employment market, the employment problem of music majors has gradually become prominent, becoming one of the important factors restricting the high-quality development of music education. Therefore, an in-depth study of the development of the employment market and countermeasures personalized career guidance for music majors is of great theoretical and practical value for improving the employment competitiveness of music majors and promoting the effective connection between music education and social needs.

2 Analysis of the Employment Status of Music Majors

2.1 Employment Scale and Trends

In recent years, the number of candidates for the college entrance examination in China has shown a steady growth trend, among which the number of candidates for art majors has increased significantly, and music majors have become one of the most popular choices in the art examination. According to a report by Xinhua News Agency, the number of candidates for the national college entrance examination in 2023 was 12.91 million, among which the number of candidates for art majors increased by nearly 20% compared with 1.19 million in 2022. Music majors have once again become one of the most popular majors in the art examination ^[1], which reflects the continuous improvement of social attention to art education and the increasingly rich pursuit of art and aesthetic needs. The gradual expansion of the employment market for music majors also contributes to the increase of candidates for music majors.

2.2 Employment Structure and Distribution

The employment structure of music majors shows a certain hierarchy and diversity. From the perspective of professional alignment with employers' requirements, employment destinations can be broadly categorized into two groups: specialized institutions, including national troupes, military troupes, conservatories of music, and other professional organizations; and relatively broad employment fields, such as local art troupes, colleges, arts departments within comprehensive universities, music educators in the general education system, cultural enterprises, and public institutions. Employing units at different levels have different requirements for the professional literacy, comprehensive

quality, and practical experience of music graduates. For example, national troupes, and professional music colleges usually require graduates to have solid professional foundations, exquisite performance skills, and high artistic cultivation, while music teachers in the general education system pay more attention to the teaching ability, curriculum design, and organization ability of graduates. In addition, from the perspective of regional distribution of employment, the employment areas of music graduates are relatively concentrated. Economic developed areas, due to the rich cultural resources and active art markets, have attracted a large number of music graduates, but at the same time, it has also led to increased employment competition.

2.3 Employment Quality and Satisfaction

Employment quality and satisfaction are important indicators to measure the employment status of music majors. From the perspective of employment quality, some music graduates with strong professional ability and high comprehensive quality can smoothly enter ideal units and engage in work that is highly consistent with their majors, such as actors in professional troupes and teachers in well-known music education institutions. They can give full play to their professional advantages in their work and obtain good career development space and salary treatment. However, "there are also a considerable number of graduates who, due to insufficient professional ability, biased employment concepts, or the influence of employment market factors, have difficulty finding ideal jobs, and even switch to other industries with low employment quality. From the perspective of employment satisfaction"^[2], the employment satisfaction of music graduates is affected by many factors, including working environment, career development prospects, salary treatment, and the match between personal interests and careers.

3 Analysis of the Causes of Employment Difficulties for Music Majors

Music majors face distinct employment difficulties, which can be attributed to three main dimensions: limited occupational fields, restrictive career perceptions, and the specialized characteristics of relevant professions. These issues are reflected in the following aspects:

3.1 External Environmental Factors

Imbalance between supply and demand in the employment market. With the continuous increase in the number of applications for music majors, the number of music major graduates has increased year by year, while the growth of job demand in the employment market has been relatively slow, leading to an imbalance between supply and demand in the employment market. In some popular employment fields, such as professional troupes and well-known music education institutions, job competition is extremely fierce, and the situation of too many monks and too little food makes graduates face greater employment pressure. In addition, the dynamic changes in the employment market also affect the employment of music majors. With the development of social economy and the diversification of the cultural market, the structure and demand of music employment positions are constantly adjusting. Some traditional music employment positions are impacted by emerging music industries and digital music technologies, and demand is gradually decreasing. Although emerging music industry fields, such as music production, music marketing, and music therapy, have certain development potential, many music majors are unable to adapt due to their high requirements for professional skills, innovation capabilities, and comprehensive quality, resulting in a prominent mismatch between supply and demand in the employment market.

Unbalanced regional economic development. China exhibits pronounced regional disparities in economic development. The eastern coastal regions, characterized by advanced economies and rapidly growing cultural industries, boast a thriving music market with substantial demand for music professionals. "This dynamic environment offers abundant employment opportunities and favorable career prospects"^[3]. In contrast, central and western regions, particularly remote areas, experience comparatively slower economic growth. Due to limited investment in cultural initiatives, both music education and the music industry remain underdeveloped. Consequently, the scarcity of available positions fails to attract music graduates to these regions. This unbalanced regional economic development has led to significant differences in the choice of employment areas for music graduates. Most graduates tend to flow to economically developed areas, further increasing the competition pressure in the employment market. At the same time, it has also caused a shortage of music talent in some areas, affecting the development of local music education and cultural undertakings.

Social and cultural concepts and cognitive biases. The social and cultural concepts in some areas and families are relatively conservative, and there are biases in the perception of music majors, believing that music majors are "not serious about their studies" and "have no future".^[4] This concept affects the employment choices and career

development of music graduates to a certain extent. Some parents and students lack in-depth understanding of the employment prospects of music majors, believing that music graduates can only engage in performance work with narrow employment channels and poor career stability, so they are cautious about the study and employment of music majors. This social and cultural concept and cognitive bias not only affects the quality of enrollment and talent training of music majors but also restricts the development of the employment market for music graduates to a certain extent, making some graduates face greater psychological and social public opinion pressure in the employment process.

3.2 Internal Environmental Factors

Disconnection between professional education and market demand. The education model of music majors in some colleges and universities is relatively traditional, and the teaching content and curriculum cannot keep pace with the pace of social and economic development in a timely manner, resulting in a disconnection with market demand. Some colleges and universities pay too much attention to the imparting of theoretical knowledge and ignore the importance of practical skills, resulting in a lack of practical work experience and practical abilities after graduation. Lacking practical skills required by the employment market for music professionals, students find it difficult to adapt to the employment market. In addition, "the curriculum of music majors in colleges and universities lacks flexibility and diversity and does not fully consider the needs of individual student development and the diversified trends of the employment market, making it difficult for students to meet the individual needs of different employers after graduation" ^[5].

Insufficient quality and ability of students themselves. The lack of quality and ability of music majors is also an important factor affecting their employment. Some students lack initiative and enthusiasm in the process of professional learning and do not have a solid grasp of professional knowledge. Their professional skills need to be improved. In the employment process, employers not only pay attention to the professional abilities of graduates but also pay attention to their comprehensive quality and career development potential.

Employment concept and psychological deviation. The employment perspectives and psychological dispositions of music majors significantly influence their career choices and employment outcomes. Certain students exhibit misaligned employment expectations during the job search process, disproportionately emphasizing the prestige and geographical location of potential employers while neglecting the compatibility between their professional competencies and vocational interests. This tendency may lead to indiscriminate career decisions, ultimately hindering their ability to secure positions that align with their qualifications and aspirations.

4 Countermeasures for the Development of the Employment Market and Personalized Guidance for Music Majors

4.1 Optimize the Professional Education System and Improve the Comprehensive Quality of Students

Innovate the professional education model. Colleges and universities should be market-oriented, innovate the music professional education model, strengthen the teaching of practical skills, and improve students' comprehensive quality. "By establishing practical bases inside and outside the school, carrying out practical teaching projects, organizing students to participate in various music practice activities" ^[6], students can accumulate experience in practice and improve their professional skills. For example, colleges and universities can cooperate with professional troupes, music education institutions, cultural companies, etc., to establish internship and training bases, provide students with internship opportunities, make students understand industry trends and employer needs in actual work, and enhance employment competitiveness. At the same time, colleges and universities should focus on cultivating students' innovation awareness and innovation capabilities, encouraging students to carry out innovation practices in music creation, performance, teaching, and other aspects, and cultivate students' personalized artistic styles and innovative thinking abilities.

Optimize the curriculum. The curriculum should be optimized and a scientific and reasonable curriculum system built in accordance to the training objectives of music professionals and market demand. "For the making of curriculum, attention should be paid to the combination of theory and practice, the increase the proportion of practical courses, and the update and expansion of curriculum content, introducing cutting-edge courses such as emerging music technology, music industry management, and music marketing, broaden students' knowledge and horizons" ^[7]. In addition, elective courses and personalized training programs should also be provided to the students to meet the career development needs of different students.

Strengthen the construction of teaching staff. A high-quality teaching staff is the key to improving the quality of music professional education. "Colleges and universities should strengthen the construction of music professional teaching staff, introduce a group of outstanding talents with rich practical experience and teaching ability, and optimize the

structure of teaching staff ^[8]. At the same time, the training of existing teachers should also be strengthened. Colleges and universities should encourage teachers to participate in academic exchanges, teaching seminars, practical exercises, and other activities to improve their professional literacy and teaching level.

4.2 Strengthen Employment Guidance and Services to Improve Students' Employment Abilities

Build an all-round employment guidance service system. "Higher education institutions should establish and enhance comprehensive career guidance service systems to provide continuous professional development support throughout students' academic trajectories ^[9]. This systematic approach should commence upon students' matriculation, incorporating structured career education courses and professional development competitions to cultivate appropriate career perspectives, enhance labor market awareness, and facilitate evidence-based career planning. In the final academic phase, institutions should intensify vocational skill development programs focusing on essential competencies including professional resume composition, interview techniques, and workplace etiquette. These targeted interventions aim to optimize graduates' professional competitiveness in the job market. At the same time, colleges and universities should establish an employment information service platform, timely release employment information, broaden employment channels, and provide students with more employment opportunities.

Carry out personalized employment guidance. Personalized employment guidance should be carried out with accordance to the professional characteristics and personalized needs of music majors. "By taking career interest tests and career ability assessments of students, students may fully understand their personality characteristics, career interests, and professional abilities, and institutions can provide personalized employment counseling and guidance recommendations for them ^[10]. For example, for students with strong professional abilities and high comprehensive quality, they can be guided to apply for postgraduate studies, further improve their professional level, and lay a solid foundation for future career development. For students who intend to engage in music education, institutions can strengthen the training and guidance of teaching abilities to help students pass the teacher qualification certificate examination and prepare them to become music teachers. For students who have entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship guidance and training can be provided to help those students understand entrepreneurship policies, develop business plans, and improve the success rate of entrepreneurship. Personalized employment guidance can help students clarify their career development direction, improve their employment abilities, and achieve personalized employment.

Strengthen mental health education and employment psychological counseling. Music majors frequently experience psychological distress, including anxiety and diminished self-efficacy, during their employment-seeking process, which adversely impacts their career decision-making and employment outcomes. To address these challenges, higher education institutions should implement comprehensive mental health interventions and career counseling services. Through structured mental health curricula, specialized psychological workshops, and professional counseling sessions, students can develop enhanced self-awareness, acquire effective coping strategies for stress management, and cultivate psychological resilience. These evidence-based interventions aim to foster students' self-confidence, mitigate employment-related anxiety, and promote adaptive approaches to career challenges. By equipping music majors with these psychological competencies, institutions can significantly enhance their graduates' employment success rates.

4.3 Expand the Employment Market and Promote the Docking of Supply and Demand

Strengthen school-enterprise cooperation and expand the employment market. Colleges and universities should strengthen industry-academia collaboration by establishing long-term strategic partnerships with enterprises, cultural organizations and performance institutions. Through the implementation of joint research initiatives, cooperative education programs, and industry-aligned talent development projects, universities can cultivate music professionals who meet current market demands. For example, they can develop structured internship programs, collaborative research projects, and industry-informed curriculum development with partner organizations, enabling students to acquire contemporary industry knowledge with providing enterprises with qualified talents.

Promote the development of the music industry and create jobs. The music industry, as an important part of the cultural industry, has broad prospects for development. Universities should actively pay attention to the development trends of the music industry and apply the Marxist concept of innovative development to guide students to focus on emerging music technologies, the integration of music and technology, and the fusion of music and the cultural industry when expanding the employment market of the music industry. "Connections and cooperation with the music industry should also be strengthened to promote its growth and development, and create more job opportunities for music-related college students."^[11]. Strategic initiatives should be implemented to foster the growth of music enterprises and stimulate innovation in musical entrepreneurship. This includes promoting interdisciplinary convergence between music and emerging sectors such as digital technology, cultural tourism, and sports entertainment, thereby expanding the

music industry's market potential and employment spectrum. The resultant industrial expansion would generate multiplier effects across the entire music value chain, encompassing composition, performance, production, marketing, and pedagogy. Such holistic development would create diversified occupational opportunities and multidimensional career pathways for music professionals.

Guide students to work at the grass-roots level and expand employment space. Music professionals are highly needed in some grassroots areas, but those areas lack attractiveness due to regional conditions and lower economic development levels. Higher education institutions should implement comprehensive career guidance programs that emphasize the value of grassroots employment opportunities in music education and cultural development sectors. Concurrently, academic institutions should establish strategic partnerships with grassroots organizations to create structured internship programs and employment pipelines. These collaborations should address students' practical concerns while facilitating the realization of professional aspirations and personal value through meaningful contributions to community-based music and cultural initiatives.

4.4 Use Alumni Resources and Give Full Play to the Leading Role of Examples

Alumni, as the valuable asset of colleges and universities, have rich professional experience and social resources. Colleges and universities should make full use of alumni resources and give full play to the leading role of alumni in student employment guidance. By inviting alumni to return to school to hold lectures, share employment experience, and carry out career planning guidance, students can understand the growth process and successful experience of alumni, and guide students to establish correct employment concepts and career concepts. At the same time, colleges and universities can establish an alumni mentor system, invite outstanding alumni to serve as employment mentors for students, provide one-on-one employment guidance and career planning suggestions for students, help students solve problems and puzzles encountered in the employment process.

4.5 Strengthen Employment Tracking and Feedback, and Continuously Optimize Employment Guidance

Colleges and universities should establish a tracking and feedback mechanism for the employment of graduates¹, strengthen the tracking and analysis of the employment situation of graduates. Higher education institutions should establish systematic graduate tracking mechanisms to regularly monitor alumni employment status, career progression trajectories, and employer satisfaction metrics. Through these longitudinal assessments, universities can obtain empirical data regarding evolving employment trends and shifting market demands. At the same time, colleges and universities should strengthen communication and cooperation with employers, improve talent training programs based on employer demand feedback, improve the quality of talent training, and realize the effective connection between talent training and market demand, providing more effective support and guarantee for the employment of music majors.

Funding

Social Science Fund of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region "Research on Accelerating the Construction of International Communication Power in Xinjiang"(2022VZJ018)

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