

Cultivation of Employability of Normal College Students from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

Ting Guo^{1,a}, Jidong Meng^{1,b,*}

¹*School of Foreign Language and Literatures, Chongqing Normal University, Chongqing, China*

^a*guoting329@126.com*, ^b*20131935@cqnu.com*

**Corresponding author*

Abstract: “Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation” proposes that colleges and universities should insist on three-wide education, that is, education should be set for full members, designed in an all-round way and conducted throughout whole process. However, employment is a critical link in three-wide education. It is a severe challenge for college graduates to find jobs due to triple influences of prevention and control of COVID-19, downward pressure on economy and the national “double reduction policy”. Normal college students face greater employment pressure because of limited employment channels, elaborate division of labor and specialization, and larger proportion of female students. Employment is the foundation of people’s livelihood, and it is practically urgent to improve employability of contemporary college students. However, studies indicate that many college students are equipped with poorer employability that is reflected in defects of psychology, personality, attitude and other factors. It is an innovation to cultivate employability of normal college students by applying concepts and methods of positive psychology.

Keywords: Positive Psychology, Employability, Normal College Students

1. Introduction

Affected by the COVID-19 epidemic and the social environment, the employment pressure of normal college graduates is increasing, and their concept of career choice has been changed. However, the phenomenon of negative employment has become increasingly prominent. How to mobilize the employment enthusiasm of normal college graduates has become an urgent problem to be solved. Positive psychology advocates tapping the positive quality and potential of individuals, enabling people to gain positive forces such as enthusiasm, optimism, and courage, which helps to enhance individual employment awareness and enthusiasm. By analyzing the current employment situation of normal college graduates, this paper discusses the application of positive psychology in the employment work of normal colleges and puts forward relevant strategies, in order to improve the employment enthusiasm of normal college graduates and provide relevant theoretical basis for the employment work of normal colleges.

2. Research Overview (Positive Psychology, Employment Realities of Normal College Students, Employability)

Positive psychology advocates exploring positive qualities, individual potential and happiness of human beings. It was initiated at the end of the 20th century by American psychologists Seligman and Csikszentmihlyi, with research fields involving positive emotional experience at subjective level, positive personality traits at individual level, and positive social environment at group level[1]. On the basis of analyzing massive domestic and foreign ancient and modern documents, Peterson and Seligman propose 6 virtues (wisdom and knowledge, courage, benevolence, justice, temperance, spiritual excellence) that exist widely in human beings and 24 corresponding personality strengths (curiosity, love of learning, creativity, open mind, wisdom and knowledge, unique point of view, courage, perseverance, authenticity, kindness and generosity, ability to love and be loved, spirit, fairness, leadership, self-control, prudence, moderation and humility, appreciation of beauty and perfection, gratitude, hope and optimism, goals and beliefs, forgiveness and compassion, wit and humor, enthusiasm), forming a complete positive personality theory[2].

In 2009, Chinese scholars Wu Sha and Wu Yufang summarized content of positive psychology into

five parts: positive cognition, positive emotion, positive behavior, positive organization and positive traits. Specifically, positive cognition is a process where individuals express positive expectations for the future. Positive emotions mean pleasurable feelings that individuals experience when completing meaningful things. Positive behavior is mainly pro-social behavior. Positive organization is beneficial environment created by individuals, such as a harmonious working environment, good family environment, etc. Positive trait refers to the psychological process of producing benefits to individuals themselves and society [3].

Normal college students are groups with unique professional orientation. Initially, they were employed naturally after graduation. Later, they had to find jobs after passing exams. Recently, they need to participate in national unified exams for teacher qualification certificates. Clearly, a series of reform measures have deprived original exclusive advantages of normal college students. Moreover, they have to take teacher qualification certificate examination and local teacher recruitment examination, facing great employment pressure. Against the severe employment situation, it is urgent to boost employability of normal college students.

In 1909, Beveridge, the famous British economist, first presented the concept of employability, that is, whether job seekers are employable. In 2002, Chinese scholar Zheng Xiaoming raised college student's employability for the first time. In other words, it was the ability of college graduates to achieve employment ideals, meet social needs, and realize their own value in social life through learning knowledge and developing comprehensive qualities during school [4]. In 2011, Li Hua and Cao Xingtian pointed out in a research that employability was affected by various factors such as individual environment, social environment, and job-seeking environment. Employability could be predicted positively by college students' psychological capital (confidence or sense of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and tenacity)[5]. In recent years, scholars highly value employment psychological problems caused by severe employment situation. Most of them focus on negative emotions or psychological diseases of graduates arising from employment pressure. However, psychological motivation of students is seldom analyzed in the cultivation of employability, which leads to poor employment education, significantly affecting education and teaching reform process of colleges. Under the background, this study explores employment problems of normal college students from the perspective of positive psychology, and comes up with countermeasures. By introducing intervention method of positive psychology, it stimulates emotional experience of positive employment of students, and shapes personality traits of proactive employment, so as to comprehensively enhance employability of students.

3. Employment Problems of Normal College Students from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

3.1. Unclear Cognition of Positive Employment

Positive cognition encourages individuals to produce positive and pleasant emotional and behavioral responses. Negative cognition brings about negative emotional and behavioral responses. Most of normal college students are in the exploratory period of their careers, who are equipped with shallow social experience, immature psychological development, incapability of correct self-understanding, ideals divorced from and reality, and serious blindness in employment. In addition, affected by existing extremely severe employment circumstance, some students fail to set an accurate employment orientation, so that they become negative psychologically after first employment failure. They even cannot adjust mentality promptly under the employment pressure and frustration to develop positive cognition.

3.2. Poor Experience of Positive Emotions

With increasingly complex and changeable employment environment, normal college students are experiencing unprecedented employment pressure. In job hunting, most students produce negative emotions such as anxiety, low self-esteem, conceit, and vulnerability, and they have no idea what sense of subjective happiness is. Furthermore, they seldom succeed in job hunting, greatly weakening self-confidence. After a job search failure, they will deny themselves, get depressed, and give up themselves completely, thus producing pessimistic and negative attitude.

3.3. Positive Personality not yet Formed

Positive personality plays an essential role in job hunting of normal college students. Normal college students develop in an open and fast-growing information society. This has fostered their broad

thinking and fast learning ability, but there are also risks. Edified by multicultural thoughts and values in information society, they generally pick up personality traits including self-centeredness, poor self-reliance ability, weak resistance to stress, and ungratefulness, etc. These personality traits lead to frequent disharmony among students, which seriously impacts high-quality employment.

3.4. Insufficient Organizational Synergy

The growth of college students attributes to joint cultivation of school, family and society. Therefore, their employment is directly related to the future of schools, families and society. It is a fact that employment environment is intense for normal college students due to effect of numerous factors. According to investigations and studies, most normal college students set too high expectations for employment. They are eager to work for in-system units by passing the public exams, and completely ignore other jobs provided by society and schools, resulting in a serious imbalance between job supply and employment demand. Meanwhile, during job-hunting process, parents support their students to take public examinations, or postgraduate entrance examinations for the second time or more times. Students are suggested not to work in remote areas, which results in increasingly lazy and slow employment. School-family-society cooperation is too weak to establish a social support system for positive employment. Hence, normal college students fail to be employed in full and on time.

4. Countermeasures to Improve Employability of Normal College Students from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

4.1. Closely Consider Characteristics of Normal College Students and Strengthen Positive Employment Guidance

At positive psychology level, employment education should adhere to students-oriented principle, and guide students to establish correct self-understanding, and cultivate a proactive attitude. Among cognitive factors, teaching motivation and teaching efficacy are particularly important. In the process of cultivating normal students, this study recommends evaluating their staged progress, and excavating advanced models around them to set up role models. This can help students correct teaching motivations, and boost sense of self-efficacy and their recognition of teacher profession.

At the same time, teaching efficacy is significantly positively correlated to recognition of teacher profession^[6]. As a result, training program for normal college students should particularly emphasize educational practice link, and guide students to experience teaching classroom as soon as possible, enrich practical exercises and improve teaching level, so as to boost sense of teaching efficacy.

4.2. Strengthen Practical Teaching and Enhance Positive Emotional Experience

The latest research shows: "It is emotion that indeed determines human intelligence", and practice is an effective way to gain emotional experience and develop abilities^[7]. In the whole process of students cultivation, it is necessary to strengthen practical education link, and provide students with practical opportunities through social practice, school-enterprise cooperation and other ways, in order to help them fully integrate theoretical knowledge with practices. Through practical activities, students can realize self-education, self-management and self-development, and this is conducive to improving social adaptability. Secondly, students should be organized to actively participate in voluntary service, work-study and other meaningful activities during learning in school. These activities are expected to facilitate mutual reinforcement of students' thoughts and actions, and strengthen positive emotional experience, so as to raise psychological quality. At the same time, measures should be adopted to exert personality and strengths of students at different stages of study, and cultivate their spirit of exploration, independence, innovation and practice, in order to comprehensively exercise employability.

4.3. Enhance Interpersonal Connections and Foster Positive Personality Traits

Positive personality traits convey rich connotations. Students with interpersonal personality advantages will obtain more help from others, and usually succeed in careers and lives. Positive college students are accountable and hold a strong sense of social responsibility. Optimistic and outgoing college students establish positive attitude towards life, create a warm living atmosphere, and enjoy a good life^[8]. Cultivation of positive personality traits promotes growth and development of college students. In the whole process of cultivating normal college students, schools should organize a series of educational and teaching activities centering on positive personality traits necessary for

"teachers-to-be". Also, events such as grade gathering, league activities, theme class meetings and others can be held to train their communication skills, expression skills and interpersonal skills, and nourish them to be self-confident, brave and calm. At the same time, in terms of students management, schools can carry out activities to all students (regardless grades), including advanced deeds report group, excellent evaluation report meeting, and national scholarship review meeting to set up excellent examples. This will subtly pass positive personality traits of outstanding students in senior grades to students in lower grades. Finally, junior and senior students should be actively motivated to participate in teaching practices, simulated recruitment, social practices and other activities to shape positive personality traits, in order to improve employability of normal college students.

4.4. Build an Organizational System and Create a Positive Employment Environment

Cooperation should be reached among school, family and society to build a positive and harmonious support environment for employment of normal college students. To be specific, at school level, colleges need to build an expert-based employment guidance team to provide accurate and trustworthy guidance and assistance for the employment. Moreover, with the aid of multimedia platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Tik Tok and others, schools can construct a peer network support system that creates opportunities for students who suffer setbacks in job hunting to vent emotion and promptly relieves their psychological problems arising from job hunting failure. At society level, the government should strengthen policy guidance, timely introduce preferential employment policies for fresh graduates, and provide more teaching jobs, so as to offer strong support for smooth employment of students. At family level, counselors and full-time teachers are suggested to reinforce communication and contact with parents regarding students' study and life, aiming to form a strong and effective family-school synergy. They can lead parents to express reasonable employment expectations for students at new parents' meetings and during home visits on holiday, in order to facilitate employment of students.

5. Conclusions

This paper explores the problems of improving the employability of normal college students from the perspective of positive psychology. Based on the main contents of positive psychology (positive cognition, positive emotion, positive behavior, positive organization), this paper analyzes the employment status of normal college students, and puts forward corresponding countermeasures to improve their employability. Positive psychology plays an important role in improving the employability of normal college students. Therefore, families, society and schools should pay attention to the education of positive psychology of normal college students, promote normal college students to accept themselves objectively, appreciate themselves, make reasonable career planning during the university stage, enhance self-confidence in the process of job hunting, and realize self-worth.

References

- [1] Sheldon K.M, Laura King. *Why Positive Psychology Is Necessary*[J]. *American Psychologist*, 2001, 56(3), 216
- [2] Peterson.C., Seligman.M. *Character Strengths and Virtus*[M]. USA: Oxford University Press, 2004:85
- [3] Wu Sha, Zhao Yufang. *The Integration View of Positive Psychology Classification System*[J]. *Science of Social Psychology*, 2009(24), 227- 264
- [4] Zheng Xiaoming. *A Tentative Study of "Employment Ability" for College Students*[J]. *Journal of China Youth University for Political Sciences*, 2002(3): 91-92
- [5] Li Hua, Cao Xingtian. *Research on the Relationship between College Students' Psychological Capital and Employability*[J]. *China Higher Education Research*. 2011(3):54-56
- [6] Fredrickson. B.L. *The broaden -and -build theory of positive emotions*[J]. *Philosophical Transactions of the Roayl Society, Series B*, 2004, 359(17):1367-1377.
- [7] Meng Wanjin. *Positive Mental Health Education: Laying the Foundation for a Happy and Successful Life*[J]. *Chinese Journal of Special Education*, 2010(11).
- [8] Chen Xiaoyan. *Research on Cultivating Positive Personality Traits of College Students-From the Perspective of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture*[J]. *Journal of Guangxi Youth Leaders College*, 2020, 30(2):5-8.