



**THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF EMPLOYMENT
SATISFACTION OF MARKETING GRADUATES OF
SHANDONG UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING AND
VOCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
SIAM UNIVERSITY
2024**



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This Independent Study has been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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Title: The Influencing Factors of Employment Satisfaction of Marketing Graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology
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Major: Education Management

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of China's market economy, the employment structure in the industrial transformation and economic system reform has undergone a major shift in the labor market on the employment of talents should know, and comprehensive quality of the new requirements. Marketing graduates feel physically and mentally exhausted, and employment satisfaction decreases. By analyzing the factors affecting the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates, the employment problems of graduates can be alleviated. The objective of this study was to explore the influence of the nature of work, career prospects, and job reward on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates.

This study adopted the quantitative research method and took the marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology as the research population. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed, and three hundred and twenty-three valid questionnaires were recovered, with a validity rate of 80.75%. This study found that the nature of work, the career prospects, and the job reward have a significant positive impact on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology. For recommendations, improvements in the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates should focus on the following aspects: 1) Improving the curriculum design and career guidance; 2) Concentrating on career prospects; and 3) Improving job reward.

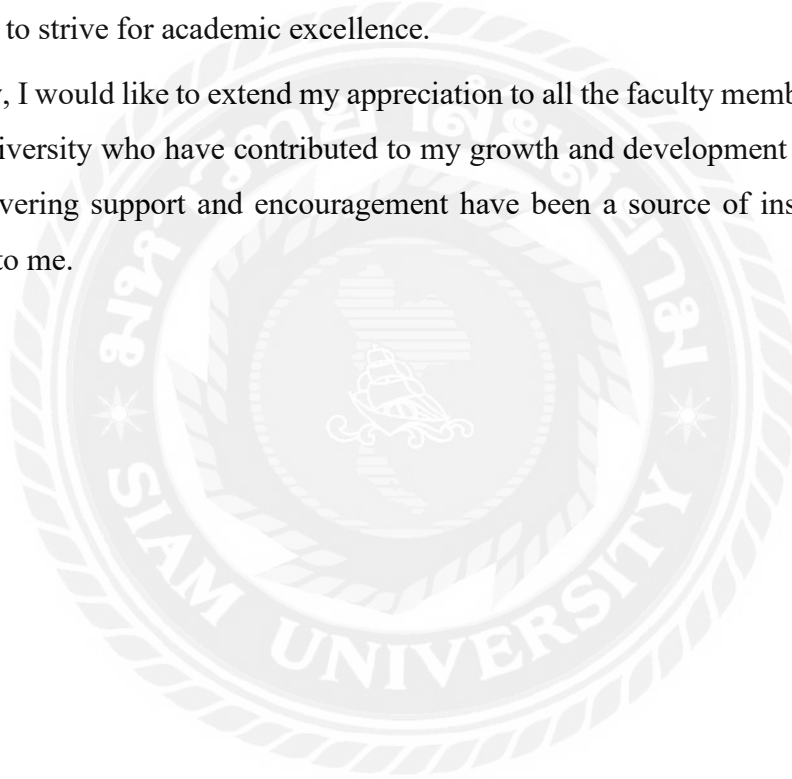
Keywords: influencing factors, employment satisfaction, marketing graduates, Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, for his invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout my master's independent study. His insightful comments and constructive criticism have significantly improved the quality of my work.

Additionally, I am grateful to Associate Professor Dr. Jomphong Mongkhonvanit, the Dean of the Graduate School, for his support and encouragement throughout my studies. His dedication to the graduate program and commitment to excellence have inspired me to strive for academic excellence.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to all the faculty members and staff of Siam University who have contributed to my growth and development as a scholar. Their unwavering support and encouragement have been a source of inspiration and motivation to me.



DECLARATION

I, Shi Jiamin, hereby certify that the work embodied in this independent study entitled “The Influencing Factors of Employment Satisfaction of Marketing Graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology” is result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Shi Jiamin

(Shi Jiamin)
July, 8 2024



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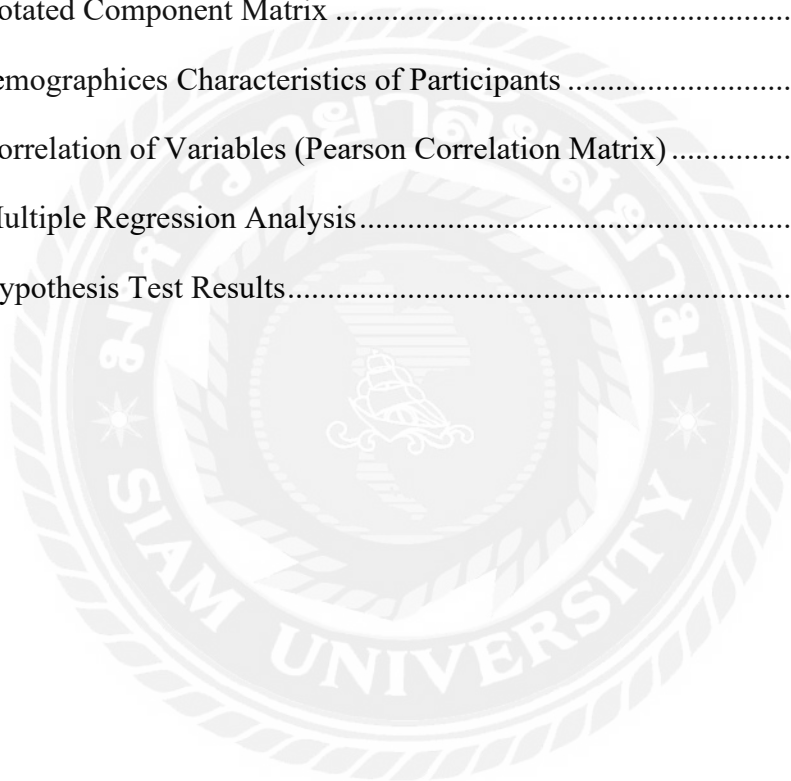
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Chinese graduates still face poor employment stability and low employment quality. When assessing graduates' employment status, the focus should not merely be on the employment rate but also delve deeper into the quality of employment, with employment satisfaction as an essential benchmark. Employment satisfaction among graduates stems from comparing their actual employment situation with their expectations, which are based on their educational level and personal perceptions. Enhancing graduates' employment satisfaction is a fundamental need to address employment challenges. By analyzing the factors influencing employment satisfaction, this can uncover the root causes of employment issues and explore multi-faceted solutions to enhance satisfaction, thereby alleviating graduates' employment problems.

The marketing major in universities annually attracts tens of thousands of students, supplying abundant marketing talents to the market. However, amidst economic structural transformation and industry renewal, the marketing field confronts new challenges. As China's market economy grows rapidly, the employment landscape undergoes significant changes due to industrial transformation and economic restructuring, necessitating new knowledge, skills, and comprehensive qualities from job seekers. Marketing, as a core component of business administration, aims to cultivate versatile marketing talents suited to modern economic needs. While the market's demand for marketing professionals has significantly expanded over long-term economic development and structural transformation, issues like university enrollment expansion, outdated educational models, and an unbalanced economy have led to a grim employment outlook for marketing majors, with talent quality often falling short of market demands, resulting in difficulties in finding jobs and low employment quality.

Marketing graduates encounter multiple issues regarding employment satisfaction. There is a notable discrepancy between the actual work content and the theoretical knowledge acquired during their studies, making it challenging for graduates to adapt initially and fostering job burnout. Marketing positions often involve long working hours and high-performance pressure, leading to physical and mental exhaustion and reduced employment satisfaction. Moreover, low starting salaries and unclear career advancement paths significantly impact satisfaction, as graduates perceive their efforts as not commensurate with rewards, hindering the achievement of career aspirations. Additionally, inadequate professional training and employee care from some enterprises deprive graduates of growth opportunities and a sense of belonging, further diminishing employment satisfaction. The fast-paced changes and technological updates in the marketing industry require continuous learning and adaptability, posing a substantial challenge to fresh graduates, who often feel overwhelmed, affecting their overall employment satisfaction. Employment satisfaction among marketing graduates arises from comparing their actual employment situation with their expectations,

grounded in their educational background and personal perceptions. Enhancing marketing graduates' employment satisfaction is vital to resolving employment issues. By analyzing the factors influencing their satisfaction, this can pinpoint the root causes of employment challenges and explore multi-dimensional strategies to improve satisfaction, thereby mitigating marketing graduates' employment difficulties.

1.2 Questions of the Study

Under the current severe employment situation, related studies lack relevance in analyzing the reasons for the generally low employment satisfaction of marketing graduates. Taking Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology as a case study, this study examined the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates in general and in each related dimension (Hown & Lee, 2018; Nawakitphaitoon & Tang, 2020). The purpose was to reveal the important factors causing the graduates' low employment satisfaction and propose countermeasures to solve the problem. It provides the theoretical basis for enhancing the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates and realizing the optimal allocation of social labor market resources.

(1) Does the nature of work affect the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates?

(2) Does the career prospect affect the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates?

(3) Does the job reward affect the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

(1) To explore the influence of the nature of work on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates.

(2) To explore the influence of the career prospect on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates.

(3) To explore the influence of the job reward on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research encompasses various aspects of employment satisfaction among marketing graduates of Shandong Vocational and Technical College of Engineering. The study focused on graduates from the marketing program of this

college as its research subjects. The research delved into the personal backgrounds and educational experiences of these graduates, examining how factors such as gender, age, educational level, and academic performance influence their employment satisfaction.

The study attended to the resources and support provided by the college, including curriculum design, internship opportunities, and career guidance services, evaluating their effectiveness in enhancing the employment satisfaction of graduates. Furthermore, the research considered the alignment between graduates' career development goals and their actual job positions, exploring how this alignment impacts their employment satisfaction.

Through a comprehensive analysis of these various aspects, the study aimed to reveal the primary factors influencing the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates from Shandong Vocational and Technical College of Engineering. A questionnaire survey was conducted online, using a five-level Likert scale. The survey was conducted from January 1, 2024, to April 1, 2024.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are more related studies on graduates' employment satisfaction, and researchers have analyzed and studied from different perspectives and have achieved a lot of results. However, most studies do not focus on the employment satisfaction of graduates in specific majors. Graduates play an important role both in terms of the number of employed people and their role in the labor market. Taking marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology as the research object, this study focuses on the influencing factors of graduates' employment satisfaction, which enriches the research system and structure of marketing graduates' employment satisfaction to a certain extent (Hown & Lee, 2018).

In the process of deepening the reform of the education system, the current employment situation is still severe. The employment of graduates is a hot issue that people are generally concerned about, and it is important to explore the influence of potential factors such as graduates, schools, and society on the employment satisfaction of graduates. Based on the results of the employment satisfaction research survey, schools can make targeted improvements and refinements to their talent cultivation programs, strengthen training and guidance services for students' employment, cultivate students' correct professional values, and realize the relative connection between graduates' professionalism and professional ability and the requirements of employers to improve the quality of graduates' employment (Nawakitphaitoon & Tang, 2020). The self-diagnosis of graduates' employment-related skills serves as a reference for developing new strategies to address career and employment challenges. This process aims to transform the traditional employment concept, establish the right mindset, and shift from passive job-seeking to proactive self-selection.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Nature of work refers to the specific tasks and responsibilities of marketing graduates in their actual job positions, encompassing job content, work environment, job intensity, professional challenges, and sense of accomplishment derived from work. This definition will be gauged through a satisfaction survey targeting graduates regarding their job content.

Career prospect denotes the opportunities and potential for professional growth within the current position or industry for graduates, including career advancement paths, skill enhancement opportunities, likelihood of job transitions, and long-term career planning. It is measured by investigating graduates' expectations and perceptions of their future career development.

Job reward refers to the material and non-material benefits graduates receive, including salary levels, bonuses, welfare benefits, job stability, professional fulfillment, and work-life balance. This aspect is primarily evaluated by investigating income levels, satisfaction with welfare benefits, and perceptions of non-material rewards.

Marketing graduates are those who graduated from the Marketing Program of Shandong Vocational and Technical College of Engineering, encompassing all individuals who graduated within the research timeframe (2019 to 2023). The research subjects were identified through the college's graduate information database and alumni network.

Employment satisfaction represents the overall degree of satisfaction graduates have with their employment status, encompassing satisfaction with nature of work, career prospect, job reward, and other related aspects. It is measured through a comprehensive scoring system that covers specific questions across multiple dimensions, aiming to reflect graduates' satisfaction.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

While the study aimed to delve into various factors influencing the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates from Shandong Vocational and Technical College of Engineering, it is not without limitations. Firstly, the study's sample was confined solely to graduates from this particular college, limiting the geographical and institutional diversity of the participants. Secondly, data collection relied heavily on self-reported questionnaires, which may introduce social desirability or recall bias. The design and administration of these questionnaires also involved a degree of subjectivity, potentially affecting the reliability and validity of the data.

Furthermore, the rapid changes in the external environment, such as economic fluctuations and technological innovations within the industry, can significantly impact employment satisfaction. However, these factors are challenging to control and analyze within the scope of this study. Additionally, the study primarily focuses on factors such as graduates' personal backgrounds, school resource support, external employment environment, and job-person fit, overlooking other potentially important variables. Lastly, the analysis and interpretation of the study results may be inherently subjective, as researchers' personal biases or chosen theoretical frameworks can influence the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the conclusions.



Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Graduate satisfaction is a crucial aspect of teaching work in universities. This study examines the relationship between nature of work affect, career prospect, job reward, and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates. This chapter summarizes relevant research on university graduate satisfaction.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Connotation of Employment Satisfaction

The concept of "employment satisfaction" first emerged in the book "Employment satisfaction" (1935) by American psychologist Hoppock, who argued that "the important basis for evaluating employment satisfaction lies in one's subjective emotions, and the actual situation of work and individual career expectations can influence satisfaction". Since then, numerous scholars have further elaborated on this concept. Vroom (1964) pointed out that employment satisfaction is the subjective feeling generated by employees during the work process, representing the discrepancy between employees' expectations of an ideal job and the actual work situation. A significant difference between the actual work experience and initial expectations leads to low employment satisfaction, whereas a small difference results in high employment satisfaction. Lawler (1967) defined employment satisfaction from the perspective of employee expectations, contending that employee satisfaction is the gap between "what employees get" and "what employees believe they can get." The smaller the gap, the higher the satisfaction. Loughlin & Barling (2001) conducted a comparative analysis between Malaysian graduates educated domestically and those who studied in the UK and the US, concluding that there was no significant difference in employment satisfaction among graduates based on their study locations, indicating that different study locations do not have a notable impact on employment satisfaction. Jaworski et al. (2020) found that optimistic thinking and employment satisfaction positively correlate with nursing proficiency among nurses, suggesting that supporting and responding to nurses' needs can enhance their employment satisfaction and nursing proficiency when improving their professional capabilities.

While most scholars consider employment satisfaction as one of the criteria for measuring employment quality, some equate employment quality with employment satisfaction. Some scholars differentiate between narrow and broad senses of employment difficulties (Jaworski et al., 2020). The sense refers to whether graduates can achieve higher satisfaction beyond mere employment. Employment satisfaction is

a comprehensive concept encompassing access to employment opportunities, job stability, income levels, and personal development. The level of employment satisfaction can influence graduates' job-seeking confidence and the sustainable and healthy development of talent cultivation in universities (Lawler & O'Gara, 1967). Studies have indicated that employment satisfaction reflects the degree of alignment between actual and expected perceptions of employment. Moreover, due to its precise positioning, strong relevance, and high efficiency, employment satisfaction is essential for evaluating the quality of talent cultivation in universities.

Conceptual definitions of employment satisfaction are generally categorized into three main types: cause-based, holistic, and factor-based (Wnuk, 2017). The causal conceptualization focuses on the root causes of satisfaction and takes the fulfillment of the worker's personal needs as the outcome of employment satisfaction (Cleare, 2013). The holistic conceptualization ignores the causes of satisfaction, an independent concept based on the subjective attitudes of workers toward their jobs and all job-related factors (Berger, 2009; Wnuk, 2017). The factor-based concept divides the factors affecting employment satisfaction into a total of five dimensions, namely, the nature of work, pay and benefits, promotion, company leadership, and coworkers, and determines the level of employment satisfaction as high or low through the worker's feelings and satisfaction with these dimensions in the workplace. Employment satisfaction is when the employee acts in the organizational role of the nature of work and has a comprehensive understanding of the work process. In the research related to the factors affecting employment satisfaction, scholars point out that employment satisfaction is determined by the feelings generated by the gap between the employee's deserved job reward and the actual job reward, and the more the actual job reward is less than the deserved job reward, the lower the degree of employment satisfaction (Berger, 2009; Cleare, 2013; Hown & Lee, 2018; Wnuk, 2017). On the conceptual definition of employment satisfaction, different scholars have put forward different insights. The concept of employment satisfaction is that employees, through the evaluation of their work, and in the process of a comprehensive emotional state, is employment satisfaction (Nawakitphaitoon & Tang, 2020). Employment satisfaction is determined by the degree of education and job matching has a great impact on employment satisfaction, there is a greater relationship between there is a greater relationship between the definition of the concept of employment satisfaction and professional relevance.

2.2.2 Influencing Factors of Employment Satisfaction

(1) Nature of Work

The nature of work is the most direct and important factor affecting employment satisfaction, which mainly includes job reward, nature of work, job group, job background and organizational culture. Among them, job reward refers to the salary

and benefits, social status personal upward mobility and so on that workers get through their work (Patillo et al., 2009). The nature of work refers to the physical and mental labor of the work performed by the workers, the challenge of the work, the complexity of the work the intensity of the labor, and so on. Workgroup refers to workers in the work environment and the work process in the work of the group's sense of identity, the group's degree of harmony, and the degree of openness and timely degree of communication and information exchange (Giancola, 2010). Work background refers to workers in the process of work in the implementation of tools, programs, and means that are complete, as well as work-related such as work time, work, such as how to play the space, and other auxiliary factors. Organizational culture refers to the work unit in the long-term accumulation of management and development process gradually forming a set of value systems belonging to the work unit itself, such as the degree of humanization of the company, corporate culture, policy effects, and strategic decisions. Marketing graduates can engage in types of work, covering a wide range of industries and positions (Berger, 2009; Cleare, 2013; Giancola, 2010). The nature and content of the work include market research and analysis, brand management, digital marketing, sales management, public relations and event planning, product management, and customer relationship management. The high cost of stressful work often brings an unfriendly experience to graduates.

In the 1950s, American psychologist Frederick Herzberg studied the motivations behind individual work in society and discovered that external factors related to an individual's work environment and conditions often serve as causes of dissatisfaction, which he termed "hygiene factors." On the other hand, a separate set of factors that bring satisfaction to individuals are often tied to the nature and content of work, determined by the nature of work, and he referred to these as "motivators." Based on these findings, he proposed the Two-Factor Theory (Motivation-Hygiene Theory) (Fabra Florit & Vila Lladosa, 2007), also known as the "Motivation-Hygiene Factors Theory." Eugenia et al. (2007) analyzed the factors influencing employment satisfaction using econometric regression modeling techniques. The empirical results of this study indicated that the duration of education does not directly impact employment satisfaction but has an indirect effect. Additionally, the degree of alignment between one's field of education and their job role demonstrates a highly significant positive correlation with employment satisfaction.

(2) Career Prospect

The satisfaction dimension of career prospect comprehensively reflects, to a certain extent, graduates' genuine interest in their majors, their attitudes toward the prospects of their careers, their satisfaction with the promotion mechanisms in their current workplaces, as well as their mindset toward their goals and future. The career prospect of the industry in which graduates are employed can significantly impact their employment satisfaction. The better the career prospect of the industry, the more graduates can leverage their strengths and professional knowledge in their careers,

resulting in higher employment satisfaction. With the continuous development of the economy, marketing has become a vital component of corporate operations and growth. Enterprises require professional marketing talents to enhance their commercial competitiveness and achieve more robust development amidst fierce market competition. Relevant statistics show that the demand for marketing positions has continued to rise, indicating promising employment prospects for marketing majors. However, many marketing majors still face difficulties in finding employment or achieving high-quality employment due to various reasons, leading to suboptimal career prospect. Similarly, many enterprises struggle to recruit high-quality marketing talents. The satisfaction dimension of career prospect, therefore, comprehensively encapsulates the extent to which marketing graduates are genuinely interested in their majors, their attitudes towards the prospects of their marketing careers, their satisfaction with the promotion mechanisms in their current workplaces, and their mindset towards their goals and future.

Career prospect is a key factor in the satisfaction of marketing graduates. Career prospect include job opportunities, room for career advancement, salary and benefits packages, industry reputation and corporate culture, as well as individual career plans and external support (Filippov & Yaroslavtsev, 2021). Multiple aspects of career prospect influence graduates' career choices and employment satisfaction. The variety and number of job opportunities are critical to graduate satisfaction. Many studies have shown that the wide diversity of employment opportunities offered by marketing programs allows graduates to choose the right career path based on their personal interests and abilities, leading to increased satisfaction. Career advancement and room for growth are also important factors influencing graduate satisfaction. The possibility of career advancement and the transparency of career development are directly related to graduates' confidence in the future and work engagement (Boulaiz et al., 2011). The study points out that in the marketing industry, the training and development programs, promotion mechanisms, and clarity of career paths offered by companies have a significant impact on graduates' career prospect.

An investigation based on data from a third-party evaluation agency on the monthly income and career prospect of graduates from vocational colleges in Zhejiang Province from the 2012-2014 cohorts indicates that the primary factors influencing graduates' employment satisfaction are salary and personal development space. In their study on factors influencing medical students' employment choices, Glynn et al. (2009) pointed out that future career development, job opportunities, and the challenge of job content are the main factors influencing medical students' employment decisions. Meanwhile, Alderfer proposed the ERG Theory in 1973, which comprises three core needs and hierarchical levels of employment satisfaction: E (Existence) refers to survival needs, R (Relatedness) represents relational needs, and G (Growth) signifies growth needs. A company with promising career prospect can create a more favorable environment for growth, fulfilling employees' needs for existence, relatedness, and growth, thereby enhancing employment satisfaction.

(3) Job Reward

Job reward and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates are affected by various factors. Job reward in marketing are often attractive because many positions offer not only base salaries but also performance bonuses and sales commissions, which allow highly effective marketers to earn a good income (Martin & Roman, 1996). For employment satisfaction, marketing graduates typically experience variety and creativity in their work. Jobs in this field, which include branding, market research, event planning, and customer relationship management, vary in tasks and challenges from day to day, and this variety and challenge make the work dynamic and engaging. However, the pressures and challenges of a marketing job cannot be ignored (Sell & Cleal, 2011). With fierce competition and strict performance reviews, marketers are required to work in high-pressure environments with tight project deadlines and performance targets. For those graduates who can remain productive under pressure and continue to learn and adapt to changes in the marketplace, a marketing job will bring fulfillment and career satisfaction. Job reward influence employment satisfaction among marketing graduates (Saif & Siddiqui, 2019).

2.2.3 Related Research

There are diverse methods to enhance the employment satisfaction of university graduates. As various survey results reveal, employment satisfaction is influenced by numerous factors, necessitating tailored suggestions from four distinct perspectives: the government, employers, universities, and graduates themselves, considering individual and professional specificities. Universities must clarify their training objectives and provide reasonable guidance to students, integrating general education with professional education, enabling them to have a clear understanding of their employability. To improve graduates' employment satisfaction, relevant government departments should play an active role by eliminating unreasonable restrictions in recruitment, such as gender and geographical biases. Additionally, the government should improve the development environment for private enterprises and offer incentives and policy support to those who employ graduates.

In the research, students in developing countries have a more positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, suggesting that the government should formulate policies to cultivate entrepreneurial skills among university students to enhance their employment satisfaction. They emphasized the importance of proactive guidance from universities during the employment preparation process for graduates, advocating for the inclusion of courses that foster social competencies the utilization of advanced teaching methods, and reasonable career guidance to boost graduates' employment confidence. Furthermore, they highlighted the need for mutual understanding and cooperation among university students, employers, universities, and other stakeholders, with each playing their respective roles to promote the

development of graduates' employability. Taylor (1986) noted that enterprises can provide practical learning platforms and opportunities for universities and students, enabling graduates to attain the necessary work readiness upon graduation, thereby creating favorable conditions for employment and enhancing their employment competitiveness.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on literature review, the influencing factors of employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Vocational and Technical University of Engineering are nature of work, career prospect, and job reward. On this research foundation, hypotheses regarding the interaction of these factors influencing employment satisfaction among marketing graduates are proposed. Consequently, a model of employment satisfaction factors for marketing graduates of Shandong Vocational and Technical University of Engineering is constructed, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

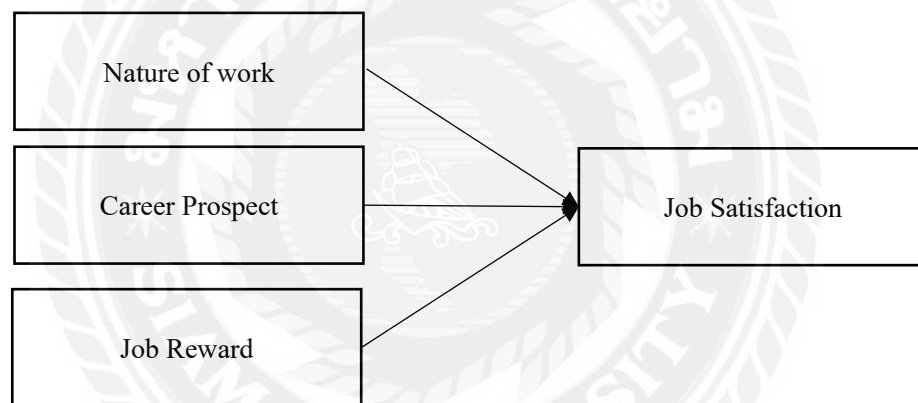


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter designs a conceptual model of the influencing factors of employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Vocational and Technical University of Engineering. In this model, the independent variables include nature of work, career prospect, and job reward, while the dependent variable is graduates' employment satisfaction.

3.2 Research Design

The quantitative research method was adopted in this study, using a questionnaire survey to collect data. The factors influencing employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Vocational and Technical University of Engineering encompass nature of work, career prospect, and job reward. The hypotheses were proposed, and a model of these influencing factors was constructed. Nature of work is divided into three aspects: job tasks, work environment, and job responsibilities. Career prospect is categorized into three dimensions: career advancement, skill enhancement, and promotion mechanisms. Job reward encompasses three components: salary level, benefits, and reward systems. Employment satisfaction is measured in three areas: overall satisfaction, job fit, and personal accomplishment. The survey questionnaire employs a Likert five-point scale, comprising a total of 12 measurement items. For each variable, question items are designed, and the coding of the items is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Measurement Items

Dimension	Measurement Items	NO.
Nature of work	1. Are you satisfied with the tasks of your current job?	Q1
	2. Are you satisfied with the working environment of your current job?	Q2
	3. Are you satisfied with your current job duties?	Q3
Career Prospect	1. What do you think about the career prospect of your current job?	Q4
	2. Are you satisfied with the vocational training and skill improvement opportunities provided by the company?	Q5
	3. Are you satisfied with the promotion mechanism within the company?	Q6
Job Reward	1. Are you satisfied with the salary level of your current job?	Q7
	2. Are you satisfied with the benefits provided by the company (e.g. insurance, vacation, etc.)?	Q8
	3. Are you satisfied with the bonus and performance incentive mechanism of your job?	Q9
Employment satisfaction	1. Are you satisfied with the overall satisfaction of your current marketing-related job?	Q10

	2. What is the degree of compatibility between the skills and knowledge you have learned in your current job and the professional marketing knowledge you have learned in school?	Q11
	3. How satisfied are you with the degree to which your current job gives you a sense of professional fulfillment and personal value realization?	Q12

3.3 Hypothesis

Based on the literature review, the interrelationships among various variables are established and a model is constructed. Through statistical analysis of the data, the degree of influence of each factor on employment satisfaction is determined. The feedback on employment satisfaction is then used to analyze its correlation with the influencing factors. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this study:

H1: The nature of work has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University.

H2: The career prospect has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University.

H3: The job reward has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University.

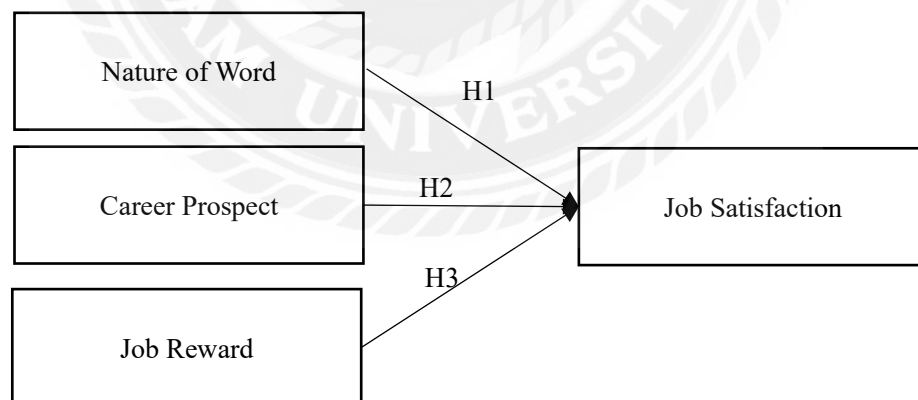


Figure 3.1 Hypotheses

3.4 Population and Sampling

The population is the marketing graduates of Shandong Vocational and Technical College of Engineering. The study employed the random sampling method. Using the formula proposed by Yamane (1973), where n represents the sample size, s is the quartile of the standard normal distribution, and a confidence level of 95% typically corresponds to $Z=1.96$. Here, p is the estimated standard deviation of the sample, assumed to be 0.5. The allowable margin of error E (the maximum permissible difference between the sample mean and the population mean) is set at 0.05. The calculation results in a sample size of 400.

$$n = \frac{s^2 * p^2}{E}$$

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection for this study was conducted over three months, from January 1, 2024, to April 1, 2024. The survey questionnaire is designed to cover various aspects including graduates' background information, current employment status, salary levels, career development, work environment, relevance to their major, and employment satisfaction. The questionnaire is available in paper and electronic formats to enhance response rates and coverage. The target respondents were graduates majoring in Marketing of Shandong Vocational and Technical University of Engineering. The survey links were distributed via email and social media platforms (such as WeChat, QQ, etc.), and paper questionnaires were distributed at on-campus events or alumni gatherings. Online questionnaires were automatically collected and recorded through a survey platform, while paper questionnaires were collected centrally at designated locations. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, with 323 valid responses received, yielding a response rate of 80.75%.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Questionnaire Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's α is employed to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, with an α value ranging from 0 to 1. A higher α coefficient indicates higher reliability and more reliable results. The research analyzed the questionnaire's reliability using SPSS, and the results are presented in Table 1. The Cronbach's α values for all factors are greater than 0.8. According to Cronbach's alpha standards, a coefficient greater than 0.8 indicates good reliability; between 0.7 and 0.8, the reliability is acceptable; and less than 0.7, the reliability is poor. Therefore, the reliability of the questionnaire in this

study is acceptable, with good internal consistency among the data.

The higher the reliability of the scale, the more reliable it is. This study adopts Cronbach's Alpha as an indicator to measure the questionnaire's reliability. A Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.8 signifies the scale's reliability. The closer the Cronbach's Alpha value is to 1, the higher the reliability of the scale and the smaller the error in the measured results. The questionnaire scale comprises four variables, and a Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted on the scale. The questionnaire scale data were organized in EXCEL and imported into the statistical analysis software SPSS for analysis. The calculated Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each variable are significantly greater than 0.8. The overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.922, which is greater than 0.8. The results indicate that all items are correlated with the overall scale, demonstrating discrimination and good internal consistency. The questionnaire is highly reliable, allowing for further validation of the scale. As shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Variable Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Nature of work	0.821	3
Career Prospect	0.858	3
Job Reward	0.885	3
Employment Satisfaction Among Marketing graduates	0.836	3

3.6.2 Questionnaire Validity Analysis

Validity refers to the validity and accuracy of the questionnaire, which represents the degree of agreement between the actual test results and the ideal test results. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are the methods commonly used by most scholars. When the value of KMO is greater than 0.6, the factor analysis can be done; when the value of KMO is greater than 0.7, it is better to do factor analysis, and the value of KMO is between 0 and 1. The closer to 1 the correlation between the variables is the stronger, the more suitable for factor analysis; when the value of KMO is closer to 0, it means that the correlation is weaker and more unsuitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is also a method to test the degree of correlation between the variables, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of the probability of companionship P value is smaller, the higher the validity, when the P value is less than 0.05, it means that it is suitable to do factor analysis. The KMO value of 0.905, which is greater than 0.8, and the P-value of probability of significance of Bartetts' sphere test is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the structural validity of the questionnaire is good.

This study employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to categorize all

questionnaire items, ultimately dividing them into four dimensions. Based on the results of the causal analysis, four dimensions with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, aligning with the original problem categorization in the questionnaire design. Each measurement item in the questionnaire has a factor loading greater than 0.5 on its corresponding dimension, indicating strong representativeness of each item within its respective dimension. Furthermore, the discriminant validity among dimensions is good, suggesting that the dimensions are independent without significant overlap. This further demonstrates that these dimensions are conceptually distinct and capable of accurately reflecting the aspects being measured. The results demonstrate that the questionnaire is highly valid and effectively measures the intended factors. Detailed data and results are presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.3 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.905
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2334.912
	df	66
	Sig.	0.000

Table 3.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	% of Variance	Cumulative %	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.169	45.844	45.844	45.844	55.844	17.629	27.629
2	1.641	8.203	54.047	8.203	64.047	16.97	44.599
3	1.521	7.604	61.651	7.604	71.651	16.955	61.554
4	1.328	6.638	68.289	6.638	76.694	16.734	76.694
5	0.626	3.131	71.419				
6	0.57	2.849	74.268				
7	0.557	2.783	77.051				
8	0.513	2.567	79.618				
9	0.45	2.25	81.868				
10	0.245	2.039	96.970				
11	0.199	1.656	98.626				
12	0.165	1.374	100.000				

Table 3.5 Rotated Component Matrix

	1	2	3	4
Q1	0.811			
Q2	0.822			
Q3	0.856			
Q4			0.723	

Q5			0.746	
Q6			0.722	
Q7		0.721		
Q8		0.722		
Q9		0.734		
Q10				0.715
Q11				0.865
Q12				0.731

3.6.3 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Before data analysis, it was necessary to clean and inspect the collected data, including checking for missing values, outliers, and other irregularities. In case of issues, appropriate measures were taken to process or exclude the data. Software such as Excel and SPSS were utilized for descriptive statistics, which involved statistical tests like means, standard deviations, percentages, and more, applied to survey results and various variables. Descriptive statistics provide foundational support for further analysis of the data.

3.6.4 Influential Statistics Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted on the collected data to determine the interactions between variables. Regression analysis was performed. Regression analysis was done using path coefficient diagrams and coefficient tables to describe the relationships between latent and observed variables, verifying research hypotheses.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

Through literature review, the factors influencing the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Vocational and Technical University of Engineering were sorted out. In this study, the reliability and validity of the collected questionnaire data were tested by quantitative method. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used to examine the relationships among variables.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The survey data provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic distribution of the participants. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with males accounting for 45.8% and females 54.2%, slightly dominated by females. In terms of age, the majority of participants (74.6%) are under 23 years old, followed by the 23-28 age group (20.4%), and only 5.0% are above 28 years old, indicating that the respondents are predominantly young. The survey results show that the technology & telecommunications industry attracted the most graduates, with 88 individuals, accounting for 27.2%. Following closely was the Financial Services, which had 94 graduates, representing 29.1%. The Media & Entertainment also demonstrated significant appeal, attracting 85 graduates, and 26.3%. The Consumption Goods industry had 50 graduates, constituting 15.5%. Additionally, 6 graduates chose other industries, accounting for 1.9% of the total. On the whole, marketing graduates enjoy promising job prospects across industries. The distribution reflects the composition of the surveyed institution or program, confirming the required demographic characteristics. See Table 4.1 for details.

Table4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Items	Options	Frequency	Percent%
Gen	Male	148	45.8
	Female	175	54.2
Age	Under 23	241	74.6
	23-28	66	20.4
	Above 28	16	5.0
Industries	Fast Consumption Goods	50	15.5
	Technology & Telecommunications	88	27.2
	Financial Services	94	29.1
	Media & Entertainment	85	26.3
	Others	6	1.9

4.3 Results of the Study

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

In this study, the correlation between the factors influencing the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates was examined with the help of SPSS.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between nature of work and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates is 0.591, $p=0.000<0.001$, which is significant, indicating that there is a positive correlation between nature of work and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient between career prospect and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates is 0.601, $p=0.000<0.001$, which is significant and indicates that there is a positive correlation between career prospect and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient between job reward and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates is 0.547, $p=0.000<0.001$, which is significant and indicates that there is a positive correlation between job reward and employment satisfaction of marketing graduates.

Table 4.2 Correlation Between Variables (Pearson Correlation Matrix)

	Nature of Work	Career Prospect	Job Reward	Employment Satisfaction
Nature of Work	1			
Career Prospect	.623**	1		
Job Reward	.616**	.619**	1	
Employment Satisfaction	.591**	.601**	.547**	1

NOTE: * $P<0.05$, ** $P<0.01$, *** $P<0.001$

4.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed on the data to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The regression equation was significant, $F=88.852$, $p<0.001$. the Durbin-Watson test value was 1.826, which is between 1.8 and 2.2. the data were analyzed for the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The data were independent and consistent with linear

regression. In the covariance diagnostic results, the VIF values of the nature of work, career prospect, and job reward were 1.112, 1.037, and 1.212, respectively. The nature of work ($\beta=0.553$, $P<0.001$), career prospect ($\beta=0.556$, $P<0.001$), and job reward ($\beta=0.445$, $P<0.001$) have a significant positive effect on the employment satisfaction of the graduates of the marketing program. Together, these variables explain 67.4% of the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates, which is in line with the requirement.

Table 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Item	Unstd. B	Std. Beta	t	Sig.	VIF	F	Durbin-Watson
C	4.721		9.058	0.000		88.652***	1.826
Nature of Work	0.553	0.455	5.068	0.000	1.112		
Career Prospect	0.556	0.429	5.457	0.000	1.037		
Job Reward	0.445	0.369	3.103	0.000	1.212		
R Square							0.674
Adjusted R Square							0.664

NOTE: * $P<0.05$, ** $P<0.01$, *** $P<0.001$

Therefore, according to the results of the data analysis, the nature of work has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University, which supports the hypothesis H1.

The career prospect has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University, which supports the hypothesis H2.

The job reward has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University, which supports the hypothesis H3.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study employed the quantitative research method. The research focused on the marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 323 valid questionnaires were retrieved, yielding an effective response rate of 80.75%. The data analysis concludes that nature of work, career prospect and job reward exhibit significant and positive effects on employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology.

5.1.1 The Nature of Work Has a Positive Influence on the Employment Satisfaction of Marketing Graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University

The research findings on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology indicate that the nature of work has a significant positive impact on employment satisfaction. Specifically, the standardized regression coefficient for this factor is 0.553, with a significance level P-value less than 0.001. This conclusion demonstrates that factors such as job content, nature of work, and work environment significantly determine the level of satisfaction marketing graduates have with their employment. This research outcome aligns with the classical theories of employment satisfaction. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory points out that job-related factors (i.e., motivators) significantly affect employee satisfaction, including achievement, recognition, and the interest and challenge of the nature of work. These factors can stimulate employees' motivation and enthusiasm, enhancing their overall employment satisfaction.

5.1.2 The Career Prospect Has a Positive Influence on the Employment Satisfaction of Marketing Graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University

The prospect of career development has a significant positive impact on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology. Further research into the employment satisfaction of these graduates also reveals that career prospect exhibit a significant positive influence, with a standardized regression coefficient of 0.556 and a significance level P-value less than 0.001. This finding indicates that marketing graduates' expectations for their career development significantly influence their satisfaction with their current jobs. This discovery aligns with career development theories, which posit that employees' expectations and confidence in future growth are

crucial factors affecting their employment satisfaction. When selecting a career, marketing graduates often consider whether the profession offers favorable opportunities for career advancement, including potential for promotion, professional training, and growth opportunities. These factors not only relate to their professional future but also directly affect their long-term commitment and loyalty to their work.

5.1.3 The Job Reward Has a Positive Influence on the Employment Satisfaction of Marketing Graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University

The findings on employment satisfaction among marketing graduates of Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology further indicate that job reward significantly and positively impacts employment satisfaction, with a standardized regression coefficient of 0.445 and a significance level P-value less than 0.001. This result demonstrates that factors such as salary and benefits significantly influence marketing graduates' satisfaction with their employment. This finding is consistent with salary satisfaction theories in economics and human resource management. According to these theories, job reward and benefits are essential considerations for employees when choosing a job and a crucial factor affecting their employment satisfaction. Marketing graduates prioritize whether job reward align with their expectations and market standards during the job search process. Reasonable salaries and benefits not only meet their basic living needs but also bring psychological fulfillment and professional recognition.

Table 5.1 Hypothesis Test Results

NO.	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Nature of work has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University.	Supported
H2	Career prospect has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University.	Supported
H3	Job reward has a positive influence on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates of Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University.	Supported

5.2 Recommendation

(1) Improving Curriculum Design and Career Guidance

For marketing graduates, they tend to prioritize jobs that offer personal growth opportunities and pose challenges during the job search process. This not only satisfies

their professional development needs but also enhances their sense of professional belonging and achievement. Employment satisfaction, to a certain extent, reflects graduates' satisfaction and adaptability to their current positions, their mindset towards working hours and intensity, the extent to which they achieve self-worth at work, whether they feel pressured by the challenges of their job, the level of security they perceive in their work, whether the job content and service recipients make them feel relaxed or stressed, their internal evaluation of teamwork and collaboration within their work unit, and their satisfaction with the unit's hardware facilities. For universities, understanding the factors influencing marketing graduates' employment satisfaction is conducive to adjusting and improving competency enhancement and career guidance, making graduates more competitive in the job market.

To enhance competency, universities should determine professional training programs based on competency. Vocational colleges should develop their training programs more from the perspective of professional (position) competency, enabling graduates to have a more pronounced competitive edge in related professions (positions) and enabling the professionals (positions) trained by vocational colleges. Developing a marketing program based on professional (position) competency in higher vocational colleges necessitates innovations and adjustments in enrollment criteria, training objectives, curriculum and teaching, student evaluation, and assessment methods. For instance, in enrollment criteria, appropriately introduce a professional (position) competency assessment mechanism to select students, particularly to identify inherent and less malleable competency characteristics such as achievement motivation, career values, and learning abilities, avoiding enrollment solely based on grades. When setting training objectives, the focus should not merely be on professional knowledge and skills but also on cultivating or training students' professional (position) competency as the primary training goal. Strengthening general education is also necessary for individual career transitions and sustainable career development. By enhancing general education and mastering comprehensive, fundamental, and broad knowledge and skills, individuals can better adapt to future societal changes and career advancements, avoiding difficulties in adapting to new professions due to overly narrow knowledge and skills. For example, design a general education curriculum model based on the actual situation of schools, industries, and majors. This could include implementing a "general education courses + industry foundation courses + professional courses" model, increasing the proportion of general education courses; implementing a major-minor system to broaden the scope of majors; integrating general education concepts into professional teaching; or transforming the current three-year vocational college system into a four-year interdisciplinary dual-major program.

Regarding career guidance, optimizing career guidance courses is essential. In developing the school curriculum system, career guidance and career planning courses should be incorporated, and the period and class hour allocation should be reasonably set based on the general rules of job seeking and the characteristics of marketing graduates. For instance, the proportion of career guidance course hours in the first year

of enrollment could be higher than in the second year, with course content tailored to students' major characteristics and professional attributes to help them gradually analyze the employment situation, discover their strengths, identify their weaknesses, clarify their employment directions, and correct their employment attitudes during their school years, preparing them well for future employment. The significant positive influence of job content on the employment satisfaction of marketing graduates from Shandong University of Engineering and Vocational Technology reflects the importance graduates attach to job content and nature during career selection. This research not only enriches our understanding of marketing graduates' employment behavior but also provides practical guidance for relevant parties in enhancing graduates' employment satisfaction.

(2) Concentrating on Career Prospect

The career prospect of an industry, the promotion mechanism of an employer, self-improvement through skills and knowledge acquired at work, training organized by the employer, opportunities for learning and exchange provided by the employer, the relevance between an individual's major and their current job, and the assistance the current job offers for future career choices all significantly impact employment satisfaction. In practical application, offering clear career development paths and opportunities, and establishing reasonable promotion mechanisms and vocational training plans can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and work motivation. Enterprises should prioritize employees' development needs by providing growth opportunities and platforms through internal training, career guidance, and promotion mechanisms, fostering employee loyalty, and improving work performance.

Marketing education should place greater emphasis on nurturing students' awareness and abilities related to career development. Universities can achieve this by offering career planning courses, employment guidance seminars, and cooperative internship programs with enterprises, enabling students to understand industry trends and career advancement paths, thus making more informed choices during job hunting. Additionally, universities should strengthen cooperation with enterprises to establish long-term and stable internship and employment bases, offering students more practical opportunities and career guidance. More importantly, fostering long-term, high-frequency, and comprehensive cooperation between schools and enterprises ensures a stable connection throughout the entire talent cultivation process, providing both parties with resources and security. Therefore, efforts should be made to collaborate with key enterprises to establish relevant institutions, ensuring continuous cooperation throughout the entire process from talent orientation to student employment.

(3) Improving Job Reward

Reasonable allocation of salaries and benefits is the cornerstone of safeguarding employees' livelihoods. The wages and benefits provided by enterprises are the most direct material rewards for employees' labor efforts and a reflection of their work efficiency. Establishing competitive salary and benefit policies can attract and retain outstanding marketing professionals. Enterprises should attach importance to allocating salaries and benefits by integrating them into their human resource management system, forming an integrated welfare and job reward management system with employee salary management. Salary and benefits encompass not only the wages paid but also indirect income components such as paid leave, educational training, housing subsidies, medical insurance, and childcare benefits. Therefore, flexible and diverse forms can be adopted in salary and benefit allocation schemes. Enterprises should regularly conduct market salary surveys to ensure their job reward levels remain competitive and offer corresponding rewards based on employee performance and contributions.

To improve performance management and incentive systems, enterprises can develop reasonable performance appraisal systems based on job risks, responsibilities, and achievements, classify salary remunerations according to contribution rates, set salary grades, quantify evaluation indicators, and further standardize their management systems to maintain the satisfaction and stability of their talent pool. During the performance formulation process, enterprises should not only ensure the standardization of salary management but also motivate employees' work enthusiasm. Employers should offer more material rewards or training and learning opportunities for promotion to outstanding employees. As for hygiene factors, for employees with low work motivation, praise or certain material guarantees can be adopted, effectively combined with incentive factors, to enhance employees' work enthusiasm and satisfaction.

Universities can enrich their curriculum in salary management to broaden students' horizons by offering courses on career development and salary management, hosting lectures on salary negotiation skills, and collaborating with enterprises to provide internship opportunities. These initiatives help students understand market trends, master salary negotiation skills, and gain insights into industry salary levels and benefits, enhancing job-hunting competitiveness. By focusing on and enhancing graduates' job reward, both enterprises and universities can better meet graduates' career expectations, improving their employment satisfaction and work performance.

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Appendix

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire survey. The survey will be conducted anonymously, and your relevant information will be kept confidential. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Part I :

- 1. Gender? A Male B Female
- 2. Age A. Under 23 B 23-28 C Above 28
- 3. Industries
 - A Fast Consumption Goods
 - B Technology & Telecommunications
 - C Financial Services
 - D Media & Entertainment
 - E Others

Part II : Please judge to what extent you agree with the following statement; choose the most appropriate option, and mark the corresponding number " √ . " The questionnaire used a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5 in which one indicates strongly disagree (or strongly disagree), two indicates relatively disagree (or relatively disagree), three indicates neutral, four indicates relatively agree (or relatively agree), and five indicates strongly agree (or strongly agree)

Measuring item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	General	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Are you satisfied with the tasks of your current job?					
2. Are you satisfied with the working environment of your current job?					
3. Are you satisfied with your current job duties?					
1. What do you think about the career prospect of your current job?					
2. Are you satisfied with the vocational training and skill improvement opportunities provided by the company?					

3. Are you satisfied with the promotion mechanism within the company?					
1. Are you satisfied with the salary level of your current job?					
2. Are you satisfied with the benefits provided by the company (e.g. insurance, vacation, etc.)?					
3. Are you satisfied with the bonus and performance incentive mechanism of your job?					
1. Are you satisfied with the overall satisfaction of your current marketing-related job?					
2. What is the degree of compatibility between the skills and knowledge you have learned in your current job and the professional marketing knowledge you have learned in school?					
3. How satisfied are you with the degree to which your current job gives you a sense of professional fulfillment and personal value realization?					

