



The Impact of Design Competitions on the Skill Development and Employability of Chinese Graphic Design Students

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: This study examines the role of design competitions, analysing their impact on the employability of graphic design students in China and evaluating the critical importance of subject-specific contests as an alternative educational approach. Additionally, it traces the origins and evolution of graphic design, highlighting the profound influence of the Bauhaus movement, founded in the early twentieth century, on contemporary graphic design practices. **Methodology:** Graphic design education underwent significant transformations following the emergence of the socialist market economy, which, driven by China's

rapid economic growth and social changes, diverged from traditional educational models. Design competitions not only refine participants' professional competencies but also play a crucial role in shaping design education in China. Through the application of human capital theory, this study illustrates that design contests are essential in fostering educational innovation and improving teaching quality, thereby becoming an integral component of higher education. **Results:** Through these competitions, students enhance their practical skills, foster innovation and teamwork, and acquire valuable experience that facilitates their entry into the job market. Additionally, companies benefit from access to a pool of promising candidates, enabling them to identify and train potential employees at reduced costs. The present study employed quantitative research methods, utilising a questionnaire for data collection. However, certain limitations must be acknowledged, including a small sample size and the need for further refinement of research methodologies, both of which may restrict the generalisability and reliability of the findings. Nevertheless, existing literature indicates that participation in design competitions enhances student skills, facilitates the development of high-quality portfolios, boosts self-confidence, improves job-seeking prospects, and contributes positively to both personal and professional growth. Future research should expand the sample size and refine methodological approaches to produce more generalisable conclusions. Ultimately, design competitions serve as an underutilised platform for developing student capabilities while also offering valuable insights into the priorities universities should consider in advancing educational reform – an essential factor in fostering innovative talent development.

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Introduction

Graphic design, a fundamental medium of visual communication, exerts a profound influence on all aspects of contemporary life, encompassing daily activities, business, culture, and social interactions. Its origins can be traced back to early forms of printing and advertising, developing in parallel with technological progress. Significant milestones were achieved during the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent advancement of science and technology, shaping the field's evolution. In the present era, digital design represents yet another transformative stage in the history of graphic design. Each phase of this evolution reflects the prevailing social and cultural standards alongside technological advancements.

The historical trajectory of graphic design can be linked to early poster painting, though it did not fully flourish until the advent of printing. Its modern development was significantly influenced by the Bauhaus movement in the early twentieth century. Beyond its impact on architecture and industrial design, Bauhaus profoundly shaped graphic design by introducing principles of functionality and simplicity. Adhering to the "form follows function" philosophy, key Bauhaus figures revolutionised graphic design practices. As Twemlow (2006) observed, elements of Bauhaus design, such as geometric forms and avant-garde typesetting, continue to serve as foundational components of graphic design education.

Cultural institutions play a vital role in enhancing public understanding and appreciation of the cultural arts (Lin & Che Cob, 2024). The growing significance and expansion of discipline-specific competitions in Chinese higher education underscore their essential function in cultivating innovative talent and driving teaching reform. Hong et al. (2022) argue that these competitions contribute to the development of innovative capabilities and serve as catalysts for educational transformation. Furthermore, their study identifies several persistent challenges within academia, including an irrational curriculum structure, stagnation in curricular innovation, and ineffective management systems for discipline competitions.

To address these issues, research has proposed the establishment of competition centres to facilitate organisational coordination, provide comprehensive information on competitions, integrate laboratory resources, and translate competition outcomes into curriculum innovation and related teaching activities (Liao & Shi, 2022). This framework offers a strategic model for embedding discipline competitions within the broader teaching reform initiatives of higher education institutions. Ying; (2021) assert that university discipline competitions represent the most effective approach for fostering innovative talent, increasingly garnering national attention. In China, a diverse array of discipline competitions spans multiple academic fields, with funding primarily sourced from the Ministry of Education, provincial education departments, the Education Advisory Commission, national and provincial associations, and private enterprises. The scope of these competitions has expanded considerably, with projects becoming increasingly complex and competition standards and award criteria continuously evolving.

Additionally, skills competitions administered by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security are attracting growing societal interest. State leaders have personally extended congratulations to winners, offering encouragement and recognising their

achievements. Notably, the Chinese government has rewarded victors and their teams from the WorldSkills Competition (WSC). The purpose of organising vocational skills competitions extends beyond fostering competition; it aims to enhance societal appreciation for various professions. By observing these contests, the public gains deeper insight into the complexities of different vocational fields, thereby challenging existing prejudices against skills-based education and training (Park, 2021). This, in turn, encourages more young individuals to pursue academic disciplines aligned with their interests and aptitudes, increasing the likelihood of them entering related professions in the future (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, 2023)

Background And Objectives

The Impact of Competitions on Graphic Design Students

According to the 2023 Analysis Report on College Student Competitions in National Ordinary Colleges and Universities, published by the Expert Working Group on College Competition Evaluation and Management System Research of the Chinese Society of Higher Education, a total of 84 college student competitions were recorded in China as of 2024. The report analysed data from 1,218 undergraduate institutions and 1,254 vocational colleges nationwide, ranking schools based on their participation and the number of awards received. The findings underscore the strong enthusiasm among Chinese universities for engaging in these competitions to secure high rankings (China Association of Higher Education, 2024). It is common practice for Chinese universities to organise faculty and students to take part in the National Vocational College Skills Competition, which attracts over 10,000 instructors and participants annually (Yang et al., 2020). As a result, competitions have become an integral component of Chinese university education, with competition rankings serving as a key performance indicator for higher education institutions.

In 2022, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in collaboration with the General Office of the State Council, issued the "Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of Highly Skilled Personnel Teams in the New Era". This document advocated for the advancement of a vocational skills competition system characterised by distinct Chinese attributes, positioning the WorldSkills Competition at its apex. The system also encompasses the National Vocational Skills Competition, various industry-specific and regional vocational competitions, specialised contests, as well as corporate and collegiate vocational skills competitions as its foundation. This directive highlights China's strong emphasis on vocational skills competitions.

Historically, China's participation in the WSC has played a crucial role in shaping its domestic vocational skills competition framework (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, 2023). The philosophy of fostering learning and instruction through competition aligns with the development of visual communication design expertise in educational institutions (Huang & Zheng, 2023). In recent years, many Chinese colleges and universities have actively organised discipline-specific competitions to enhance student engagement, stimulate innovative thinking, and cultivate teamwork skills, ultimately aiming to produce well-rounded talents. While participation in these competitions is not compulsory for all students, Chinese universities

remain proactive in improving the quality of talent development by encouraging student involvement.

During interviews conducted earlier in this research, students of Beijing New Media Technician College made notable achievements in various competitions. His competitors secured 6 gold, silver, and bronze medals at national events, alongside 5 first prizes, 8 second prizes, and numerous third prizes and merit awards at the municipal level. At the industry level, they won up to 10 first prizes, 12 second prizes, and additional third prizes. The college's recognition has grown, largely due to the success of its students. For example, the visual communication design class of 2014 achieved 100% employability, with graduates joining prestigious companies like Tencent and 4A advertising agencies, some earning as much as 20,000 yuan per month. Furthermore, top-tier companies such as Huawei have been actively recruiting students through the school-enterprise cooperation programme since 2017, just before their graduation, underscoring the high demand for skills learned under the WSC standards. These results highlight the importance of competitions, which elevate institutions and multiply their prestige. The high employability and attractive remuneration for WSC participants serve as evidence of their capabilities, setting a strong example for others.

In light of the growing support for large-scale skills competitions in China, winning a grand prize often leads to excellent employment prospects upon completion of internship courses. Competitions offer a comprehensive approach to developing students' skills. In a separate study, Competitions offer a comprehensive approach to developing students' skills. WSC-focused training aims to produce well-rounded professionals equipped with industry-specific technical skills, thereby paving the way for future advancements. Specialised competitions are a crucial component of practical instruction in graphic design, honing students' skills and ensuring they are job-ready upon graduation.

Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to examine how students' participation in a design competition influenced their employment prospects.

Research Methodology

A quantitative methodological approach was employed to develop a new questionnaire to address the research questions. Adapted from Alhalasa (2017) work, the questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographic information and the survey instrument. The demographic section captured data on the interviewee's gender, educational institution, workplace, job title, working hours, and monthly salary. The survey also gathered statistics on the impact of student awards and participation in design competitions, aiming to explore the relationship between these awards and professional outcomes. The questionnaire was structured around five competency areas: self-identification, software proficiency, creativity, work history, and network development. The design and content of the questionnaire were carefully crafted through an extensive literature review and consultations with recognised experts in the fields of Graphic Design Education and Industry. These experts were selected for their substantial knowledge and experience, ensuring the survey's ease of use, clarity, and relevance to data collection and analysis. Their feedback helped eliminate any structural deficiencies, ensuring logical progression and grammatical accuracy.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Employability Study

In today's world, employability has become a fundamental parameter of competitiveness in managing individuals. The advent of globalization has brought about a technological revolution that has disrupted traditional work patterns and occupational hierarchies. With the rise of new work modalities, such as remote work and flexible hours, the concept of 'lifetime employment' is losing its relevance. In this evolving context, employability has gained increasing importance. Sustainable Employability (SE), which has garnered significant attention in recent years, focuses on maintaining productivity and ensuring meaningful work for employees throughout their careers. The central concern for both businesses and educational institutions is ensuring that employees continuously update their skills and knowledge to remain adaptable to dynamic work environments and shifting market demands.

Picco et al. (2022) examined the effectiveness of employer-driven workplace interventions in enhancing SE through a review article. The interventions discussed in their research address core elements of SE, particularly the provision of meaningful work content. Moreover, interventions that engage at least three components of SE tend to produce more positive outcomes. Montgomery (2020) investigated social innovation in youth employment, exploring challenges such as the balance between employability and key demand issues, notably the effects of low compensation and job instability. Through interviews with employed or trainee youths, as well as senior policymakers and practitioners, the study identified employability as a form of self-immunization against these challenges.

In a similar vein, Römogens et al. (2019) advocated for a multifaceted, capability-oriented approach to conceptualising employability from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing insights from both higher education and workplace learning. Their research highlights the belief that employability models from different fields can mutually reinforce each other. Certain dimensions of employability that may be overlooked in one discipline can be emphasised in another, thereby broadening the scope for both conceptual and empirical explorations of employability within higher education and the workplace.

The definition of "employability" and the strategies to enhance it remain pivotal topics in academic research. Hillage and Pollard (1998) argue that employability extends beyond the mere ability to secure a job; it involves the capacity to realise one's value in the labour market and to sustainably harness one's potential through employment. An individual's employability is shaped by the knowledge and skills they have acquired and are able to demonstrate to potential employers. Furthermore, employability includes the ongoing development of one's career, the ability to adapt to societal changes, and a commitment to lifelong learning. Key components of employability typically include both professional and general skills, self-management, career planning, social competencies, and interpersonal relationships. For individuals, enhanced employability equates to a greater ability to secure desirable employment opportunities, benefiting their professional progression. On a broader scale, improving the employability of the workforce brings advantages to businesses and nations, as it contributes to economic growth, social cohesion, and the reduction of wealth disparities.

The Impact Mechanism of Competitions on Students' Employability

In the context of an increasingly competitive job market, improving students' employability has emerged as a key priority within educational discussions. Competitive subjects and skills-based competitions, serving as supplementary educational mechanisms, hold the potential to enhance students' preparedness for the workforce. Nevertheless, there is ongoing debate and differing perspectives regarding the precise influence of such competitions on students' employability outcomes.

A study by [Boxi et al. \(2023\)](#) found that participation in disciplinary competitions not only strengthens students' capabilities in scientific research, innovative thinking, and practical application, but also fosters teamwork and a humanistic spirit. Collectively, these attributes contribute to participants' social competitiveness. Nonetheless, the study identified several shortcomings within the structure of these competitions, such as low student motivation, insufficient publicity within schools, weak mentorship frameworks, and a lack of incentive policies. To address these concerns, the study recommended that the quality of disciplinary competitions be improved by highlighting the achievements of exemplary teachers and students, strengthening mentor-mentee relationships, and establishing a dedicated fund to enhance the impact of these competitions on students' social competitiveness. [Bu and Wang \(2024\)](#) highlighted that the model of nurturing business talent through academic competitions enhances students' practical and innovative skills, thereby improving their overall competitiveness and fostering the development of high-quality talent. Academic competitions play a crucial role in encouraging innovative thinking, promoting teamwork, supporting lifelong learning, and developing self-management skills.

In China, reforms are underway to advance the WorldSkills Competition (WSC) vocational standards, thereby enhancing the country's vocational education sector. This initiative is expected to contribute to personal development and improve employability. There is a pressing demand in China for a substantial number of highly skilled vocational workers who can effectively contribute to the nation's growth ([WorldSkills International, 2022](#)). In response, the Chinese government has increased support for vocational colleges and universities with the aim of raising the quality of vocational education ([China Daily, 2021](#)). Many contestants in WSC are sponsored by their employers. Employers, by sponsoring apprentices in these competitions, not only enhance their company's reputation but also secure a pool of talented individuals for their workforce. This investment strategy enables organizations to cultivate and employ world-class, highly skilled personnel.

In countries such as the UK and South Korea, corporate involvement in WSC competitions is notably high, with many events sponsored by prominent industry firms. For example, the 2022 WSC Special Event was sponsored by the Samsung Group. Many South Korean participants were employees of Samsung, a long-time sponsor of these competitions. Through such support, Samsung has cultivated a substantial number of highly skilled young professionals, many of whom have gone on to win WSC awards ([Samsung, 2022](#)). This sponsorship benefits contestants by providing support, while employers also gain the opportunity to identify and recruit talented individuals, streamlining the employee retraining process and reducing associated costs. In the UK, 97% of participants in the WSC reported optimism about their post-competition prospects, while 95% felt their employability skills had improved. Employers use these competitions

to evaluate their apprenticeship programs and assess whether apprentices have acquired the necessary skills and attitudes (Bentley-Gockmann, 2020). The data from the UK clearly demonstrates a correlation between competition participation and the improvement of skills relevant to career advancement. From a community perspective, these competitions foster skill development and employment opportunities for young people.

In conclusion, student participation in competitive events enables them to enhance their skills while gaining practical experience that ultimately improves their employability. Additionally, these competitions provide valuable academic research data to colleges, universities, and learning institutions, offering insights into strategies and methods to improve students' career prospects.

Theoretical Framework

Human capital theory serves as the foundational framework for this study. Emerging from classical and neoclassical economic thought, the theory explores how education, training, knowledge, skills, and health intersect with an individual's productivity, thereby influencing overall economic performance. The theory underscores the significant role of education and training in boosting both individual and national productivity. As economic globalization and technological advancements accelerate, the theoretical importance of human capital has similarly grown. A review of the literature on human capital reveals numerous studies that have examined its application across various domains, highlighting the relationship between education, training, income levels, and the impact of vocational training on individual productivity and economic growth. In recent years, scholars have explored human capital theory from various perspectives.

Suleman (2017) analyses the theory, demonstrating that individuals' ability to produce and earn more is enhanced through the acquisition of skills via education and training, a key component of human capital theory. The theory's applicability is universal, extending across various levels and types of educational investment. Education is seen as the enabler of knowledge and skill acquisition, positioning human capital as a renewable source of productivity. Individuals must, therefore, engage in continuous skill development to maintain creativity and foster growth. Many companies invest in enhancing their employees' human capital by encouraging reskilling and the acquisition of valuable skills, thereby improving workforce quality without the need for additional recruitment. Such investments are cost-effective, as they often lead to adjustments in salary expectations, yet still benefit the company. In contrast, when companies hire new employees, they must invest in retraining to ensure these individuals can adapt to their roles.

Aliu and Aigbavboa (2019) argue that while generic skills – knowledge gained through education and training that is applicable across various contexts – serve as the foundation for innovation, specific human capital refers to specialised skills and knowledge tailored to particular companies or circumstances. Opportunities for acquiring these specialised skills are often limited, with competitions offering one significant avenue. These events provide students with invaluable experience prior to graduation, as the training typically involves the latest knowledge and focuses on skills distinct from general competencies. Wright and Constantin (2020) applied human capital theory to explore factors influencing employers' decisions to hire skilled immigrants under temporary visa sponsorship. A survey of 1,602 employers in Australia revealed that employing skilled workers for

targeted recruitment was a cost-effective strategy, particularly when seeking productive employees. The study also highlighted the role of government policies in influencing the movement of temporary skilled migrants, thus optimising the utilisation of their human capital.

In summary, human capital theory elucidates the connection between intelligence, knowledge, and skills, and their economic value. This theory is particularly relevant to the framework of this study, as it can be applied to examine the relationship between participation in graphic design competitions and employability outcomes.

Empirical Analysis And Results Discussion

Data Source and Sample Characteristics

Students who engage in graphic design competitions and secure awards are typically more likely to be employed by leading industry firms. In contrast, those who do not participate may find themselves with a relatively underwhelming portfolio. This study investigates the relationship between participation in graphic design competitions and the job performance of graphic design students in China. The research sample included 37 students from Shenzhen, Hangzhou, Tianjin, and Kaifeng, selected to reflect geographical and provincial diversity. The survey examined various factors, including job positions immediately after graduation, salary levels, participation in graphic design competitions, reasons for non-participation, and the benefits of winning awards.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The role of graphic design competitions in enhancing students' employability and the transformations that occur during their participation necessitate further exploration. This study seeks to assess the impact of graphic design students' involvement in competitions on their post-graduation salary prospects. By comparing the salary ranges of different types of graduates, the research aims to clarify the relationship between salary levels and career advancement. Additionally, the study will explore graduates' perceptions of design competitions and the underlying factors influencing their attitudes. The occupations of the students who participated in the survey were categorised into five groups (Table 1): designer, teacher, other design-related jobs, independent designer, and non-design jobs. Of these, 51.3% of the graduates continued to work as designers in companies, 16.2% pursued teaching careers, and 8.1% became independent designers, applying their expertise in creative design. Conversely, 21.6% of the graduates moved into roles unrelated to design.

Table 1

Job Statistics of Graphic Design Graduates

| Type of Work | Proportion |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Designer | 51.3% |
| Teacher | 16.2% |
| Another Work Related to Design | 2.7% |
| Independent Designer | 8.1% |
| Non-Design Work | 21.6% |

A survey regarding post-graduation salaries was conducted, with the results shown in Table 2. The data indicates that the majority of graduates – 32.4% – earned monthly salaries ranging from RMB 3,000 to 5,000. This was followed by those earning between RMB 1,000 and 3,000 (24.3%), RMB 5,000 and 7,000 (18.9%), and RMB 7,000 and 9,000 (16.2%). Notably, only 8.1% of students earned over RMB 9,000 per month. The wide salary range, from RMB 1,000 to RMB 20,000, highlights the disparities across various professions and levels of experience. Independent designers, in particular, tended to earn higher salaries, likely due to the advanced skills and experience required for such roles. The data also revealed a strong correlation between salary levels and career progression, with graduates earning higher salaries typically possessing greater skills and experience, which enabled them to work independently on projects and command higher remuneration.

Table 2

Graphic Design Student Monthly Salary Statistics

| Salary range | Proportion |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1000-3000 RMB | 24.3% |
| 3000-5000 RMB | 32.4% |
| 5000-7000 RMB | 18.9% |
| 7000-9000 RMB | 16.2% |
| 9000-10000 RMB | 2.7% |
| 10000-20000 RMB | 5.4% |

According to the survey findings, 62.2% of the participants reported having received awards during their academic years, whereas 37.2% indicated they had not (Table 3). Furthermore, 32.4% of the respondents participated in the competition on their own initiative, while the majority, 67.6%, were nominated by their teachers (Table 4). This indicates that a significant proportion of students engaged in the competition through teacher recommendations, which may have been influenced by a tendency to select high-achieving students with a greater likelihood of success. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily suggest that students without teacher nominations were unable to secure awards, as the evaluation process was conducted independently by the organising committee, without direct influence from teachers. It is possible that students who did not achieve success either failed to meet the competition's eligibility criteria, resulting in a lack of teacher endorsement, or were unsuccessful in their independent submissions.

Table 3

Statistics on the Percentage of Students Winning Awards During the School Year

| Award statistics | Proportion |
|------------------|------------|
| Previous Awards | 62.16% |
| No awards | 37.84% |

Table 4

Statistics on Students' Participation Methods

| Way of competition | Proportion |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Self-Entry | 32.4% |
| Teachers' Recommendations | 67.6% |

The survey, which sought to explore the reasons behind students' reluctance to participate in competitions (Table 5), revealed that 10.8% of respondents attributed their non-participation to a lack of interest in the competition itself. Meanwhile, 35.1% cited

feelings of inadequacy, believing their work was not of sufficient quality to compete. A further 29.7% expressed uncertainty about how to engage in such competitions and a lack of confidence in their abilities. Additionally, 2.7% of students viewed the competition as a waste of time, while 5.41% perceived it as offering limited career or job-related benefits. The survey identified the primary barriers to participation as concerns over the quality of work, unfamiliarity with competition procedures, and a lack of self-assurance. Addressing these issues could potentially enhance student engagement in competitions. The findings offer valuable insights into the obstacles students face, highlighting broader challenges that may arise during their academic development. The primary aim of this study is not to promote design competitions but to examine the relationship between student participation in such competitions and their subsequent employment prospects. This research seeks to improve students' understanding of how engagement in design competitions can facilitate skill acquisition and to offer insights into the types of potential employers they might interact with prior to graduating. By doing so, the study aims to provide a clearer perspective on the practical benefits and career-related outcomes associated with participation in these events.

Table 5

Statistics on Reasons for Lack of Motivation in Student Competitions

| Reason | Proportion |
|--|------------|
| Not Interested in the Competitions | 10.8% |
| No Good Works | 35.1% |
| The Competition is Wasting Time. | 2.7% |
| Not Sure How to Enter the Competition | 29.7% |
| Lack of Self-Confidence | 29.7% |
| The Tournament Won't Help You Find a Job | 5.4% |

Main Findings And Implications

This study proposes that, as evidenced by the data presented in Table 6, graphic design graduates within a specific region who have won design competitions are more likely to secure well-paying jobs compared to their peers who did not participate in such events. This trend serves as a strong indicator of enhanced employability skills, suggesting that strategic involvement in design competitions enables students to refine their talents, build impressive portfolios, develop self-confidence, and improve their career prospects, ultimately leading to higher earning potential. Such experiences positively influence students' personal and professional growth in multiple dimensions, including:

Table 6

Comparison of Graduate Salary Statistics by Region

| City | Number of Awards | Salary Statistics of Award-Winning Graduates | | | | | | Salary Statistics of Unawarded Graduates | | | | |
|----------|------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|--|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| | | No Winners | 1K-3K | 3K-5K | 5K-7K | 7K-9K | 10K-20K | 1K-3K | 3K-5K | 5K-7K | 7K-9K | 10K-20K |
| Shenzhen | 3 | 2 | | | | 2 | 1 | | 2 | | | |
| Kaifeng | 9 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | |
| Tianjin | 2 | 5 | 1 | | 1 | | | 3 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Hangzhou | 9 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | | | 3 | | | 1 |

1. **Skill Development Through Thematic Challenges:** Design competitions typically revolve around specific themes, requiring participants to submit their work within set timeframes. These parameters not only test fundamental skills such as colour coordination, typography, and layout but also encourage problem-solving and creative thinking. The evolving demands of competition tasks, coupled with the need to adapt to new technologies and innovative approaches, push participants to unlock their full potential.
2. **Accumulation of a Personal Portfolio:** Each competition entry allows participants to create a body of work that reflects their individual style and design expertise. These submissions serve as a testament to their dedication and skill, showcasing sophisticated design elements in a cohesive manner. High-quality work often captures the attention of potential employers and opens doors to future collaborations.
3. **Boost in Self-Esteem:** Recognition and awards from competition judges can significantly enhance participants' self-confidence. This newfound self-belief acts as a powerful motivator, encouraging individuals to tackle new challenges with enthusiasm. Additionally, interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds fosters skill enhancement, broadens perspectives, and provides practical insights into their strengths and areas for improvement.
4. **Enhanced Job Search Opportunities:** Winning or participating in design competitions offers distinct advantages in the job market. Employers tend to favour candidates with demonstrated experience, advanced skills, and innovative capabilities. Engaging in such contests provides valuable work experience, facilitates networking with industry professionals, and increases the likelihood of securing desirable employment. Furthermore, listing competition achievements on a resume distinguishes candidates from their peers.

In conclusion, participation in design competitions serves as a catalyst for both personal development and career advancement. It represents a strategic pathway for aspiring professionals aiming to achieve success in their respective fields.

Limitations And Future Research Directions

The primary limitations of this research stem from the small sample size and the preliminary nature of the methodologies employed. Firstly, the limited sample size restricts the ability to generalise the findings and may undermine the credibility of the results. With only four urban Chinese graphic design graduates included in the study and an even smaller number represented in the survey sample, the findings may not accurately reflect the perspectives of the broader population or the prevailing conditions of the target market. Small samples can introduce distortions in statistical analyses, leading to either significant overestimations or underestimations, which in turn jeopardise the validity and generalisability of the conclusions. Additionally, more complex analytical techniques, such as multivariate regression analyses, which typically require larger datasets to ensure model stability and produce reliable predictions, may be compromised.

Secondly, the foundational framework underpinning this research is still in its early stages, necessitating further scrutiny of several critical elements. For example, the measurement tools and data analysis techniques used in the study require validation and critical discussion by other researchers to ensure their reliability. Without such validation,

the credibility of the findings may be questioned. Furthermore, there may be unrecognised theoretical flaws that could influence the conclusions drawn from the research. While the constraints imposed by the small sample size are evident, the use of underdeveloped research methodologies has also limited the depth and scope of this study. Acknowledging these limitations provides an opportunity for future researchers to refine the research design by increasing the sample size and employing more rigorous and sophisticated methods. Such improvements would enhance the precision of the results and their applicability to broader contexts.

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