

Study of the influence of class construction on the 90s undergraduate's employability -- Taking one university in Wuhan as an example

Mujia Chang & Min Kuang

College of Science, Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan, Hubei, China

ABSTRACT: Undergraduate's employability is an important factor that leads to difficult employment situation for undergraduates. However, there's close connection between the cultivation of undergraduate's employability and class construction. This thesis takes 500 90s undergraduates from one university in Wuhan as examples. It reveals the relations of class teacher's function, class leader's function, and class atmosphere in class construction with the 90s undergraduate's employability. The study shows that effective play of class teacher's function can leave positive influence on the 90s undergraduate's basic inherent quality, basic working ability, emotion control ability, planning and self-examination. Good class atmosphere can also leave positive influence on the 90s undergraduate's basic internal quality, basic working ability, emotion control ability, planning and self-examination.

Keywords: university; employability; class construction; 90s undergraduate's; influence factor

Undergraduate's employment difficulty has become the focus of attention for government, society, family and school at present. However, it is easy to find the reason for this phenomenon based on analysis of multi-dimensional perspectives. Undergraduate's weak employability and difficulty in adapting to employer's demand constitute a factor that cannot be ignored. A report made by McKinsey says, "Only 10% of undergraduates can meet multinational enterprises' requirements." Therefore, in order to solve undergraduates' employment issue, it is very important to improve undergraduates' employability. Moreover, the channels to explore and cultivate undergraduates' employability are also of great importance.

Undergraduate's employability is a comprehensive ability related to vocation. It mainly refers to the basic quality, knowledge and skills required for undergraduate's success. Undergraduate's employability is mainly composed of major employability, basic employment quality, and universal employment skills. To be specific, major employability refers to the professional theoretical knowledge, methods, and skills that undergraduates learn from systematic study; basic employment quality refers to physical and mental quality related to employment, such as professional quality, sense of responsibility, enterprise, and psychological quality; and universal employment skills

include individual ability of job hunting, interpersonal skill, learning skill, problem solving skill, teamwork skill, and innovation skill. How to fully play the function of each class element in class construction and guide students to improve their employability is a problem demanding prompt solution.

Class collective in college and university is an important place for undergraduates to obtain knowledge and grow. At present, class collective still remains as the most important and most stable group for undergraduates. The features of class collective include long group living time, high frequency of mutual contact, great mutual influence, and significant function on individual development. The *Suggestions on Further Strengthening and Improving Undergraduate's Ideological and Political Education from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*, points out that "class is the main organization carrier of college, university, and self-service. It takes the roles of uniting students, organizing students, and educating students". Class collective members usually consciously adjust their own cognition and behaviors according to the orientation of the group, so as to adapt to the group needs and seek for psychological balance and sense of belonging. Besides, cooperative study, problem-solving study, learning from good examples, and many other study opportunities can be

generated during this process; and thus can provide many opportunities for students to study [1]. Meanwhile, the collective wisdom required for class construction can encourage students to master how to pool the wisdom and efforts of everyone, and how to be bold in innovation. The various interpersonal communications and a rich mixture of activities in class can help students build trust on the surroundings and lead them to understand, care, and show their gratitude. Moreover, they can also help students stay open, innovative, aggressive, and dynamic. Therefore, improving undergraduate's employability by class construction is feasible.

This thesis tries to explore the influence that the main factors of college and university class construction has on the 90s undergraduate's employability. So far, there are few studies related to this subject and most of them are lack of systematic and empirical analysis.

1 STUDY FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

1.1 *Compilation of questionnaire for the 90s undergraduate's employability*

This thesis combined the 90s undergraduate's actual situation and compiled Questionnaire for the Structural Model of the 90s Undergraduate's Employability by looking up references. It also constructed the four-factor model of the 90s undergraduate's employability. This model consists of four dimensions: inherent character quality, basic working ability, emotion control and management ability, and planning and introspection ability.

Among which, inherent character quality includes 8 indexes: professional dedication, sense of responsibility, integrity degree, sense of time, honesty, hard-working and hardship bearing, observation of laws and disciplines, and willpower. All these indicators can reflect undergraduate's ideological and ethic quality.

Basic working ability includes 8 indexes: interpersonal communications, communication ability, self-marketing ability, organizational coordination ability, immediate response ability, expression ability, problem-solving ability, and innovation ability. All the indexes can obtain great importance from employers. They are all basic skills frequently used at work.

Emotion management and control ability includes 3 indexes: self-control ability, endurance, and psychological adaptation ability. All these indexes can reflect undergraduate's emotion management and psychological adaptation level.

Planning and introspection ability includes 5 indexes: planning ability, time management ability, sense of competition, subjective initiative, and introspection ability. The skills reflected by these indexes can

forecast whether job hunters will be able to manage themselves and adapt to continuously changing social demands in the future.

1.2 *Survey of the condition of each factor's function in undergraduate's class*

Class construction in colleges and universities and cultivation of undergraduate's employability share the same target. The direction of class construction is reflection of the main will of education. The target of class construction is to turn the intention and requirements of education into those of student collective by cultivating and managing class. It also aims to turn teacher's power into that of student collective, so as to form a resultant force of education in combination of teacher and student collective. One of the classic features contained in class construction is to focus on student's daily life at school. By reconstructing student's daily life at school, it aims to realize improvement on student's development. The core body of class construction is student. The process for a class collective to become more developed and healthier is also a process for students to realize self-growth and development. Therefore, in order to effectively analyze the relation between class construction and cultivation of undergraduate's employability, this study conducted investigation on the influence that the most important three factors - class teacher's function, class leader's function, and atmosphere of class collective - have on the play of each element in the class. It set up items according to class teacher's function, class leader's function, and function of class atmosphere respectively. Undergraduates can perceive and answer the influence that class teacher's function, class leader's function, and function of class atmosphere have on their individual employability improvement.

1.3 *Study hypothesis*

This study established connection between the influence imposed by the elements of class (class teacher's function, class leader's function, and class collective atmosphere) and the employability of undergraduate's four dimensions, and proposed three hypotheses as follows:

H1: there's positive correlation between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's inherent character quality;

H2: there's positive correlation between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's basic working ability;

H3: there's positive correlation between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's emotion management and control ability;

H4: there's positive correlation between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's planning and introspection ability.

2 STUDY METHODS

2.1 Sample selection and data collection

The respondents of this study are 500 90s graduates of the current year from one university in Wuhan. All the students' basic information, employability quality, play of class teacher's function, play of class leader's function, and situation of class atmosphere come from the students' feedback who took the questionnaire survey. 550 copies of the questionnaire were issued in total and 520 were received, among which there were 504 effective ones with a recovery rate of 94.54%. The effective rate of the questionnaire was 96.92%.

Among the respondents, male students accounted for 66.7% while female accounted for 33.3%. To analyze according to major difference, 47.2% respondents major in humanities and social sciences while 52.8% majored in natural sciences.

2.2 Variable measurement

The items shown in the two tables of this study all took the Likert Scale to manifest degree difference. The reaction range gradually increased from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). They required the respondents to choose how much they agree according to actual situation.

2.3 Pretest

Firstly, this study conducted pretest to the initial scale and selected undergraduates from Huazhong Agricultural University as the respondents. The respondents filled in the questionnaire and returned the copies on the spot. 160 copies of the questionnaire were issued in total among which 144 were effective with an effective rate of 90%. SPSS17.0 was applied to conduct reliability test on the items of the scale according to the sample data of the pretest. The test result showed the Cronbach's Alpha results of the 90s undergraduate's employability scale, of class teacher's function, of class leader's function, and of class atmosphere were 0.937, 0.864, 0.956, and 0.877 respectively. Therefore, this scale can be used to conduct a large-scale survey.

3 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The mean values and standard deviation N=504 of the three elements of class construction and the 90s undergraduate's employability are shown in Table 1.

The results of the correlation analysis on the three elements of class construction and the influence of the 90s undergraduate's employability are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Mean value and standard deviation between three elements of class and undergraduate's employability (N=504)

	Mean	Std. deviation
Basic quality	3.2292	.56955
Basic working ability	2.8854	.60287
Emotion management and control ability	2.875	.72176
Planning and introspection ability	2.7	.63067
Class teacher's function	2.9954	.73424
Class leader's function	3.1083	.56761
Function of class atmosphere	2.6759	.95963

Table 2. Correlation analysis of the three elements of class and undergraduate's quality ability (N=504)

	Basic inherent quality	Basic working ability	Emotion management and control ability	Planning and introspection ability
Gender	0.221	0.160	0.302	0.169
Major	0.131	-0.163	-0.190	-0.078
Class teacher's function	0.301*	0.478**	0.517**	0.514**
Class leader's function	0.238*	0.216	0.318**	0.306**
Function of class atmosphere	0.288*	0.128*	0.181	0.317**

Notes: ** means $P < 0.01$; * means $P < 0.05$

3.1 Related hypothesis verification of the three elements of class and the 90s undergraduate's inherent quality

Among control variables, there's no correlation among gender, major, and student's inherent character quality. Among independent variables, there's positive correlation between class teacher's function ($r=0.301$, $p<0.05$) and the 90s undergraduate's inherent character quality; there's positive correlation between class leader's function ($r=0.238$, $p<0.05$) and undergraduate's inherent character quality; and there's positive correlation between class atmosphere ($r=0.288$, $p<0.05$) and the 90s undergraduate's inherent character quality. It means when class teachers, class leaders, and class atmosphere can play their roles better, it's likely for undergraduates to improve their inherent character quality. The positive correlations between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's inherent character quality assumed in H1 have all been verified.

3.2 Related hypothesis verification of the three elements of class and 90 undergraduate's basic working ability

Among control variables, there's no correlation among gender, major, and undergraduate's basic working ability. Among independent variables, there's strong positive correlation between class teacher's function ($r=0.478$, $p<0.01$) and the 90s undergraduate's basic working ability; there's insignificant correlation between class leader's function and the 90s undergraduate's basic working ability; and there's positive correlation between class atmosphere ($r=0.128$, $p<0.05$)

and the 90s undergraduate's basic working ability. It means when class teacher's function and class atmosphere can play their roles better, it likely for the 90s undergraduates to improve their basic working ability. The assumption that the three class elements can be beneficial to the improvement of the 90s undergraduate's basic working ability shown in H1 and the assumption that there's positive correlation between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's basic working ability shown in H2 have both been verified.

3.3 *Related hypothesis verification of the three elements of class and the 90s undergraduate's emotion management and control ability*

Among control variables, there's no correlation among gender, major, and undergraduate's basic working ability. Among independent variables, there's strong positive correlation between class teacher's function ($r=0.517$, $p<0.01$) and the 90s undergraduate's emotion management and control ability; there's strong positive correlation between class leader's function ($r=0.517$, $p<0.01$) and the 90s undergraduate's emotion management and control ability; and there's insignificant correlation between class atmosphere and the 90s undergraduate's emotion management and control ability. It means when class teacher's function and class leader's function can play their roles better, it is likely for the 90s undergraduates to improve their emotion management and control ability. The positive correlation between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's inherent character quality as assumed in H3 has been part verified.

3.4 *Related hypothesis verification of the three elements of class and the 90s undergraduate's planning and introspection ability*

Among control variables, there's no correlation among gender, major, and undergraduate's planning and introspection ability. Among independent variables, there's strong positive correlation between class teacher's function ($r=0.514$, $p<0.01$) and the 90s undergraduate's planning and introspection ability; there's strong positive correlation between class leader's function ($r=0.306$, $p<0.01$) and the 90s undergraduate's planning and introspection ability; and there's strong positive correlation between class atmosphere ($r=0.317$, $p<0.01$) and the 90s undergraduate's planning and introspection ability. It means when class teacher's function, class leader's function, and class atmosphere can play their roles better, it is likely for the 90s undergraduates to improve their planning and introspection ability. The positive correlation between the three class elements and the 90s undergraduate's planning and introspection ability as assumed in H4 has all been verified.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 *Conclusions*

(1) Effective play of class teacher's function can leave positive influence on the integral improvement of the 90's undergraduate's employment quality

The survey shows effective play of class teacher's function can leave positive influence on the 90s undergraduate's basic inherent quality, basic working ability, emotion management and control ability, and planning and introspection ability. As people who have highly frequent contact with students, class teachers can play a vital role in guiding students to improve employability. During daily education management, class teachers can get familiar with most students' hobbies, characteristics, and vocational planning. They can also provide guidance on vocational planning, comprehensive ability improvement, and occupational guidance for students accordingly. Therefore, play of class teacher's function can leave positive influence.

(2) Effective play of class leader's function can leave positive influence on the improvement of the 90s undergraduate's part employment quality

The survey shows effective play of class leader's function can leave positive influence on the 90s undergraduate's basic inherent quality, basic working ability, emotion management and control ability, and planning and introspection ability. Class leaders make up the direct force of forwarding class construction. They also form the key power to unify class members. If class leader's function can be fully played, they can not only lead classmates to create better class atmosphere; but can also organize various activities to enhance the solidarity and friendship among classmates while promoting healthy development. All these can be very beneficial for cultivation of classmates' basic quality and high psychological quality. Meanwhile, class leaders can take an exemplary role to help classmates with worse academic achievement catch up. It can leave direct influence on classmates' planning and introspection ability.

(3) Good class atmosphere can leave positive influence on the integral improvement of the 90s undergraduate's employment quality

The survey shows good class atmosphere can leave positive influence on the 90s undergraduate's basic inherent quality, basic working ability, emotion management and control ability, and planning and introspection ability. Optimistic and unified class collective atmosphere can help each student have comprehensive development on their personality and improve their comprehensive quality. Most students in classes with friendly atmosphere are motivated to be better. They have clear planning for the future and are aware of time management. In such classes, there's strong academic atmosphere and students are eager to participate in practice activities inside and outside campus, so as

to improve their abilities. Therefore, good class atmosphere can help students create and improve their quality through various ways. It can leave positive influence on undergraduate's basic quality, basic working ability, emotion management and control ability, and planning and introspection ability.

4.2 Suggestions

(1) Enhance class teacher team building and improve class teacher's class management and employment guiding ability

From the beginning to become developed, a class teacher is the leading core in a class. His/her speech and behaviors, characteristics, and working style can leave great influence on students intangibly. They may also form the style of the class. Therefore, class teacher shall pay attention to improve management ability [3] at work. Class teacher is the pilot in forming class character. In order to improve student's employability, class teacher shall establish clear management concept and comprehensively systematic guiding strategies to conduct class work. Thus, it can provide rules and regulations for class construction to obey in an easier way. It can also promote students to follow the major direction of class construction and find their own advance directions. Moreover, a class teacher shall use personal charisma to influence and encourage students. During the contact with students, a class teacher shall be able to influence students through his connotation, temperament, and behaviors, so as to effectively arouse students' eager of becoming excellent and promote their forming of good quality. Lastly, class teacher's employment guidance ability shall be improved. If class teacher has the knowledge and skills required for undergraduate employment guidance, it will be very beneficial for students in confused period to find their direction as soon as possible. In the meantime, class teachers shall integrate vocational planning into daily management work, so as to effectively help students establish sense of vocational planning and employment. In this way, students can prepare for employment in advance. When students hesitate about vocational choices, class teachers shall be able to provide reasonable suggestions and better guidance for students.

(2) Emphasize on class leader team building and give full play to class leader's exemplary and vanguard role

Class leader team has close contact with students. It is very easy for class leaders to know student's ideas. They are the direct practitioners of many daily management policies and strategies made by school. Teachers can express their class management ideas through themselves. They aim to focus more on student's self-management and self-service instead of strengthening teacher's management status. Therefore, in order to lead the cultivation of student's employability by class construction, it is very important to

emphasize on the establishment of class leader team. Firstly, a batch of excellent students can be selected as class leaders. Those students have good talent and dedication spirit. They have the sense of service and can unify classmates by giving examples of their own behaviors. Such class leaders can not only take an exemplary role in the class; but can also lead the class construction to march towards the expected direction. Secondly, the cultivation and education of class leader team shall be given great attention. The cultivation and education of class leader team is not only the basic engineering of class construction; but is also an important step in cultivating student's employability. On one hand, if class leaders can master the basic skills and methods of class management and team construction, they will not only be able to lead the whole class to a better direction; but can also deal with every issue and promote harmonious class construction. On the other hand, it is very necessary to cultivate class leader's employment guidance ability which is beneficial to improve classmates' employability and play a positive role in class activity organization, interpersonal relation establishment, and atmosphere creation. Thirdly, attach importance to fully play the role of class leaders in helping others. With the guidance of class leaders, students can advocate collective employment and try to arouse student's sense of employment by helping others and information sharing. In this way, students can feel care from peers and learn from other's strong points to offset their weakness.

(3) Create friendly class atmosphere and establish positive and healthy class culture

Class atmosphere, especially class psychological atmosphere, is an important factor in affecting class management work. It can also influence whether students can develop healthily in a direct or indirect way. Harmonious class atmosphere and optimistic class style can help students absorb class management and create competitive study atmosphere. Thus, student's learning initiatives can be ignited. Meanwhile, harmonious class atmosphere can also be reflected through interpersonal relationships among students. It is easy to form friendly and caring atmosphere among classmates in good class atmosphere which can arouse classmates' enthusiasm and lead them to realize the goal of class construction. Therefore, harmonious and optimistic class atmosphere is the guarantee for healthy growth of class members. It can also help students improve employability. In order to improve student's employability through class construction, how to help students develop into talents and improve their employability shall be taken as the main target in class construction. Healthy, lively, and featured class culture is the soft power of class construction; and is also an important channel to enhance members' collective honor. It can not only promote formation of good collective air of public opinion; but can also effectively urge students to strictly regulate their be-

haviors. In addition, students can become more aware of their own behaviors. During the establishment of class culture, class culture with positive energy is a must. Good learning style and class style are also invisible power to promote class construction. To create good class atmosphere, we shall create class culture with positive energy which is an invisible force and can help promote student's initiative to enhance vocational knowledge; help students lay a foundation of mastering solid professional skills; encourage people to set up correct viewpoint on the world, life and values; and help people establish a distant bar and set a long and grand goal. The second step is to integrate class culture with "vocational planning" feature. In class construction, various class activities with "vocation" can be made. Students are also free to participate in social practice, scientific innovation, and internship. Through all these efforts, students will have a huge progress in practice training. It is a great way for students to continuously improve their verbal expression ability, psychological quality, and innovation ability. Classes can also organize vocational career or vocational interview, in order to arouse their attention to vocational planning. Students can get to know their vocational competence better and get ready for employment.

REFERENCES

- [1] Li, J.C. 2012. Discussion about realization of student development in class construction--Based on perspective of study science. *Journal of Northeast Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, (1).
- [2] Yang, X.H. 2012. Research on the structural model of the 90s undergraduate's employability. *Population & Economics*, (2).
- [3] Hu, J. 2013. How to improve student's employment competitiveness in class management. *Journal of Gansu Normal College*, (2).
- [4] Junkai Li. 2012. Research on the structure and influence factor of college students' employability. *China Youth Study*, 11: 89-92.
- [5] Zhihong Qiao, Shuang Wang, Bingqing Xie & Zhen Wang. 2011. The construct of graduates' employability and its effect on graduates' employment results. *Psychological Development and Education*, 27(3): 274-281.
- [6] Congzhong Liu. 2012. A discussion on the construction of college classes and the cultivation of undergraduates' employability. *Journal of Qilu Normal University*, 27(2): 45-48.