

# The effect of job resources on web casters' job accessibility

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**Abstract:** As an emerging occupation in the new employment pattern, network anchor has become an important channel of flexible employment for many young people. However, with the continuous expansion of the scale of employment, the lack of work resources and difficulties in obtaining traffic for network anchors have gradually come to the fore, affecting their sense of work access and hindering the development of high-quality employment. Focusing on web casters, based on the job requirement-resource model, we explored how job resources affect web casters' sense of job accessibility as well as the mediating effect of traffic stickiness, and the moderating effect of innovation ability. The results show that: there is a significant positive effect of both work resources and traffic stickiness on network anchors' sense of job acquisition; there is a mediating effect of traffic stickiness between work resources and sense of job acquisition; and innovation ability can promote the positive effect of network anchors' work resources on traffic stickiness. The findings of this paper provide reference and basis for enhancing network anchors' sense of job acquisition, which has distinct theoretical and practical significance.

**Keywords:** job resources; job access; web casters; Chinese contexts

## 1. Introduction

The new generation of information and communication technology is widely used in the economic and social fields, the new technology, new economy and new business forms are developing rapidly, and the scale of the new employment pattern workers with flexible working hours and large employment volume is expanding rapidly, which has become an important source of jobs in China's labour market in the future<sup>[1]</sup>. Among them, web casters have become an important choice of flexible employment for many young people because of their diverse types of work, freedom from venue restrictions, creativity and 'de-elitism'. However, as the scale of employment continues to expand, the problems faced by web casters, such as high competitive pressure and a lack of work resources, have gradually come to the fore, and all sectors of society have begun to pay attention to the labour rights and interests of web casters and their work experience<sup>[2]</sup>. The report of the Twentieth National Congress of the CPC stresses the need to 'support and regulate the development of new forms of employment, and strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of workers in flexible employment and new forms of employment'. Effectively safeguarding the labour rights and interests of web casters and achieving high-quality employment for web casters is not only a practical necessity, but also the key to promoting the healthy development of new forms of employment.

Enhancing the sense of job acquisition is an important part of safeguarding the labour rights and interests of network anchors and achieving high-quality employment. As a comprehensive feeling or assessment of the individual's return on actual effort and value realization at work<sup>[3]</sup>, the sense of work gain reflects the positive psychological experience of the individual in the workplace, which can effectively enhance employees' sense of well-being at work<sup>[4]</sup>, strengthen the perception of the meaning of work, and promote employees' work performance, and has become an important dimension in measuring the high-quality employment of workers. At present, studies on the sense of job acquisition

mainly focus on traditional employment forms of workers such as enterprise employees, teachers, doctors, migrant workers, etc., and there are fewer studies on new employment forms of workers. With the change of employment environment and employment form, the influencing factors of network anchors' sense of job acquisition have also changed, and there is an urgent need to explore its specific connotation and important antecedents.

The Job Requirements-Resources Model (later referred to as the JR-D model) is an important theoretical model for studying the impact of job characteristics on occupational mental health. It divides job characteristics into job resources and job requirements, which affects individuals' engagement and burnout through the process of motivation and health loss<sup>[5]</sup>, and provides an overall guiding framework for promoting the relationship between “work and well-being”. This provides an overall guiding framework for promoting the relationship between work and well-being. According to the JD-R model, work resources are the ‘positive factors’ at work that enable individuals to achieve their work goals, reduce attrition from work requirements, and promote personal growth and development. Adequate work resources can improve work performance by promoting employee engagement, which in turn generates positive psychological experiences<sup>[6]</sup>. It has been shown that ‘work resources’ such as perceived organizational support and empowered leadership are significant positive predictors of job acquisition<sup>[4]</sup>. Human resources, equipment resources and development funds are important sources of work resources for web casters, and the abundance or scarcity of these resources has a direct impact on web casters' work commitment or burnout, which has a significant impact on their sense of work gain. As a matter of fact, there is a serious imbalance in the work resources of Chinese network anchors, and the ‘Matthew effect’ is getting stronger and stronger<sup>[7]</sup>. In addition to a small number of head network anchor enjoys abundant resources, a large number of waist and bottom of the network anchor using their own resources live for several hours, but it is difficult to have traffic conversion and capital realization. This part of the relative lack of work resources network anchor, in the career development, is not there a practical and effective way to break through the development bottleneck? Therefore, how to enhance the network anchor's sense of work under the existing conditions of relative lack of work resources is currently worth studying, and need to further explore the internal mechanism of the formation of the network anchor's sense of work.

Since China's national live broadcasting in 2020, more and more people are pouring into the live broadcasting industry, and the competition has intensified, prompting the live broadcasting method to gradually shift from the previous crude to the connotative development, and this evolution also puts forward higher requirements for the utilization of the network anchor's work resources. In June 2022, ‘Oriental Selection’ Dong Yuhui to high-quality content driven, for the emotional resonance of the bill for the innovative form of live broadcasting quickly out of the circle<sup>[8]</sup>, abundant working resources and unique innovative ability to make the network anchor in the content of the homogenisation of the serious, narrowing the space for survival in the industry to stand out.

In summary, this paper constructs a theoretical model of the role relationship between network anchors' work resources and work acquisition from the theoretical perspective of the JD-R model. Taking into account the professional characteristics of web casters, we constructed ‘traffic stickiness’ as a mediating variable, and introduced innovation ability and institutional environment as moderating variables. To further explore the role mechanism between the network anchor work resources and the sense of work acquisition, to provide reference for the relevant departments to improve the network anchor rights and interests protection, guide the platform system norms, and promote the standardised development of new employment forms.

## **2. Theoretical Basis and Research Assumptions**

### ***2.1 The Job Requirements-Resources Model***

Job resources are the factors that enable individuals to achieve their work goals, reduce the loss of work requirements, and promote personal growth and development. According to the JD-R model's ‘dual-path’ hypothesis<sup>[9]</sup>, abundant job resources increase employees' commitment to their work, which in turn generates positive effects such as high organizational commitment, high willingness to stay on the job, and high job performance. While job requirements are the relevant factors that consume the energy of an individual at work, excessive job requirements will make the employee's energy continuously depleted in the work process, triggering burnout, which in turn will have a negative impact on the individual employee and the organization. However, job demands do not simply lead to ‘resource depletion’; the ‘coping’ hypothesis of the JD-R model suggests that under high job demands,

employees will be more motivated to work and fully utilise the resources available to them in order to achieve their job goals. And two different types of job requirements, challenging and obstructive, can have different impact utilities<sup>[10]</sup>. Based on the JD-R model, this paper combines the occupational characteristics of network anchors to explore the influence effect of job resources on job acquisition and the role mechanism of job requirements in it.

## **2.2 Job resources and access to work**

As a positive psychological experience in the workplace, job acquisition emphasises the material and psychological satisfaction that employees achieve through their labour, and is the material and psychological basis for happiness<sup>[4]</sup>. Ego depletion theory is commonly used to explore individual psychological and organizational behavioural changes in organizational members as a result of resource depletion. In terms of individual psychology, the depletion of work resources tends to stimulate emotional exhaustion and depression<sup>[11]</sup>, making employees more pessimistic in their expectations for the future<sup>[12]</sup>. On the contrary, employees with abundant resources have a pleasant or positive affective state towards their work<sup>[13]</sup>, which can continue to bring satisfaction both physically and psychologically, and enhance the sense of job acquisition<sup>[14]</sup>. For web casters, rich working resources mainly include efficient operation team, excellent live studio equipment, professional technical support and so on, which can bring a sense of achievement and satisfaction to web casters by improving their working efficiency, shaping their personal influence and stimulating their creativity, and actively engaging in diversified interactions in a smooth live broadcasting environment. Network anchors through the rational allocation and optimisation of work resources, can enhance the enthusiasm of network anchors' work input, and enhance the network anchors' sense of access to work.

Based on this, this paper presents the hypothesis:

H1: Job resources have a significant positive effect on web casters' job accessibility.

## **2.3 Mediation of flow stickiness**

The variable of user stickiness has been studied quite a lot in the previous literature. User stickiness is considered to be the ability of a network to leave a positive impression on users and to motivate them to stay<sup>[15]</sup>. Traffic stickiness of web casters refers to the extent to which viewers continue to pay attention to, participate in and interact with the anchor and his or her content, reflecting the loyalty of viewers to the anchor. Specifically, the network anchor's ability to acquire and maintain traffic flows. The core work of network anchors lies in making full use of internal and external resources such as operation teams, live broadcasting equipment and development funds, which can help network anchors get more traffic.

Effort-recovery theory suggests that a rich variety of work resources can fully satisfy employees' work needs and effectively stimulate their willingness to devote their personal efforts and abilities to their work tasks<sup>[16]</sup>. Network anchors with rich resources are able to enhance the audience's interaction rate and stimulate the audience's enthusiasm for participation through diversified and high-quality live sessions, making the live content more vivid and interesting, and enhancing the traffic stickiness in the continuous positive work input. At the same time, social media publicity, co-operation and promotion and other social resources can effectively expand the visibility of network anchors, increase exposure, attract more potential viewers, and then enhance the traffic stickiness. In addition, high-quality network connection and professional technical support can ensure smooth live broadcasting and reduce audience loss due to technical problems. By making full use of work resources, web casters are able to continuously innovate live content, improve live quality, expand visibility, and enhance interactive experience, thus attracting more viewers and increasing traffic stickiness.

Based on this, this paper presents the hypothesis:

H2: Job resources have a significant positive effect on traffic stickiness of network anchors.

Affective event theory suggests that the experience of a work event triggers an individual's affective response, and that different affective responses lead to differentiated attitudes and behaviours at work<sup>[17]</sup>. For network anchors, the different trend direction of the live room traffic data will produce different psychological changes, which in turn affects the enthusiasm of network anchors' work input.

High traffic stickiness means that the audience maintains continuous interest and attention to the live content, which indicates that the anchor is fully recognized and liked, and directly enhances

self-confidence and satisfaction. At the same time, high traffic stickiness can also promote the personal growth and development of network anchors<sup>[18]</sup>. In order to maintain the stickiness of the audience, web casters take the initiative to improve their professionalism and live broadcasting skills, and continue to learn and grow in innovative live broadcasting content and forms. However, platform instability can also cause webcasting moods to fluctuate and even lose confidence due to less traffic. The lack and depletion of traffic seriously hit the enthusiasm of web casters, generating negative emotions of job burnout and job insecurity, and reducing the sense of job acquisition of web casters.

Based on this, this paper presents the hypothesis:

H3: Traffic stickiness has a significant positive effect on web casters' job accessibility.

Based on the support of the above theories and related empirical studies, this paper further infers that traffic stickiness plays a mediating role in job resources and network anchors' job acquisition. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H4: Traffic stickiness mediates the relationship between job resources and web anchor's job acquisition.

#### ***2.4 The moderating role of innovative capacity***

On the basis of the study of resource allocation theory, Rawls (1971) put forward 'fair allocation', which is understood as a better utility for each person than in the case of equal allocation<sup>[19]</sup>. Based on the platform perspective, the use of algorithmic recommendation and traffic allocation principles can be more effective in retaining users targeted by high-quality content, thus enhancing the utility of the platform. Taking TikTok as an example, the platform's 'traffic pool' will provide an initial flow of traffic for web casters and distribute it to target users in accordance with the content labels<sup>[20]</sup>, and the platform, through the construction of rules and the manipulation of algorithms, will determine whether or not to continue to provide a larger flow of traffic for the second push based on the effect of the live content<sup>[21]</sup>. This traffic distribution mechanism requires and is discarded by the platform's algorithm once it fails to consistently produce explosive content<sup>[22]</sup>.

With the rapid development of the webcasting industry, anchors are facing more and more competitive pressure. In order to obtain platform traffic support or improve user stickiness, it is necessary for web casters to consistently produce exciting bridges or episodes that can trigger fans' likes, comments and retweets, and this kind of proactive commitment to the emotional labour of building fan relationships is inextricably linked to the creativity and improvisation of web casters and their operation teams<sup>[23]</sup>, or else they will be left behind by the fast-developing Internet. As a unique resource of individual characteristics, innovativeness is the ability of an individual to propose and implement ideas, methods, products or services that are novel, unique and valuable<sup>[24]</sup>. Anchors with the ability to innovate are able to keenly capture the changing needs of the audience, constantly explore new ways of live broadcasting, content and interactive forms, and timely adjust the live broadcast strategy to meet the needs and expectations of the audience. At the same time, the platform's competition for traffic under the algorithmic recommendation mechanism has been involuntarily, the result of which is that quality content has become the password for obtaining traffic<sup>[25]</sup>, driving media platforms to urgently need web casters with sustained content production capacity and innovative ability to transform their work resources into efficacy, and to enhance the audience's stickiness and loyalty.

Based on the above analyses, this paper proposes hypotheses:

H5: Innovativeness positively moderates the relationship between job resources and traffic stickiness of web casters.

Combining the above research hypotheses, this paper constructs a research model, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Research model.

### 3. Research design

#### 3.1 Sample and data collection

This paper mainly uses questionnaires to collect research data. The members of the group cooperated with a large Chinese live broadcasting platform, and the questionnaires were distributed online in a targeted manner to conduct the survey. The survey was conducted from June 2022 to October 2022, and the target respondents were workers who take web caster as their main occupation. 4,398 questionnaires were obtained, of which 4,205 were valid, with a sample validity rate of 95.6%. Through the collation and analysis of the survey data, it is found that the network anchors investigated in this paper have the following characteristics: the proportion of female anchors is higher, accounting for 51.82%; in terms of education, in addition to master's degree and above, the distribution of network anchors' academic qualifications is more uniform, indicating that the network anchor career threshold does not have too many requirements in terms of academic qualifications; in terms of age, among the respondents aged 18-60 years old Born mainly between 1980 and 1995, of which slightly more were born in 1980-1989, accounting for 40.59%; in terms of practice time, the platform has more network anchors with more than 1 year of practice time, accounting for 50.35%. Specific descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample distribution.

variant	factor	percentage
gender	male	48.18
	female	51.82
educational attainment	Junior high school and below	25.04
	senior high school	16.77
	secondary/vocational/technical schools	13.91
	college/higher vocational/technical college	21.95
	undergraduate	19.81
	master's degree or above	2.52
Birth year	2000 onwards	3.45
	1996-1999	11.08
	1990-1995	24.83
	1980-1989	40.54
	1979 and before	20.10
Length of time in business for the platform	under 1 month	5.30
	1-3 months	12.27
	4-6 months	14.91
	7-12 months	17.17
	1-2 years	31.82
	more than 2 years	18.53

#### 3.2 Variable Measurement

(1) Work resources. This was measured by respondents' answers to three questions: "Few resources for work (e.g., tools and data, etc.)" "Limited social resources, difficult to increase visibility and influence" and "Difficult to maintain resources." For each question, a 'yes' choice is scored as 1 point and a 'no' choice is scored as 0 points. The scores were summed up and then reversed to get the final score of work resources. The larger the value, the richer the network anchor's work resources.

(2) Traffic stickiness. Measured by respondents' answers to three questions: "Difficulty in getting traffic and followers" "Few opportunities for exposure and official support and "Difficulty in maintaining traffic." For each question, 'Yes' is scored as 1 point and 'No' is scored as 0 points. And sum up, and then reverse the assignment to get the final score of traffic stickiness. The larger the value, the more traffic the network anchor gets and the easier it is to maintain the traffic.

(3) Sense of Job Acquisition. Considering the research of previous scholars on the content structure of the sense of job acquisition and the occupational characteristics of network anchors, this paper divides the sense of job acquisition of network anchors into four aspects: job income, occupational experience, skill enhancement, and occupational development, and integrates the sense of job acquisition through 10 questions, assigning values from 1 to 5 to the terms 'very dissatisfied' 'not very satisfied' 'average' 'more satisfied' and 'very satisfied', respectively. The larger the value, the higher the network anchor's sense of job satisfaction.

(4) Innovation. This was measured by respondents' answers to the question "Insufficient production and innovation of quality live content". Answers of 'yes' are scored as 0 and 'no' as 1. A value of 1 indicates that the web caster has a high level of innovation.

#### 4. Empirical analysis

##### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

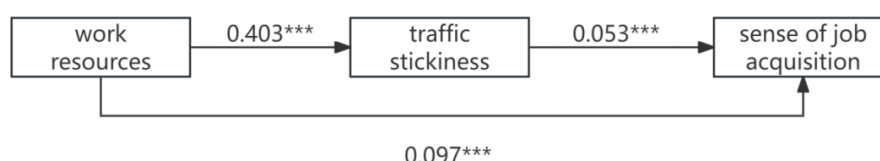
This paper uses SPSS26.0 for data collation and completes data analysis such as descriptive statistics, and the results are shown in Table 2. Network anchors' sense of job acquisition is average, with large room for improvement; there are large internal differences in job resources and traffic stickiness, but more than 70% of network anchors believe that they have a high degree of innovative ability.

Table 2: Definition of main variables and descriptive statistics.

variable name	variable type	average value/percent	standard deviation	instruction
work resources	continuous variable	-0.72	0.938	range of values[-3,0]
traffic stickiness	continuous variable	-1.57	0.818	range of values[-3,0]
sense of job acquisition	continuous variable	3.824	0.712	range of values[1,5]
innovation	categorical variable	0=29.1%	0.454	0=No high capacity for innovation
		1=70.9%		1=high capacity for innovation

##### 4.2 Mediation effect test

In order to clarify the relationship between work resources, traffic stickiness, and sense of job acquisition, this paper uses Mplus 8.0 software to test the research hypotheses using structural equation modelling<sup>[26]</sup>. The specific data are shown in Figure 2. Firstly, there is a significant direct positive effect of work resources on network anchors' sense of job acquisition ( $\beta = 0.097$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), from which H1 is verified; secondly, there is a significant positive effect of work resources on traffic stickiness ( $\beta = 0.403$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); and there is a significant positive effect of traffic stickiness on network anchors' sense of job acquisition ( $\beta = 0.053$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), from which H2 and H3 are verified.



Note: \* indicates  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* indicates  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.001$

Figure 2: Results of the path analysis of the research model.

In this paper, Bootstrap test was used to repeat the sampling 5000 times to test the significance of the mediating effects of the model under the 95% confidence interval<sup>[26]</sup>. The significance of each mediating effect was judged according to whether the confidence interval of each mediating effect did not contain 0. The mediating effect values as well as the confidence intervals are shown in Table 3. The results showed that the mediating effect of flow stickiness between job resources and job acquisition was significant, with a mediating effect value of 0.022 ( $P < 0.001$ , 95% confidence interval [0.011, 0.032]); The direct effect of job resources on job acquisition was significant at 0.097 ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% confidence interval [0.073, 0.119]). Therefore, flow stickiness partially mediates the relationship between job resources and job acquisition, and H4 is validated.

Table 3: Results of the analysis of intermediation effects.

Path/effect	estimated value	standard error	significance	95% confidence interval	relative effect value
aggregate effect	0.119	0.012	0.000	0.098,0.138	100%
direct effect	0.097	0.014	0.001	0.073,0.119	81.5%
work resources—>traffic stickiness—>sense of job acquisition	0.022	0.006	0.001	0.011,0.032	18.5%

#### 4.3 Moderating effects test

In this paper, the PROCESS plug-in for SPSS 26.0 was used to conduct a moderated mediated effects test with reference to the Bootstrap method proposed by Hayes<sup>[27]</sup>. The model was built with job resources as the independent variable, job access as the dependent variable, flow stickiness as the mediator variable, and innovation ability as the moderator variable.

From the analysis of the data in Table 4, it can be seen that the coefficient of the interaction term is 0.3092 ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% confidence interval [0.2430, 0.3755]) under the moderation of innovation capability; while the coefficient of work resources is 0.2976. Comparing the coefficient of work resources with the coefficient of the interaction term, it is found that innovation capability has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between work resources and flow stickiness. Thus, H5 is validated.

Table 4: Analysis of moderating effects.

target	coeff	se	p	95%CI
constants	-1.4238	0.0363	0.0000	-1.4949,-1.3527
work resources	0.2976	0.0276	0.0000	0.2435,0.3517
innovation	0.2523	0.0408	0.0000	0.1723,0.3322
Int_1(work resources*innovation)	0.3092	0.0338	0.0000	0.2430,0.3755

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

In order to investigate the important path of job resources in enhancing web casters' sense of job accessibility, the study focuses on web casters, a fast-growing but as yet under-attended labour force in the zero-worker economy, and empirically examines traffic stickiness as a mediator variable and innovation ability as a moderator variable. The results of the study show that job resources have a significant role in promoting network anchors' sense of job access, in which traffic stickiness plays an important mediating role. And innovation ability can significantly promote the positive effect of network anchors' work resources on traffic stickiness.

This study advances the research field of network anchors' sense of job acquisition. For the profession of network anchors, existing studies mostly focus on the influence of anchors' discourse style, behavioural characteristics<sup>[28]</sup>, social interactions on purchasing behaviour, etc., and there are fewer studies on network anchors' sense of job acquisition, and most of them are qualitative studies. As a platform worker who produces creative content and services mainly by mental or spiritual labour, the work of web casters is endowed with the cultural qualities of inspiration and spirituality<sup>[29]</sup>. Combining the occupational characteristics of web casters, who are creative labourers, the orchestration of web casters' creative ability is incorporated into the original model's consideration of work resources, which expands the theoretical applicability of the JD-R model in the work scenarios of platform labourers.

In summary, this study explores how the rapidly emerging web caster industry in China can maximise the effectiveness of work resources to enhance job attainment, and unlike previous studies that have extensively examined work resources in various industries, the study focuses on the unique challenges faced by web casters in China. Considering the specificity of work in the casual economy and the rapid growth of the web caster industry in China and globally, it is particularly important to explore the pathways and boundary conditions of the role of webcasters' work resources in relation to job attainment. In an era where the zero-work economy is becoming the dominant employment model<sup>[1]</sup>, the findings of this paper pave the way for future research on work access for specific labour forces, which is likely to influence management policies and workplace practices in the global zero-work economy sector.

## 6. Countermeasure recommendations

It is found that abundant innovative resources greatly increase the work engagement of web casters, enhance traffic stickiness, and promote the sense of work gain. However, web casters need to build a 'resource package' that includes cognitive, emotional, and skill aspects to buffer the pressure of high work demands or lack of work resources<sup>[30]</sup>. Firstly, they should continuously improve their innovation ability, learn new skills, and acquire more work resources to break through their development bottlenecks; secondly, they should be good at self-direction, regulate their personal emotions, and actively construct a sense of meaning in their work, so as to realise the long-term development of their personal and professional lives. Finally, they should actively seek the help of platforms and related organizations, and they should also increase their support for anchors, provide better working environment and conditions, and help anchors gain personal value and career development.

## 7. Research limitations and future perspectives

The research in this paper provides targeted policy ideas and implementation paths to enhance the sense of job access of platform workers. However, there are still some shortcomings in this paper, for example, the data in this paper are cross-sectional data, which makes the measurement of the sense of job acquisition more subjective, and should be followed up in stages to make the research results more objective; the impact of changes in the external environment, such as the platform system and policy guidance, on the work status of web casters is neglected, and the subsequent measurements on the platform institutional environment should be optimised in accordance with the actual situation, so as to make it better respond to the objective reality.

## Acknowledgements

This paper is one of the phase results of the National Social Science Fund of China's project "Study on the Employment Sustainability of Returning Migrant Workers Based on the Industrial Development of County Areas"(22BRK002).

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