

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS' EMPLOYABILITY

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INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT – As the scale of Chinese universities and colleges continues to expand, the number of students graduating from colleges and universities is increasing every year, and the problem of "difficult employment" of college students is becoming increasingly prominent. Colleges and universities need to deeply study the influencing factors of the cultivation of college students' employability in order to comprehensively improve the employment competitiveness of college students. This paper puts forward the factors that influence the cultivation of college students' employability, and makes an empirical analysis with the data obtained from the questionnaire of college graduates of various majors of Guangdong Jiaying University as the research sample. The empirical analysis shows that the influencing factors are composed of strategic planning, curriculum and major settings, training approaches, teachers' level, and career planning guidance. They have a significant role in promoting college students' employability.

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The development of China's higher education is at the mass higher education stage; the scale of college graduates is expanding, and the employment competition for undergraduates is becoming increasingly fierce. The problem of "difficult employment" for college graduates, especially for undergraduates, has become a major concern of the people's livelihood. The employment problem of college students is a hot topic that is widely discussed by the government, universities, and society (Chen Siyuan, 2022). At present, in the new normal of China's economy, stabilising growth and ensuring employment are the main goals of macroeconomic policies. Although China's current employment situation is generally good, it is also facing enormous pressure and challenges. Among them, the employment of college students is a major challenge. For colleges and universities, it is the most important task to comprehensively improve the employability and quality of college students. Improving college students' employability, enhancing employment competitiveness, enabling them to quickly change roles, adapt to the work environment, meet social needs, and alleviate employment pressure are the responsibilities and missions entrusted to universities by the times (Wei Beibei, 2022). Therefore, finding out the influencing factors of college students' employability and taking targeted measures to improve college students' employability are both theoretical and practical issues facing higher education and also an important topic of academic research.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to many investigations and studies, due to the intensification of competition in the employment market, employers have high requirements for the ability and quality of college graduates. Some employers only recruit job seekers with work experience and do not accept college students with no practical experience. The reason for this situation is that the comprehensive ability of college students is low, which does not match the needs of employers. It is manifested in the following aspects: the basic professional knowledge and skills are not solid, the practical ability is not strong, the professional ability is not high, and innovation ability is not enough. In view of the problem of insufficient employability of college students, scholars have conducted in-depth research from different perspectives and achieved good results, but there are still shortcomings, especially the research on the influencing factors of employability training is not deep enough, and the proposed improvement measures are not effective enough. This needs to be improved in the next step.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have conducted in-depth research on the connotation of college students' employability and put forward their own views. Zhang Xiujuan (2022) believes that college students' employability is gradually formed through knowledge accumulation and social practice, and it is continuous learning ability. Yu Changchun & Wang Runbin (2014) believed that the employability of college students refers to the collection of various qualities that enable college students to achieve smooth employment and maintain job opportunities.

With the research on the connotation of employability, scholars' research on the dimensions of employability is also advancing synchronously. Wang Lei & Lyu Jia (2021) proposed that college students' employability consists of four dimensions: basic ability, professional ability, personal characteristics, and social adaptability. Xiao Yan & Wang Yanan (2018) divided employability into three dimensions: human capital, social capital and psychological capital. Based on the review of existing research and interviews with college students, this research proposes that college students' employability consists of four dimensions: professional knowledge and ability, transferable ability, job hunting and career planning ability, and self-management ability.

Scholars have also done a lot of research on the factors affecting the cultivation of college students' employability and have made some achievements. Cheng Min et al. (2021) believe that the factors that affect the employability of college students include government factors, college factors, student factors, employer factors, etc. Based on the review of existing research and interviews with college students, this research proposes that the influencing factors of college students' employability training include five aspects: strategic planning, curriculum and major settings, training approaches, teachers' level, and career planning guidance.

METHODOLOGY

Measuring Tools

The subjects of this study are undergraduate graduates, and the survey is conducted in the form of a questionnaire. The survey scale includes several aspects: the first aspect is to understand the information of the respondents, including age, gender, major, etc. The second aspect is to understand the components of employability, including professional knowledge, professional skills, sense of responsibility, etc. The third aspect is to understand the factors that affect the cultivation of employability, including the establishment of clear employability training objectives by the colleges and universities, the encouragement of students to participate in social practice activities by the colleges and universities, the teaching level and research ability of teachers, etc.

The scale used in this study belongs to the self-developed scale. All items were obtained through interviews with relevant experts and in combination with the existing literature on college students' employability. During the development process, relevant experts were invited to carefully revise the scale, and finally, the scale of this study was obtained. In the second and third parts of the scale, the Likert five-point scoring method is used for statistics.

Sample and Data Collection

In this research, a preliminary questionnaire was designed. First, it was distributed among 100 students at Guangdong Jiaying University, and 95 questionnaires were collected, of which 93 were valid. A formal questionnaire survey was conducted after questionnaire collection and data collation. In the process of issuing the scale, this research mainly selected the graduates of Guangdong Jiaying University as the survey objects; using the online distribution method, a total of 425 questionnaires were sent out, 413 were retrieved, and 400 were confirmed to be valid.

RESULTS

Reliability Test

This research uses SPSS22.0 to test the consistency of the constituent elements of college students' employability (see Table 1 for the results). The overall Cronbach's alpha value of the college students' employability component scale is 0.904, and the Cronbach's alpha value of the four dimensions of professional knowledge and ability, transferable ability, job hunting and career planning ability, self-management ability is 0.878, 0.859, 0.836 and 0.901, respectively, which are greater than 0.7. This result shows that the scale of college students' employability components has high reliability.

Table 1. Reliability Test of the Components of College Students' Employability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Overall Scale	0.904
Professional Knowledge and Ability	0.878
Transferable Ability	0.859
Job Hunting and Career Planning Ability	0.836
Self-management Ability	0.901

This research uses SPSS22.0 to test the consistency of the influencing factors of college students' employability (the results are shown in Table 2). The overall Cronbach's alpha value of the influencing factors scale of college students' employability in this study is 0.912, and the Cronbach's alpha value of the five dimensions of strategic planning, curriculum and major settings, training approaches, teachers' level, and career planning guidance is 0.902, 0.890, 0.863, 0.878, and 0.857, respectively, which are greater than 0.7. This result shows that the scale of influencing factors of college students' employability has high reliability.

Table2. Reliability Test of Influencing Factors of College Students' Employability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Overall Scale	0.912
Strategic Planning	0.902
Curriculum and Major Settings	0.890
Training Approaches	0.863
Teachers' Level	0.878
Career Planning Guidance	0.857

Validity Test

This research uses SPSS22.0 to conduct factor analysis on college students' employability and its impact to verify the structural validity of the questionnaire.

The exploratory factor analysis of the constituent elements of college students' employability shows that the KMO value is 0.917. According to Bartlett's sphericity test, the approximate chi-square is 2785.043, and the degree of freedom is 980, which has reached a significant level and is suitable for factor analysis.

It can be seen from the factor analysis results of college students' employability in Table 3 that four common factors with characteristic values greater than one are extracted through rotation, and the four common factors have 62.781% variance explanatory capacity for college students' employability, which meets the requirements of exploratory factor analysis. According to the items' common factors, the four factors are professional knowledge and ability, transferable ability, job hunting and career planning ability, and self-management ability.

Table 3. Results of Factor Analysis of College Students' Employability

Factor	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Professional Knowledge	0.861			
Professional Skills	0.852			
Information Acquisition and Processing Capability		0.786		
Learning Ability		0.789		
Executive Ability		0.762		
Teamwork and Management Ability		0.733		
Open Thinking and International Vision		0.705		
Job Hunting Skills			0.812	
Career Planning Ability			0.809	
Anti-frustration ability				0.782
Responsibility				0.773
Desire to Advance				0.718

The exploratory factor analysis of the factors affecting college students' employability shows that the KMO value is 0.903. According to Bartlett's sphericity test, the approximate chi-square is 2155.082, and the degree of freedom is 520, which has reached a significant level and is suitable for factor analysis.

It can be seen from the factor analysis results of college students' employability in Table 4 that five common factors with characteristic values greater than one are extracted after rotation, and the five common factors accounted for 63.502% variance of the factors affecting employability, which meets the requirements of exploratory factor analysis. According to the items included in each common factor, the five factors in this research are named strategic planning, curriculum and major settings, training approaches, teachers' level, and career planning guidance.

Table4. Results of Factor Analysis on Influencing Factors of College Students' Employability

Factor	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Formulate Clear Objectives for Cultivating Employability	0.881				
Formulate a Scientific Strategy for Cultivating Employability	0.863				
Strengthen Professional Certification		0.823			
Strengthen the Opening and Expansion of General Education Courses		0.826			
Give Students Ample Opportunities to Choose Courses Across Majors		0.832			
Set Up Innovation and Entrepreneurship Course Module		0.805			
Encourage Students to Participate in Social Practice Activities			0.772		
The University Attaches Importance to Strengthening Exchanges and Cooperation with Domestic and Foreign Universities			0.763		
Bringing Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education into the Training Plan			0.788		
Strengthen the Construction and Management of Student Associations				0.856	

Teachers' Teaching Ability and Level	
Teachers Have the Teaching the Concept of Integrating the Development of Employability into the Teaching Process	0.898
Strengthen Guidance and Service for Students' Career	0.836
Provide Career Information, Advice and Guidance	0.883

Regression Analysis

This research uses SPSS22.0 to conduct regression analysis on college students' employability and its influencing factors by taking each dimension of their employability as a dependent variable and each dimension of their influencing factors as an independent variable. First, the correlation test is conducted for each dimension (see Table 5 for the results).

Table 5. Correlation Coefficient Among Variables

Factor Professional	Strategic Planning	Curriculum and Major Settings	Training Approaches	Teachers' Level	Career Planning Guidance
Knowledge and Ability	0.654**	0.815**	0.504**	0.615**	0.438**
Transferable Ability	0.513**	0.796**	0.696**	0.586**	0.581**
Job Hunting and Career Planning Ability	0.467**	0.630**	0.529**	0.504**	0.578**
Self-management Ability	0.497**	0.649**	0.651**	0.487**	0.576**

Regression Analysis of Professional Knowledge and Ability

Table 6. Regression Analysis and Test Results of Professional Knowledge and Ability

	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error		
(Constant)	0.341	0.105	3.232	0.001
Strategic Planning	0.247	0.043	5.778	0.000
Curriculum and Major Settings	0.527	0.035	14.974	0.000
Training Approaches	-0.019	0.033	-0.556	0.579
Teachers' Level	0.123	0.040	3.072	0.002
Career Planning Guidance	0.031	0.026	1.156	0.248

It can be seen from the results in Table 6 that the coefficient significance (P value) of strategic planning, curriculum and major settings, and teachers' level is within 0.05, and these variables have a significant impact on professional knowledge and ability. It shows that professional knowledge and ability are positively affected by strategic planning, curriculum and major settings, and teachers' level because the regression coefficients are positive, and curriculum and major settings have the greatest impact on professional knowledge and ability.

Regression Analysis of Transferable Ability

Table 7. Regression Analysis and Test Results of Transferable Ability

	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error		
(Constant)	0.495	0.078	6.332	0.000
Strategic Planning	-0.047	0.032	-1.478	0.140
Curriculum and Major Settings	0.372	0.026	14.234	0.000
Training Approaches	0.235	0.025	9.491	0.000
Teachers' Level	0.011	0.030	0.359	0.720
Career Planning Guidance	0.167	0.020	8.505	0.000

The data in Table 7 shows that the coefficient significance (P value) of curriculum and major settings, training approaches, and career planning guidance is within 0.05, and these variables have a significant impact on transferable ability. It shows that transferable ability is positively affected by curriculum and major settings, training approaches, and career planning guidance because the regression coefficients are positive, and curriculum and major settings have the greatest impact on transferable ability.

Regression Analysis of Job Hunting and Career Planning Ability

Table 8. Regression Analysis and Test Results of Job Hunting and Career Planning Ability

	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error		
(Constant)	0.682	0.135	5.068	0.000
Strategic Planning	0.026	0.055	0.469	0.639
Curriculum and Major Settings	0.291	0.045	6.475	0.000
Training Approaches	0.160	0.043	3.756	0.000
Teachers' Level	0.053	0.051	1.039	0.299
Career Planning Guidance	0.282	0.034	8.337	0.000

The data in Table 8 shows that the coefficient significance (P value) of curriculum and major settings, training approaches, and career planning guidance is within 0.05, and these variables have a significant impact on job hunting and career planning ability. It shows that job hunting, and career planning ability is positively affected by the curriculum and major settings, training approaches, and career planning guidance because the regression coefficients are positive, and the curriculum and major settings have the greatest impact on job hunting and career planning ability.

Regression Analysis of Self-management Ability

Table 9. Regression Analysis and Test Results of Self-management Ability

	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error		
(Constant)	0.594	0.073	8.182	0.000
Strategic Planning	0.051	0.029	1.721	0.086
Curriculum and Major Settings	0.150	0.024	6.178	0.000
Training Approaches	0.209	0.023	9.097	0.000
Teachers' Level	-0.043	0.028	-1.544	0.123
Career Planning Guidance	0.151	0.018	8.276	0.000

The data in Table 9 shows that the coefficient significance (P value) of curriculum and major settings, training approaches, and career planning guidance is within 0.05, and these variables have a

significant impact on self-management ability. It shows that self-management ability is positively affected by curriculum and major settings, training approaches, and career planning guidance because the regression coefficients are positive, and training approaches have the greatest impact on self-management ability.

DISCUSSION

The results of regression analysis in this research show that strategic planning and teachers' level have a significant role in promoting professional knowledge and ability, training approaches and career planning guidance have a significant role in promoting transferable ability, job hunting and career planning ability, self-management ability, and curriculum and major settings have a significant role in promoting professional knowledge and ability, transferable ability, job hunting and career planning ability, self-management ability.

We should take targeted measures to improve college employability according to the impact of these factors. First, in terms of strategic planning, colleges and universities should formulate clear employment ability cultivation goals and scientific employment ability cultivation strategies so that teachers and students in colleges and universities have a clear understanding of the goals to be achieved and the implementation steps to be taken to cultivate students' employment ability.

Only in this way can teachers and students' actions be more targeted and effective. The second is to further enhance students' employability through measures such as strengthening professional certification, strengthening the opening and expansion of general education courses, providing students with sufficient opportunities to choose courses across majors, and establishing innovation and entrepreneurship curriculum modules in terms of curriculum and major settings. Thirdly, in terms of training approaches, measures are taken to comprehensively enhance students' employment abilities by encouraging them to participate in social practice activities, emphasising the strengthening of communication and cooperation with universities at home and abroad, incorporating innovation and entrepreneurship education into training plans, and strengthening the construction and management of student associations. Fourth, in terms of teachers' level, colleges and universities should take effective measures to comprehensively improve their teaching ability and level and actively guide teachers to establish a teaching concept of integrating employability development into the teaching process so as to achieve the effect of comprehensively improving the quality of talent cultivation. Fifth, in terms of career planning guidance, by strengthening guidance and services for students' careers, providing high-quality student career information, advice, and guidance, comprehensively improving students' career development potential and employment quality.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Considering the availability and representativeness of the data, this questionnaire takes the data obtained from Guangdong Jiaying University as the research sample to conduct an empirical analysis of the factors affecting the employability of college students proposed by this research. The analysis results show that the indicator system proposed by this research is effective in measuring the factors affecting employability.

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