

Research on the Improving Path of College Student Employability from Social Practice Perspective

Suxia Cui

Department of Management Science and Engineering, University of Jinan, 250022, China

Abstract: Facing the grim employment situation, how to effectively enhance employability of the college student is the research focus of the university and other areas. This paper took more than 2,000 graduates from 20 colleges and universities in China as the research objects, and analyzes the key factors and the status quo of college student employability under the perspective of the social practice basing on Factor Analysis. The study found that, to improve the service ability and sociability, college students should actually enhance the practical ability, problem-solving ability, teamwork ability, etc. Based on this, the paper proposed upgrade path from three levels, the government's macro-control, universities' correct guidance, and university students' employment consciousness, to enhance the college student employability.

Keywords: Social practice, College student, Employability

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the reform of higher education and the continuous enrolment expansion of colleges and universities, the number of college graduates is rising. According to related statistics, the employment rate of university students is in a sustained downward trend for the past few years, as shown in table1. Contradiction of supply and demand in the employment of university students is getting even more serious, so how to improve college student employability has become the research focus of academia.

The report of *Coping with China hidden talent shortage* from McKinsey, the Known international management consulting firm, noted that there are only 10 percent of college students meet the personnel requirements of multinational companies in China. College student employability is a expression of the force of college students knowledge, ability and quality. Strengthening their capacity of building improving the overall quality, participating in various social practices actively, and enhancing career adaptability are important ways to enhance the college student employability [Dong Chao-Zong, 2010].

Social practice plays an important role in improving college student employability. Some scholars believe that it is the main reason causing weak graduates that Chinese traditional culture oriented education model emphasizes the importance of learning book knowledge and theoretical knowledge, but often neglected the students' self-development and training capabilities of replicability [Mu Lin, 2006]. In the college students employability training and promotion aspects, the higher education in China exists many problems. For example, some

colleges do not have the specific professional education and some students lack of social practice experience. Therefore, some scholars have suggested the Undergraduate Education reform from the following aspects: valued practices and cultural activities on campus; employment guidance should be enhanced specialization; establish undergraduate 'move back' mechanism [Li Hai-Fen, 2004].

FACTORS ANALYSIS

Our experts believe that, employability refers to the graduates who have the ability to adapt to the needs of society, achieve employment goals and maintain the development in their career. Achieve the value of their own abilities or skills by learning the knowledge to improve the overall quality during school [Fan Ze-Ying et al., 2006]. This paper tries to identify the key factors affect the social practice of college students based on the factor analysis, a large number of survey data, and hoping, identify the key points of value-added on social practice perspective, and hoping to find the breakthrough points to improve college students employability.

Sample selection

To confirm the College Student Employability in different economic regions, the research group selected 2000 college graduates from 11 colleges and universities in 20 provinces as the study sample, considering the school level, regional factors, universities and school characteristics and other aspects of nature. There are four "985" universities, five "211" universities, and eleven other colleges and universities. From the view of region, there are nine colleges in the east, five colleges in the midland and

six colleges in the west.

In the survey, 100 questionnaires were given to college graduates in 20 colleges. There are 2000 questionnaires were distributed, 1805 questionnaires are recovered. And we received 1534 valid questionnaires, 76.7% of effective rate. The questionnaire data and conclusions should be more representative by taking geographical distribution, educational level and respondents into account.

DETECTION OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Table1: College student employability’ descriptive statistics variable list from social practice perspective

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Correlations with factors adding
Social practice experience	69.987	16.708	.621**
practical ability	78.527	12.962	.692**
Problem-solving skills	79.582	11.749	.760**
Communication skills	77.778	12.109	.753**
Adaptability	78.855	11.666	.780**
Social adaptability	81.353	11.29	.734**
Teamwork	82.537	24.918	.458**
Organizational communication skills	80.613	11.643	.771**

Note: ** indicates the index correlation coefficients significant at the 0.01 level.

To test the stability of the survey questionnaire and measure the reliability of the obtained information, the paper analyzes the reliability of the college student employability’s constitute factors in the aspects of social practice, and the 8 variables including social practice experience, practical ability, problem-solving skills, communication skills, adaptability, social adaptability, teamwork and organizational communication skills. Cronbach’s alpha of these eight variables is 0.823, more than 0.6, indicating that the result of questionnaire is very good.

In KMO and Bartlett’ Sphericity test, the P value of corresponding probability is approximately 0.000, which is less than significant level of 0.05, so this may indicate the correlation coefficient matrix and a unit matrix have differences significantly. KMO value is 0.941, which is close to 1, indicating that the data was suitable for factor analysis.

As can be seen from the above test values, the questionnaire is effective from the perspective of social practice. The reliability of the questionnaire’ data is beneficial for correlation analyses, such as factor analysis. The data collection has reached the questionnaire survey purposes.

Factor analysis based on principal component analysis method

During the study, the intrinsic relationship between the eight indicators also needs to be analyzed in order to locate the key value factors of improving the college student employability from the social practice perspective. So the study categorizes eight measures into several comprehensive indexes, and the paper used factor analysis of the principal component analysis to achieve this goal. Principal component analysis in this paper is the means, which makes the original eight related variables to constitute linearly,

where p is 8; related variable is x_i . Then transform them to a group of unrelated variables, which is y_i . Formula is as follows:

$$\begin{cases} y_1 = u_{11}x_1 + u_{12}x_2 + u_{13}x_3 + \dots + u_{1p}x_p \\ y_2 = u_{21}x_1 + u_{22}x_2 + u_{23}x_3 + \dots + u_{2p}x_p \\ y_3 = u_{31}x_1 + u_{32}x_2 + u_{33}x_3 + \dots + u_{3p}x_p \\ \vdots \\ y_p = u_{p1}x_1 + u_{p2}x_2 + u_{p3}x_3 + \dots + u_{pp}x_p \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

Among them,

$$u_{i1}^2 + u_{i2}^2 + u_{i3}^2 + \dots + u_{ip}^2 = 1 \quad (i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, p);$$

y_i and y_j ($i \neq j; i, j = 1, 2, 3, \dots, p$) are independent ;

$$\text{Var}(y_i) \text{ } \text{Var}(y_i + 1) \quad \forall_i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, p-1.$$

y_1, y_2, \dots, y_p are followed by the main components of the original variables, where y_1 is the largest proportion of the total variance, the rest main ingredients in total variance are in descending order of proportion. Eight indicators describe the aspects of social practice have greater relevance. The composite indicator variables which are obtained by dimensionality reduction are based on principal component analysis. In order to better explain the practical significance of each factor, it is necessary to make great variance rotation for the data. So the resulting rotation and loaded new factors will have a more simple structure and more obvious practical significance.

FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULT AND FACTOR INTERPRETATION

After the principal component analysis and variance great rotation, the study got two main factors from eight indicators, which are comprehensive index. Finally, we made index weights based on the different contribution of factor value. Then we obtained the composite indicators that reflect the current college

students employability from the perspective of social practice. Table2.

Table2: The total variance explanation of factor analysis after rotated

Factors	1	2
Eigenvalues	5.012	2.878
Variance contribution rate (%)	21.878	12.562
Cumulative variance contribution rate (%)	21.878	61.870

As can be seen through the above experimental data, two main factors of variable correlation matrix eigenvalues are bigger than 1. When these two main factors are rotated and extracted, it is clearer to understand the meaning, easier to cluster analysis, and better to refine the data basis of college student employability from the social practice perspective. So the paper divided 8 factors into two major categories, and then explored the composition and the status quo based on the perspective of the social practice of college student employability.

Table3: Factor loadings after rotated and factor classification table

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2
	Working capacity	Social ability
Practical ability	.744*	.186
Problem-solving skills	.718	.135
Adaptability	.607	.205
Communication skills	.543	.259
Teamwork	.098	.805*
Organizational communication skills.	.348	.662
Social adaptability	.354	.648
Social practice experience	.243	.106

Note: * is the maximum value for a factor by sorting factor loading values.

In order to research the composition of college student employability from the social practice perspective effectively. The paper named the 2 factors appropriately on the basis of factor loadings and factor classification table, Table3. The 2 factors were named as “Working capacity” and “Social ability” according to the size factor variance contribution rate.

CONCLUSIONS

As the main employment, college graduates should show their consciousness and strengthen of self-cultivation when they are in the promotion process by training and improving. For example, college students should change the concept of employment, improve the consciousness and initiative of employability, and learn to teamwork. Improving learning ability, and training multi-disciplinary capability consciously combined with the actual are also very important [Ma Xiao, 2008]. Professional social practice makes a combination of professional education of school and social work, makes theoretical knowledge and social life in close connection, and makes classroom teaching and social practice linkages. It can not only provides a platform for students to play professional expertise and consolidate expertise, but also allows students to further examine their own expertise.

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