
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND EMPLOYMENT AREA SELECTION ABILITY OF COLLEGE GRADUATES: EVIDENCES FROM CHINA

Mingji Liu

Abstract

In general, college students prefer to work in the areas with developed economy and favourable policies. Their ability to select employment areas is greatly affected by a unique internal quality: psychological capital. This paper attempts to disclose the relationship between the psychological capital of college graduates and their employment area selection ability. To this end, a questionnaire survey was performed among college graduates in north-eastern China, and the results were subjected to correlation analysis. During the analysis, the psychological capital was examined from four dimensions, namely, self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. The results show that college graduates prefer first-tier cities or provincial capitals; the self-efficacy and resilience are the top two determinants of employment area selection ability, and are greatly affected by gender, family origin, student cadres and academic record; the psychological capital of college graduates has a significant positive impact on their ability to select employment areas, laying a strong basis for predicting the selection of employment areas. The research greatly promotes the analysis of employability of college students.

Key words: Regional Economy, Employment Flow, Psychological Capital, Employment Area Selection Ability, Questionnaire Survey.

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INTRODUCTION

College graduates have always been an important part of high-level human resources. In recent years, the increasingly saturated job market has brought great employment pressure to the graduates (Ngoma & Ntale, 2016). At present, there are many factors affecting the selection of college students' employment areas, including employment policy, employment situation, family background, their own values and personality traits. Psychological capital is also an internal factor that cannot be ignored affecting the employment of college graduates greatly (Alkire & Avey, 2013). Psychological

capital is an intrinsic psychological quality that solves problems and resists stress. It has a subtle influence on the choice of graduates' employment areas. The cultivation of college students' psychological capital is an important indicator to enhance students' comprehensive quality and employment competitiveness (Babalola, 2010, Wang, Liu, Li et al., 2017). Psychological capital includes four dimensions: self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience, and each dimension has its own competitive advantage. College students have their own advantages in the dimensions of psychological capital. By stimulating college students' awareness of their own psychological capital can they form employment competitive advantage (Kim & Williams, 2012).

The employment area selection of graduates means to obtain employment opportunities and

School of Economics and Management, Harbin Institute of Technology, Harbin 150080, China
E-Mail: hsdliumingji@126.com

maintain employability in the corresponding regions or areas after the professional study of the individual students (Thompson, Lemmon, & Walter, 2015). To understand the graduates' ability to select employment areas, it is necessary to know about the graduates' expectations for employment, the rules and regulations that employers can adapt to, and environmental constraints, as well as their own positioning (Shalom, Serro, Giaconia et al., 2013). Studies have shown that psychological capital is of great significant for promoting the employment ability of college graduates, and the employment of college graduates is inseparable from a good psychological state. Such kind of good psychological state is psychological capital (Huang, 2001; Yazici & Yazici, 2010). Taking college graduates in Northeast China as the research objects, this paper attempts to analyse the relationship between graduates' psychological capital and their ability to select employment areas using the questionnaire survey and correlation analysis. It also elaborates on the influence of psychological capital on graduates' employment selection ability.

INFLUENCE MECHANISM OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON THE ABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT AREA SELECTION

Psychological capital is a kind of value-added capital bringing benefits to individuals. This positive state of mind helps individuals to be optimistic and develop their own abilities (Agarwal & Farndale, 2017). Studies have shown that the improvement of psychological capital can enable people to maintain positive attitudes, beliefs, hopes and confidence, and encourage individuals to accumulate energy at work and

improve their individual perception (O'Donohue, Martin, & Torugsa, 2015). The ability of college graduates to select the employment area is the one to achieve the ideal and life value in the living, learning and communication process of colleges and universities (Aslund, Starrin, & Nilsson, 2014). Interfered by various factors, the psychology capital of college students will change under different learning environments, and it's formed in the process integrating their own environment and the social environment, reflecting the individual's ability (Souto-Otero, 2016).

For the psychological capital, the self-efficacy dimension is the endogenous force that drives the selection of graduate employment area; the optimistic dimension plays a positive role in promoting the choice; the hope dimension gives graduates a strong expectation and prospect for the future; the resilience dimension encourages college students to actively face their own disadvantages, and manage to improve their own quality so as to lay a good foundation and preparation for employment. Figure 1 is a structural diagram showing the impact of psychological capital on employment selection ability. The four dimensions of psychological capital all affect the selection of employment area in the three aspects of individuals, schools and society.

THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' EMPLOYMENT REGIONAL FLOW

Driving system of college student's employment regional flow

The selection of employment areas for college students is related to the allocation and development of national, social and regional resources. However, the employment regional

Figure 1. Structural chart of the impact of psychological capital on employment area selection ability

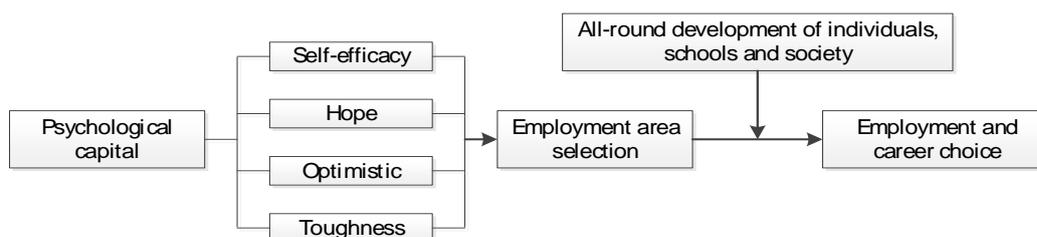


Figure 2. The driving system map of regional flow of college students' employment

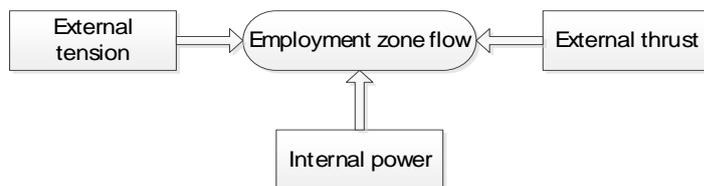
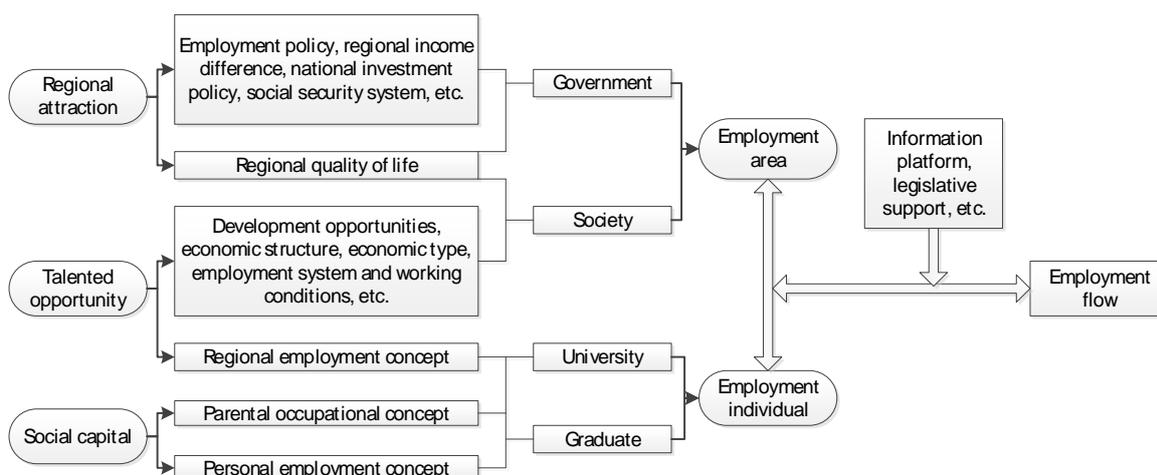


Figure 3. Strategic model of regional flow direction for college graduates



flows of college graduates from different regions, different levels and different disciplines differ largely, generally showing the concentrated flow in the east region, scattered flow in the central and western regions is scattered, and the unbalanced flow within one province. Figure 2 shows the driving system of the employment regional flow for college students. The driving force of employment flow is affected by external pull, external thrust and internal motivation. The employment flow of college students is manifested as the rational choice of individual behaviour and individual.

Individual behaviour is affected by psychological factors. In the process of employment selection, college students show different employment psychological tendencies, psychological quality and mentality, which will produce a great impact on the employment area selection. Figure 3 shows the guidance strategy model of regional flow direction for college graduates. The guidance of graduates' regional flow cannot be separated from the implementation subjects and related policies. In order to achieve their guidance role under the influence of families, individuals, society and

universities, it's necessary for the related personnel to understand the impact of each factor on the employment of individual graduates, and then develop corresponding measures to implement the adjustment of college students' employment regional flow.

Empirical study on the causes of college students' employment regional flow

The employment regional flow of college students is formed in their choice process. The choice of college students' employment areas is to meet their own needs. It depends on the evaluation of college graduates for this area whether meeting their own expectations, and also on the evaluation of their own employability. In summary, the ability to select employment areas includes two factors: the willingness to go and the ability to go. In this section, 500 college graduates were selected as survey respondents in order to explore the graduates' selection of employment areas and related factors. Figure 4 shows the plans of college graduates. The proportion of graduates directly employed was the largest, and a considerable proportion of graduates chose to

continue your studies. Table 1 lists the distribution of employment paths. It's found that the vast majority of students find jobs through campus recruitment fairs and self-study exams. Figure 5 shows the impact of various factors on the attractiveness of graduate employment areas. It can be clearly seen that quality of life, social security and income levels were important factors affecting the employment choice of

graduates, followed by employment policies and settlement systems, and the economic structure and the economic type had little impact on the choice of graduate employment areas. Figure 6 shows the ideal employment area selection for college graduates. It can be clearly seen that the proportion of graduates who chose first-tier cities and provincial capitals exceeded 75%, and college graduates are prone to big cities.

Figure 4. Graduation plan of college graduates

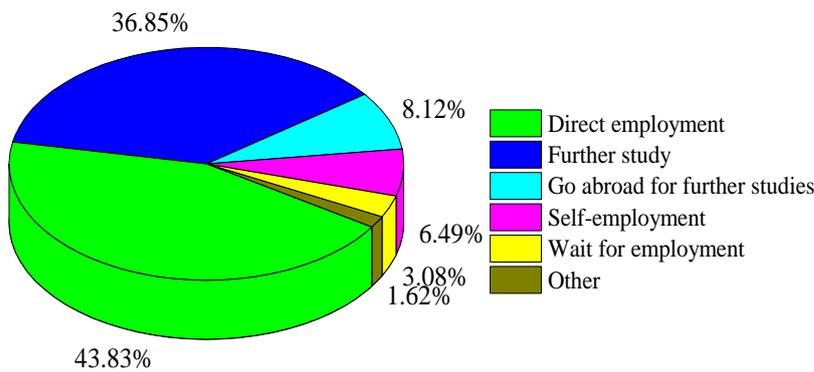


Table 1. Distribution of employment paths

	Number	Other
School job fair	212	42.4%
Self-test	133	26.6%
Teacher recommendation	51	10.2%
Parent introduction	44	8.8%
Talent market	34	6.8%
Friend recommendation	13	2.6%
Recruitment on the Internet, Newspapers, etc.	8	1.6%
Other	5	1%

Figure 5. The influence of various factors on the regional attractiveness of graduates' employment

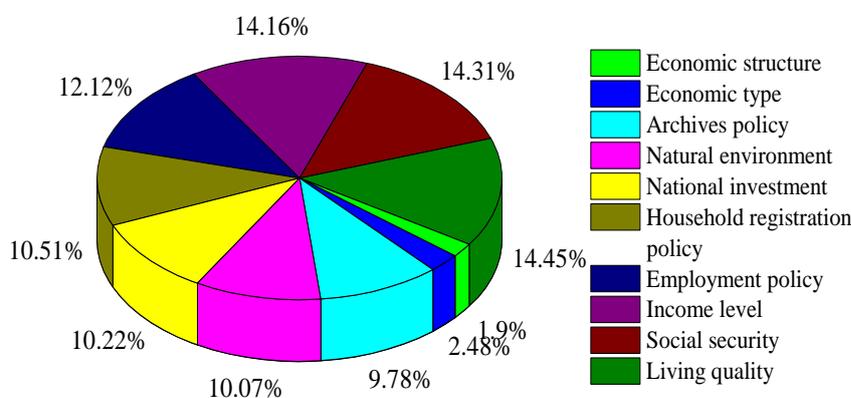
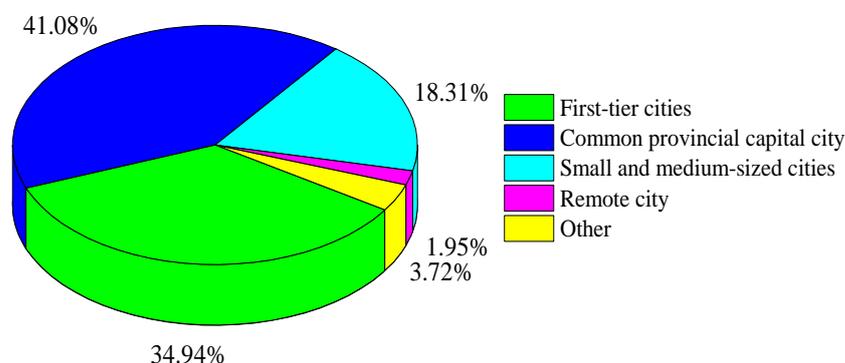


Figure 6. Ideal selection of employment areas for college graduates



EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS FOR THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON EMPLOYMENT AREA SELECTION ABILITY

Survey research and data extraction

In order to explore the influence of college graduates' psychological capital on employment selection ability in Northeast China, this section studies the psychological capital status of college graduates in Northeast China using the questionnaire survey. The whole questionnaire survey consisted of three parts, namely, basic introduction, background, and survey items. The survey on psychological capital of college students adopted seven-point system. The higher the scores, then the better the psychological capital state. The subjects were all college graduates in Northeast China, and the data obtained was statistically processes and organized using the SPSS software. Table 2 shows the basic data of the subjects.

Table 2. Basic data of subjects

Factors	Type	Quantity	Proportion/%
Gender	Male	272	54.4%
	Female	228	45.6%
Family origin	Towns	317	63.4%
	Countryside	183	36.6%
Student cadres	Yes	101	20.2%
	No	399	79.8%
Academic record	Good	123	24.6%
	Medium	256	51.2%
	Poor	121	24.2%

Correlation analysis between psychological capital and employment area selection ability

This questionnaire mainly studied the

influence of gender, family origin, student cadres and academic record on the psychological capital of graduates. Figure 7 shows the average scores of each dimension of the psychological capital for the college graduates in Northeast China, in which self-efficacy and resilience dimensions scored the highest, followed by the hope dimension, and the optimistic dimension scored the lowest, which is related to the pressure of college graduates in the employment selection process, but overall the students are good at self-efficacy and resilience. Figure 8 shows the influence of various factors on the scores of each dimension of psychological capital. Figure 8(a) shows the gender factor. It can be clearly seen that the scores of male students' psychological capital were higher than those of female students, and there were significant differences in each dimension of psychological capital in terms of the gender factor; Figure 8(b) is the family source factor, and the scores of the psychological capital of college graduates in urban households were higher than those in rural households, indicating a significant difference in each dimension of psychological capital; Figure 4(c) shows the cadre factors of students, in which the influence of student cadres on the various dimensions of psychological capital does not show any regularity; the college graduates as student cadres scored higher in the resilience dimension, but lower in the self-efficacy dimension. Overall, in terms of the student cadres' factor, there was significant difference in the dimensions of self-efficacy and resilience. Figure 4(d) shows the factors of academic record. It can be clearly seen that students doing well in school scored higher

Figure 7. Diagrammatic sketch of research method Average scores of psychological capital of college graduates in Northeast China

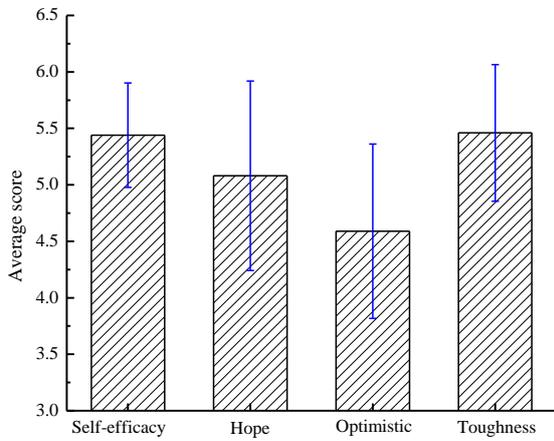


Figure 8. The influence of various factors on the scores of various dimensions of psychological capital

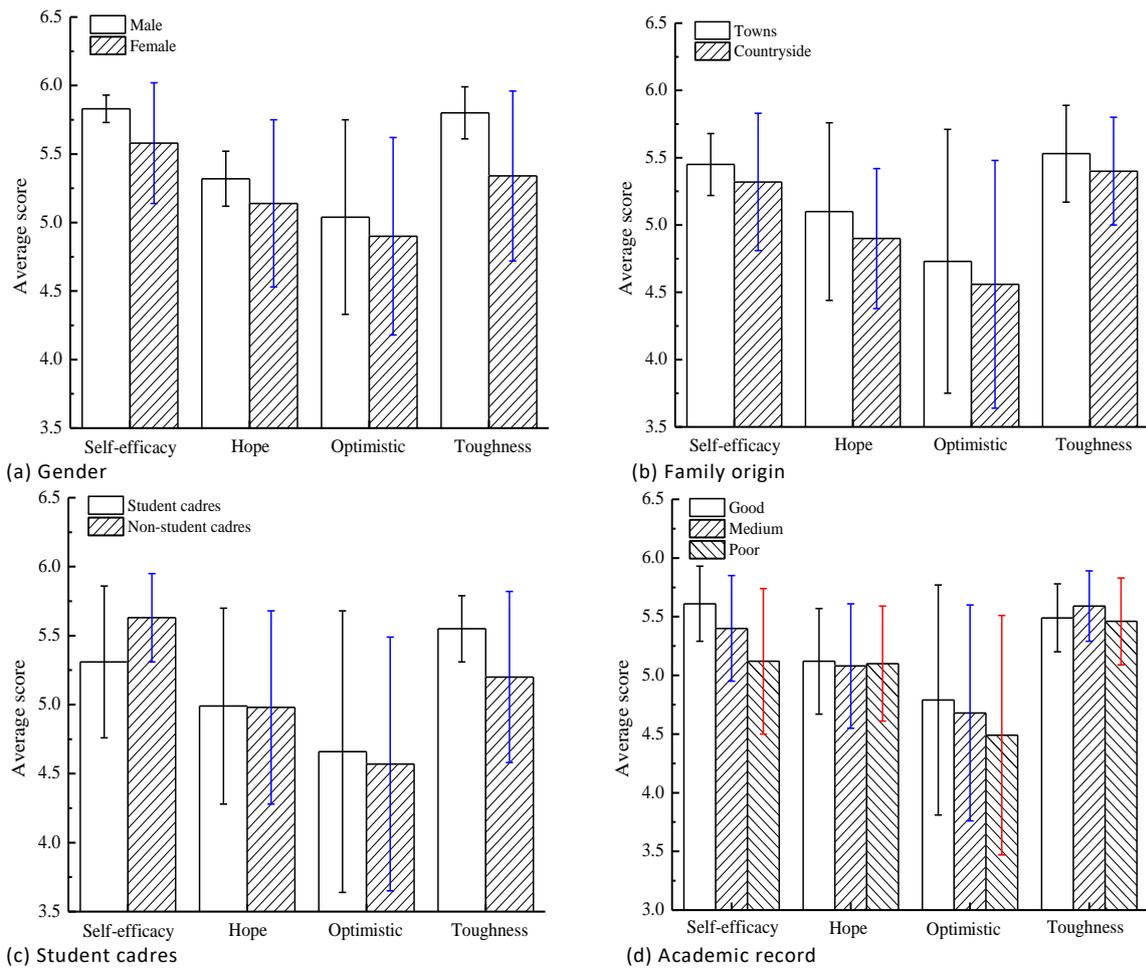
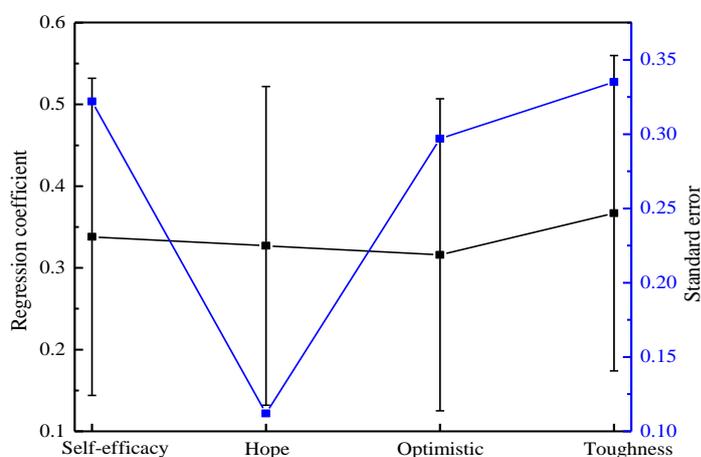


Figure 9. Parameter analysis of regression models in different dimensions of mind capital and employment area selection



in the self-efficacy dimension and optimistic dimension, but there was no significant difference in the dimension of hope and resilience.

The analysis of the average scores in each dimension of college graduate's psychological capital shows that there is a correlation relationship between all dimensions of psychological capital and employment area selection ability, that is, the higher the score of each dimension, the greater the scores of the employment area selection ability. Figure 9 shows the parameter analysis of regression models in different dimensions of psychological capital and employment area selection. It can be seen that the psychological capital has a strong predictive ability for the employment area selection, in which the self-efficacy dimension has the strongest predictive ability, followed by the resilience dimension, hope dimension, and optimistic dimension.

CONCLUSIONS

Taking college graduates in Northeast China as the research objects, this paper analyses the relationship between graduates' psychological capital and employment area selection ability using questionnaire survey and correlation analysis, and also elaborates on the influence of psychological capital on graduates' employment selection ability. The specific conclusions are as follows:

(1) The driving force of college students' employment flow is affected by external

pull, external thrust and internal motivation. So, it is generally characterized by the concentrated flow in the east region, scattered flow in the central and western regions, and the unbalanced flow within one province;

- (2) The self-efficacy and resilience dimensions of college students' psychological capital in Northeast China scored the highest, followed by hope dimension, and the optimistic dimension scored the lowest; the psychological dimension of college graduates is affected by gender, family origin, student cadres and academic records, etc.;
- (3) There is a correlation relationship between all dimensions of psychological capital and employment area selection ability, that is, the higher the score of each dimension, the greater the scores of the employment area selection ability. Furthermore, the psychological capital has a strong predictive ability for the employment area selection, in which the self-efficacy dimension has the strongest predictive ability, followed by the resilience dimension, hope dimension, and optimistic dimension.

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