The influencing factors of career adaptability of newcomers: Based on multiple perspectives of individual, family and school

Decai Wang

Business School, Southwest University of Political science and Law, Chongqing, China, 401120

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to explore the structure and antecedents of career adaptability based on multiple perspectives of individual, family and school in China.

Design/methodology/approach – The author surveyed the newcomers from the data of graduated from the same school in the same year, examined the reliability and validity of career adaptability. Finally, regression equation was applied to test the research model.

Findings – The results demonstrated that career adaptability of newcomers has good reliability and validity, practical ability, ability matching and academic satisfaction have a positive influence on career adaptability, the effects of individual factors and family factors are very weaker than the school.

Research limitations/implications – These findings offer insights into the career development of newcomers based on the multiple perspectives, and provide theoretical guidance and a practical operation path for the enterprise.

Originality/value – Our research contributes to career adaptability of new employees by highlighting the factors from individual, family and school. This is the first empirical study to explore the career adaptability of newcomer.

Keywords Newcomer, Career adaptability, Personality traits, Family support, School support

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Career adaptability is the key ability for the employee to achieve career success in a dynamic environment, career planning is essential to deal with uncertainty (Bocciardi, et al., 2017). It is very important to adapt to the complex and dynamic career system linked to successful career management (Kuijpers, et al., 2006). The theory of career adaptability coexists with the career uncertainty, which contains the interaction between employees and environment and the subjective initiative of employees, and explains the career phenomenon of the newcomer. With the expansion of the enrollment rate of graduate students in China, the school also plays a more and more important role in how to cultivate the graduate students. However, due to the diversity of graduate students, it brings great challenges to the educational methods. It is necessary to consider the balance between standardization and differentiation.

For students, they focus more on the improvement of their future professional ability no matter how the educational model changes. A large number of studies have shown that career adaptability can effectively predict employee’s career success. At present, the measurement of career adaptability has been verified in the global scope (including the United States, Brazil, Ireland, France, South Korea, etc.) (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012), but the research is just on its beginning stage in China.

As far as career adaptability theoretical research mainly focuses on four aspects: demographic factors, for example gender and grade, family factors, for example the influence of family socio-economic status and parents and personality characteristics, such as Big Five personality. Career adaptability has direct effects on the Big Five personality dimensions (Woo, 2018). There is a direct relationship between career competencies and career adaptability, a proactive personality is insignificantly related to career adaptability, and early-career employees with low proactive personality benefit from high career competencies (Alkhemeiri, et al., 2002). Workplace factors, Al-Ghazali (2020) study show that transformational leaders enhance career adaptability. However, there are few types of research on the influence factors of school education on employees’ career adaptability. This paper surveyed the newcomers from the data of graduate students graduated from the same school in the same year, and

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analyzes the influence of new employees’ learning experience, individual factors and family factors on their career adaptability.

Based on the analysis of the previous studies, this paper carried out an in-depth study on career adaptability of newcomers, the main innovations of this research as follows: first, this paper verifies the structure of career adaptability in the Chinese context through the research sample of newcomers from the data of graduate students graduated from the same school in the same year. Second, this study focuses on the multiple perspective factors influence the career adaptability of new employee including school education, family environment and individual characteristics, and it is more powerful to put these factors into the same model more the single factor. Third, the influence of different dimensions of career adaptability may be different, and the analysis of different dimensions can more accurately find the essential reasons that affect career adaptability.

2. Theoretical deduction and research model

Career construction theory presents a model for comprehending vocational behavior and making vocational choices to maintain successful and satisfying work lives (Savickas, 1997). Career adaptability is a psychological meta-capacity for successful adaptation the current and future career changes and development (Jannesari and Sullivan, 2019). It is the core concept of individual career management proposed by career construction theory. Therefore, career adaptability is not a stable state like individual personality traits. It will change over time and environment, and will be affected by individual factors, environmental factors and their interaction. Career adaptability includes four dimensions, career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence. Career concern describes the extent to which preparation for the future career. Career control describes the extent to which employees to influence their career development. Career curiosity describes the extent to which exploration of future career opportunities and the thinking of influencing their work and environment. Career confidence describes the extent to which employees successfully solving problems and overcoming difficulty when their turning career goals into reality. Career control describes the extent to which ability to achieve career goals to deal with future career challenges.

Existing research shows that career decision theory based on choosing the direction is a static state, especially the norms and models established. Career development depends on teaching skills and methods of career planning, and through these methods to achieve the ideal career goals. However, in the context of globalization and transition economy in China, with the acceleration of technological change, the working mode also changed accordingly, employees’ professional role is changing faster and faster (Yu and Zheng, 2013). To address such challenges from diversification, globalization and boundless professionalization, it is increasingly important to cultivate employees’ ability to cope with new job requirements and different environments, which is the core element of career adaptation. Generally speaking, there are three main factors, namely: individual and demographic factors, family and social factors, organizational or school factors.

The research on individual factors focuses on three aspects: First, scholars have not reached a consistent conclusion about the relationship between personality traits and career adaptability. Personality material of college students includes openness, agreeableness, extroversion and preciseness are significantly positive influence on the career adaptability and negative influence on neuroticism (Rottinghaus et al., 2015). Through surveying 659 full-time employees and multi-time longitudinal study at 6-month intervals to understand the effect of demographic variables and individual differentiation traits on career adaptability, the results showed that age and future temporal focus have a significantly positive influence on employees’ career adaptability at all time points, however, gender, educational level, externality, openness, neuroticism and core self-evaluations in the Big Five personality only have are significantly positive influences on one or more time (Zacher, 2014). Active personality and the differences in career adaptability between different genders of the same grade positively affect employees’ career adaptability (Yu et al., 2016). Second, it is the difference of career adaptability between gender and college students of the same grade. Through literature analysis find that there is no obvious difference between genders in western countries, but not in China, the performance of career adaptation of different genders is different, men are relatively higher than women (Zhao and Guo,
If organizational sponsorship has a positive impact on employees’ career adaptability? However, in the research, career adaptability is complex. Employees with excellent results may offset the impact of insufficient sponsorship. Therefore, smarketing economy accounts for a considerable proportion and is close to completing competition in more industries. According to the competitive mobility, although the resources of the rural elite are very few, China’s market economy accounts for a considerable proportion and is close to completing competition in more industries. Therefore, employees can win professional competition through excellent results. Therefore, employees with excellent results may offset the impact of insufficient resources. It can be seen from this that the factors that affect employees’ career adaptability are complex, and the influence between the factors may be strengthened or weakened. However, in the research literature on career ability, there are still a few school factors that affect their career adaptability. For new employees, organizational sponsorship has a positive impact on employees’ career adaptability? If
individual factors, family factors and school factors are put into the model for evaluation at the same time, can the influence between various factors be offset and which factor is more prominent in this competition model? In addition, is there any difference in career adaptability under different degree types? Career adaptability has multi-dimensional characteristics, do professional masters and academic masters have the same impact effects in different dimensions?

This paper will explore the influence of individual factors, family factors and school factors on career adaptability of new employees. Specifically, individual factors mainly discuss students’ gender, major and degree of effort, etc. The degree of effort mainly includes students’ preparations in scientific research and work practice. Family factors mainly consider the influence of learning environment factors before graduate students enter school, mainly considering the newcomers urban and rural backgrounds, generally speaking, the newcomers in rural areas will have a weaker understanding of social practice and occupation before entering school, while the newcomers growing up in urban areas will have more understanding through their parents before formally entering the job, which may affect their career adaptability. In terms of school factors, the overall satisfaction of students’ studies mainly including the satisfaction of study and life, student management, professional setting, curriculum teaching, social practice, employment guidance, etc. According to this, this paper establishes a multiple linear regression model.

\[ Y = \sum_{i=1}^{4} Y_i \]
\[ Y_i = r_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{n} r_i x_i \]

\( Y_i (i=1, 2, 3, 4) \) represents career control, career confidence, career curiosity and career concern respectively. The overall score of career adaptability is weighted by the variance contribution rate of rotation of career control, career confidence, career curiosity and career concern. \( X_i (i=1, 2, 3, 4) \) represents various independent variables and personal factors (gender, cadre experience, social practice, career planning, career expectation, acquisition of work initiative, etc.); Family factors (urban and rural background, economic status) School factors (academic satisfaction, professional and post matching degree, professional skills matching degree, etc.). Spss20.0 and Mplus7 analysis tools were used to test the research model through exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis.

2. Data and method

The scale of this study comes from the mature scale in the west, which has been well verified in the Chinese context. In addition, a pre-survey is needed before the large sample survey to check whether the scale is concise and understandable and clear in expression through experts in career research, this study uses a single source sample from the graduate students graduated from the same university in southwest China in the same year.

Investigators got the list of graduate students through the graduate school of the university. In order to control the variation, the survey sample selected the graduate students who graduated in the same year and the questionnaire was sent point to point. A total of 1800 questionnaires were distributed in the university graduated 1813 graduate students, including 25 doctoral students and 1788 master students. After eliminating invalid questionnaires, 559 valid questionnaires were generated, with an effective recovery rate of 31.06%. Among them, 268 are men and 288 are women, accounting for 48.1% and 51.7% respectively, 236 people are civil servants, accounting for 42.2%, 137 people are private enterprises, accounting for 24.5%, 81 people are state-owned enterprises, accounting for 14.5%, and 58 people are public institutions, accounting for 10.4%. In terms of degree types, 335 are academic masters, accounting for 59.9%, 209 are professional masters, accounting for 37.4%, and 15 are doctoral students, accounting for 2.7%. In terms of the new employees’ urban and rural backgrounds, 262 are urban students, accounting for 46.9%, and 278 are rural students, accounting for 49.7%.

3. Results

3.1 Structure of career adaptability of newcomers

The KMO value of career adaptability is 0.94, which is greater than 0.7. Bartlett spherical test is
significant. Therefore, the career adaptability of the newcomers is suitable for factor analysis. The rotation is carried out by using the maximum variance method to extract factors with characteristic roots greater than 1, a total of 4 factors were extracted, and the cumulative interpretation variation was 56.36%.

The first factor was career control, which explained 14.56% of the variance and Cronbach’s reliability coefficient was 0.66. The second factor was career confidence, which explained 13.24% of the variance and Cronbach’s reliability coefficient was 0.66. The third factor was career curiosity, which explained 11.13% of the variance and Cronbach’s reliability coefficient was 0.89. The fourth factor was career concern, which explained 17.44% of the variance.

Therefore, through exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, career adaptability has shown good reliability and validity in the new employees. So, it is feasible to test the newcomers by using the questionnaire of 24 items of career adaptability including career control, career curiosity, career confidence and career concern, for graduation research.

3.2 Reliability and validity analysis

The reliability of career adaptability for newcomers was tested by Cronbach’s reliability coefficient. The Cronbach’s coefficient of career adaptability was 0.88. Cronbach’s coefficient of career control and career confidence was 0.66, career curiosity was 0.89, career concern was 0.84.

Due to the relatively mature scale adopted in this study and the pre-test made before the formal investigation, the questionnaire has good content validity, discrimination validity and aggregation validity. Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis by Mplus. The analysis results are shown in Table 1, the fitting index of the four-factor model is the best: $\chi^2$/df=3.50, TLI=0.95, CFI=0.97, SRMR=0.015, RMSEA=0.051, all of which meet the acceptable statistical standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$\chi^2$/df</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-factor models</td>
<td>631.82</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-factor models</td>
<td>881.63</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-factor models</td>
<td>644.40</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-factor models</td>
<td>505.15</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-factor models</td>
<td>464.39</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 T test and regression analysis

This study compares the difference between professional master’s degree and academic master’s degree by an independent sample T test. The research results are shown in Table 2. First, career adaptability was positively and significantly related to the practical ability of newcomers in school ($r=0.10$, $p<0.05$), the matching degree between the comprehensive ability during the research period and the current job ($r=0.21$, $p<0.001$), and the academic satisfaction during the school period ($r=0.11$, $p<0.05$). Secondly, according to different degree types, the individual factors of professional masters are research ability ($r=1.24$, $p<0.01$) and ability matching degree ($r=0.12$, $p<0.05$) have positively and significantly related to career adaptability, the school factors are academic satisfaction ($r=0.18$, $p<0.05$), for academic master’s degree, the ability matching degree ($r=0.27$, $p<0.001$) and academic satisfaction ($r=0.05$, $p<0.05$) have positively and significantly influence on career adaptability.

The regression analysis results of the career adaptability include four dimensions are shown in Table 3. Whether career planning is carried out ($r=0.18$, $P<0.001$ and $r=0.11$, $P<0.05$) and ability matching degree ($r=0.18$, $P<0.05$ and $r=0.20$, $P<0.001$) have positively and significantly related to career control. However, academic satisfaction has an influence on professional master ($r=0.19$, $P<0.05$) but has no influence on academic master. Practical ability in school only affects academic master’s production ($r=0.15$, $P<0.01$), but has no influence on professional master’s production.

Career planning is carried out academic master ($r=0.11$, $P<0.05$) and professional master ($r=0.12$, $P<0.05$) have positively and significantly related to career confidence. However, only ability matching degree ($r=0.14$, $P<0.05$) and academic satisfaction ($r=0.25$, $P<0.01$) has positively and significantly related to career confidence of professional master’s degree. Students’ practical ability in
school (r = 0.12, P < 0.05) has positively and significantly related to career confidence of academic master’s degree.

There is no common influencing factor between professional master’s degree and academic master’s degree in the dimension of career curiosity. Gender (r = 0.18, P < 0.05), scientific research ability (r = 1.08, P < 0.05) and academic satisfaction (r = 0.24, P < 0.01) has positively and significantly related to career curiosity of professional master’s degree. Urban and rural background (r = -0.24, P < 0.05) and ability matching degree (r = -0.15, P < 0.05) has positively and significantly related to career curiosity of academic master’s degree.

There is no common influencing factor between professional master’s degree and academic master’s degree in the dimension of career concern. Scientific research ability (r = 1.24, P < 0.01) and academic satisfaction (r = 0.18, P < 0.05) has positively and significantly related to career concern of professional master’s degree. The ability matching degree (r = 0.27, P < 0.01) has positively and significantly related to career concern of academic master’s degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>All sample</th>
<th>Professional master’s degree</th>
<th>Academic master’s degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.77***</td>
<td>4.75***</td>
<td>4.81***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research ability</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.24**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical ability in school</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and rural backgrounds</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and job matching</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability matching degree</td>
<td>0.21***</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td>0.27***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic satisfaction</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5.01***</td>
<td>2.14***</td>
<td>3.97***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: n=1800. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

The influencing factors of career adaptability

Table 2
Independent sample T test between professional and academic master’s degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Career control</th>
<th>Career confidence</th>
<th>Career curiosity</th>
<th>Career concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>PMD</td>
<td>AMD</td>
<td>PMD</td>
<td>AMD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.93***</td>
<td>4.72***</td>
<td>4.94***</td>
<td>4.83***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research ability</td>
<td>0.18***</td>
<td>0.17***</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical ability in school</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and rural backgrounds</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and job matching</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability matching degree</td>
<td>0.18**</td>
<td>0.20***</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic satisfaction</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F
2.14*  3.97***  2.30*  2.33*  2.85**  2.14*  2.14*  3.97***

Notes: n=1800. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported; PMD= Professional master’s degree; AMD = Academic master’s degree; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 3
Regression analysis results
4. Conclusion and suggestion

Through a questionnaire survey and data analysis, it is shown that there is no difference in the scores of various dimensions of career adaptation for newcomers in different degree types. The regression analysis of shows that the practical ability, the matching degree between the ability and the existing job, and the academic satisfaction of graduate students have positively and significantly related to the career adaptability of new employees. However, the gender, scientific research ability and academic performance of individual factors, the urban and rural background and family income of family factors, and the professional matching degree of school factors have no significant influence on the career adaptability.

A comparative analysis of graduate students with different degrees shows that the scientific research ability, ability matching degree and academic satisfaction of professional masters have positively and significantly related to career adaptability of new employees. The ability matching degree and academic satisfaction of academic masters will positively and significantly influence on the career adaptability.

However, there are differences in the relationship between professional master’s degree and academic master’s degree in various dimensions of career adaptability. Specifically, in the dimension of career control, career planning and ability matching degree have positively and significantly influence on professional master’s degree and academic master’s degree, academic satisfaction only has positively and significantly influence on professional master’s degree, and practical ability only has positive effects on academic master’s degree. In the dimension of career self-confidence, career planning has positively and significantly influence on both degree types of graduate students, professional master’s ability matching degree and academic satisfaction positively and significantly influence on career confidence, practical ability positively and significantly influence on academic master’s career confidence; In the dimension of career curiosity, the two types of graduate students have no common influencing factors. The influencing factors of professional master include gender, scientific research ability and academic satisfaction, while the influencing factors of academic master include urban and rural background and ability factors. In the dimension of career concern, scientific research ability and academic satisfaction will affect professional master’s degree, and ability matching degree will affect academic master’s degree. They have no common influencing factors.

Through the comparative study of the factors that affect the career adaptability of graduate students and different dimensions according to the difference of degree types, this paper puts forward the following implications. First, the career adaptability of newcomers is more affected by their practical ability in school, ability matching degree and academic satisfaction. In the training of graduate students, the employment department or tutor of the school should be taken as the main body, and the improvement of the practical ability of graduate education should be taken as an important means. We can start with the internal practice and social practice to build more practical platforms for graduate students in the school. Second, the influence of professional master’s degree and academic master’s degree is different, relatively speaking, the scientific research ability of professional master’s degree is conducive to improving their career adaptability. In postgraduate education and evaluation, according to different degree types, for professional graduate students, strengthening scientific research capacity will have a positive influence on them, the influence on academic masters is not obvious, which requires schools and tutors to strengthen the cultivation of scientific research ability of professional masters. For most schools, professional masters adjust their practical ability more, and the cultivation of their academic ability is also conducive to improving their career adaptability. Third, the difference between professional master and academic master is more obvious in different dimensions of career adaptability. Although the overall effect of career planning is significant, it has a positive influence on career control and career confidence. Therefore, career planning education for new employees is also particularly important. For academic masters, the practical ability has a positive impact on career control and career self-confidence, therefore, the improvement of practical ability of academic masters will benefit them.

References


Corresponding author
Decai Wang can be contacted at: wangdecai@swupl.edu.cn

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