

A Study on the Relationship Between Subjective Career Barriers and Personality Traits in College Students

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Abstract: *Personality traits have a profound impact on the life development of college students, including significant effects on their employment prospects. Based on this, this study employs methods such as questionnaire surveys, using 500 current college students as research subjects, to investigate and analyze the relationship between subjective career barriers and personality traits among college students. The results show that in the comparison of subjective career barrier scores between male and female students, female students scored higher than male students in the dimension of family attitude. In the comparison of subjective career barrier scores between students from different family regions, it was found that rural students scored higher than urban students in the dimensions of family background and family attitude, with differences being statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). In the comparison of the Big Five personality traits scores between male and female students, female students scored higher than male students in the neuroticism dimension. Among students from different family regions, rural students scored higher than urban students in the neuroticism dimension, with differences being statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). From this, it can be concluded that the neuroticism variable is a significant variable that enters the regression equation, indicating that among the Big Five personality traits, neuroticism is closely related to subjective career barriers in college students.*

Keywords: College students, Subjective career barriers, Personality traits, Relationship.

1. Introduction

According to reports from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the number of fresh college graduates in China in 2023 reached 11.58 million, an increase of 820,000 compared to the previous year. This has led to increasing competitive pressure on college graduates seeking employment, drawing widespread attention to the issue of subjective career barriers among these students. Subjective career barriers are obstacles and difficulties perceived by individuals in their career development process, which can adversely affect their employment prospects. Addressing the issue of subjective career barriers in college students is therefore crucial. Subjective career barriers are influenced by multiple factors, among which personality traits play a significant role, as they represent the unique composite patterns of an individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Consequently, there is a very close relationship between subjective career barriers and personality traits. To help college students actively overcome subjective career barriers and secure employment, it is essential not to overlook the role of personality traits. It is important to fully utilize personality traits as a pathway to resolving the issue of subjective career barriers in college students. Currently, academic research on subjective career barriers and personality traits among college students has made some progress, but studies on the relationship between these two aspects are relatively lacking. Against this backdrop, it is highly necessary to study the relationship between subjective career barriers and personality traits in college students.

difficulties perceived by individuals in their career development. These are factors that individuals perceive as limiting their career choices and advancement, based on their own cognition and feelings. Examples include biases in self-perception, lack of self-confidence, negative perceptions of the work environment, and specific psychological states and beliefs. Subjective career barriers are different from objective external obstacles, emphasizing individuals' negative subjective perceptions and evaluations of themselves and their employment environment. These perceptions can impact career decisions, employment confidence, and personal emotions.

2.2 Personality Traits

Personality refers to the overall stable psychological characteristics of an individual in behavior, emotion, and cognition, while personality traits are the relatively stable characteristics exhibited by individuals on psychological and behavioral levels. Personality traits include aspects such as extraversion, introversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. Personality traits play a crucial role in an individual's physical and mental development. Good personality traits are significant for building and maintaining interpersonal relationships, adapting to social environments, and maintaining psychological health. They also positively influence self-awareness and growth. Personality traits are closely related to career suitability, profoundly affecting individuals' job performance, career achievements, and development in the workplace.

2. Definition of Related Concepts

2.1 Subjective Career Barriers

Subjective career barriers refer to the obstacles and

3. Subjects and Methods

3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study were college students from five

universities, focusing on their subjective career barriers and personality traits. A total of 500 students participated in the survey, including 284 males and 216 females, with 159 students from rural areas and 341 from urban areas.

3.2 Methods and Tools

3.2.1 Methods

1) Questionnaire Survey Method

This study utilized the questionnaire survey method, targeting college students to collect, distribute, and retrieve questionnaires. The aim was to understand the basic information, subjective career barrier scores, and personality trait scores of the students. A total of 515 questionnaires were distributed, and 507 were returned. After excluding invalid questionnaires, 500 valid questionnaires were retained, with a recovery rate and efficiency rate of 98.45% and 98.62%, respectively.

2) Data Statistical Method

All data in this study were processed using SPSS 20.0 statistical software. Measurement data were expressed as mean $\pm$ standard deviation ($\pm s$), and t-tests were used. A P value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

3.2.2 Tools

1) College Students' Subjective Career Barriers Questionnaire

This study referenced Wu Minzhi's "College Students' Subjective Career Barriers Questionnaire" and made appropriate adjustments according to the current research. The questionnaire covers six dimensions: employment competition, family background, family attitude, social ability, professional level, and career knowledge, with a total of 37 items. The α coefficients for each dimension ranged from 0.658 to 0.857, with reliability ranging from 0.635 to 0.822, indicating good validity and reliability. The questionnaire uses a 4-point scale.

2) Personality Traits Assessment Scale

The study used Costa's 1992 Brief Big Five Personality Inventory, consisting of five factors: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, with a total of 60 items. The scale uses a Likert 5-point scoring system, where scores are positively correlated with the characteristics of each factor, with higher scores indicating more pronounced factor characteristics.

4. Results Analysis

4.1 Survey Results of Subjective Career Barriers in College Students

In the comparison of subjective career barrier scores between male and female college students, female students scored higher than male students in the family attitude dimension, with the difference being statistically significant ($P<0.05$), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Subjective Career Barrier Scores between Male and Female College Students ($\bar{x}\pm s$ points)

Project	Gender	Number of cases	Score	t	P
A1 Vocational knowledge	Male	284	2.21 $\pm$ 0.62	0.254	0.425
	Female	216	2.19 $\pm$ 0.55		
A2 Employment competition	Male	284	2.95 $\pm$ 0.54	0.758	0.569
	Female	216	2.90 $\pm$ 0.61		
A3 Social skills	Male	284	0.08 $\pm$ 0.61	0.662	0.622
	Female	216	2.06 $\pm$ 0.63		
A4 Family background	Male	284	2.21 $\pm$ 0.71	0.547	0.408
	Female	216	1.98 $\pm$ 0.69		
A5 Professional competence	Male	284	2.18 $\pm$ 0.81	0.365	0.531
	Female	216	2.20 $\pm$ 0.80		
A6 Family attitude	Male	284	2.49 $\pm$ 0.81	3.154	0.042
	Female	216	2.21 $\pm$ 0.63		
A Total score	Male	284	2.35 $\pm$ 0.45	1.269	0.224
	Female	216	2.29 $\pm$ 0.43		

In the comparison of subjective career barrier scores between college students from different family regions, rural students scored higher than urban students in the dimensions of family background and family attitude, with the differences being statistically significant ($P<0.05$). In the other dimensions, the score differences were not statistically significant ($P>0.05$), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of Subjective Career Barrier Scores between College Students from Different Family Regions

Project	Gender	Number of cases	Score	t	P
A1 Vocational knowledge	Rural	159	2.22 $\pm$ 0.62	1.062	0.751
	City	341	2.11 $\pm$ 0.50		
A2 Employment competition	Rural	159	2.98 $\pm$ 0.52	0.365	0.625
	City	341	2.87 $\pm$ 0.54		
A3 Social skills	Rural	159	2.15 $\pm$ 0.68	0.258	0.521
	City	341	2.09 $\pm$ 0.59		
A4 Family background	Rural	159	2.35 $\pm$ 0.61	2.065	0.012
	City	341	1.93 $\pm$ 0.59		
A5 Professional competence	Rural	159	2.20 $\pm$ 0.57	1.254	0.898
	City	341	2.03 $\pm$ 0.51		
A6 Family attitude	Rural	159	2.51 $\pm$ 0.68	3.541	0.001
	City	341	2.15 $\pm$ 0.65		
A Total score	Rural	159	2.42 $\pm$ 0.46	3.984	0.000
	City	341	2.20 $\pm$ 0.40		

4.2 Survey Results of Personality Traits in College Students

In the comparison of Big Five personality traits scores between male and female college students, female students scored higher than male students in the neuroticism dimension, with the difference being statistically significant ($P<0.05$). In the other dimensions, the score differences were not statistically significant ($P>0.05$), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of Big Five Personality Traits Scores between Male and Female College Students

Project	Gender	Number of cases	Score	t	P
C1 Neuroticism	Male	284	61.22 $\pm$ 12.36	4.65	0.00
	Female	216	66.52 $\pm$ 9.57		
C2 Extraversion	Male	284	81.06 $\pm$ 9.03	0.98	0.84
	Female	216	82.21 $\pm$ 9.25		
C3 Openness	Male	284	82.74 $\pm$ 10.31	0.28	0.84
	Female	216	83.45 $\pm$ 11.05		
C4 Agreeableness	Male	284	80.03 $\pm$ 10.95	0.36	0.75
	Female	216	81.14 $\pm$ 11.45		
C5 Conscientiousness	Male	284	82.29 $\pm$ 13.33	0.45	0.86
	Female	216	83.41 $\pm$ 12.85		
C Total score	Male	284	90.08 $\pm$ 10.09	0.55	0.70
	Female	216	91.25 $\pm$ 11.47		

Table 4: Comparison of Big Five Personality Traits Scores between College Students from Different Family Regions

Project	Gender	Number of cases	Score	t	P
C1 Neuroticism	Rural	159	70.25±10.19	5.064	0.000
	City	341	62.06±11.06		
C2 Extraversion	Rural	159	82.21±10.29	1.258	0.745
	City	341	83.98±11.25		
C3 Openness	Rural	159	84.98±12.87	0.525	0.651
	City	341	85.77±11.85		
C4 Agreeableness	Rural	159	86.74±11.58	0.541	0.652
	City	341	85.60±12.49		
C5 Conscientiousness	Rural	159	86.98±11.28	0.650	0.458
	City	341	86.39±12.20		
C Total score	Rural	159	89.96±10.21	2.203	0.087
	City	341	90.33±11.20		

In the comparison of Big Five personality traits scores among students from different family regions, rural students scored higher than urban students in the neuroticism dimension, with the difference being statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). In the other dimensions, the score differences were not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$), as shown in Table 4.

4.3 Correlation between Subjective Career Barriers and Personality Traits in College Students

Using the Big Five personality traits as independent variables and subjective career barriers as dependent variables, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using bivariate correlation method. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation between Subjective Career Barriers and Big Five Personality Traits in College Students (r)

Project	C1 Neuroticism	C2 Extraversion	C3 Openness	C4 Agreeableness	C5 Conscientiousness
A1 Vocational knowledge	0.345**	-0.064	-0.018	0.162*	-0.051
A2 Employment competition	0.211**	0.035	0.035	0.24**5	0.159*
A3 Social skills	0.325**	-0.332**	-0.140	-0.045	-0.124
A4 Family background	0.221**	-0.031	-0.101	0.154*	0.122
A5 Professional competence	0.378**	-0.037	-0.046	0.147	-0.125
A6 Family attitude	0.145	0.034	0.042	0.198*	0.012
A Total score	0.385**	-0.081	-0.042	0.026**	0.004

Note: * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$.

In the regression analysis, subjective career barrier scores were treated as the dependent variable, while Big Five personality traits were considered as independent variables. Stepwise method was adopted for regression processing. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Linear Regression of Subjective Career Barriers and Big Five Personality Traits in College Students

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R ²	Adjusted R-squared	t	β	P
Total score of subjective career barriers	Neuroticism	0.16	0.16	5.22	0.37	0.000**

Note: * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$.

From the above regression analysis, it is evident that the neuroticism variable is a significant factor entering the regression equation, indicating a close correlation between neuroticism in the Big Five personality traits and subjective career barriers in college students.

5. Discussion

Through the analysis of the results of this study, it can be observed that there is a close relationship between subjective career barriers and personality traits among college students. The neuroticism factor in the Big Five personality traits shows a positive correlation with subjective career barriers in college students, providing significant insights. Neuroticism is an expression of individual emotional regulation, indicating whether individuals experience negative emotions and whether their psychological condition is stable. In individuals with high neuroticism, there is typically more pronounced psychological stress, impulsivity, and a higher likelihood of experiencing depression and anxiety compared to individuals with low neuroticism, leading to a relatively heavier mental burden. Therefore, the likelihood of experiencing subjective career barriers is higher among college students with high neuroticism. Addressing this phenomenon, it is important for college students to actively regulate their emotions, maintain a stable mindset, and proactively cope in order to increase the

likelihood of successful employment. Additionally, this study found that family attitude and family background also have an impact on subjective career barriers among college students. Therefore, breaking through subjective career barriers requires effective support and encouragement from college students' parents.

6. Conclusion

In summary, this study utilized a questionnaire survey method to analyze the relationship between college students' subjective career barriers and personality traits. The results revealed that the relationship between subjective career barriers and personality traits is very close, and personality traits are significant for college students' employment. Therefore, in the current employment environment, college students should learn to adjust their emotions and face employment issues with a stable and positive attitude to overcome subjective career barriers.

As employment pressure continues to increase, attention to the issue of college students' subjective career barriers is also rising. The subjective career barriers of college students are influenced by various factors, among which personality traits are a very important factor. College students with certain personality traits are more likely to experience subjective career barriers. For example, students with introverted and anxious personality traits are more likely to encounter career barriers in interpersonal communication, while students with independent personality traits are more likely to face barriers in team collaboration. The differences in personality traits among college students result in varied approaches and attitudes towards coping with career barriers. Students with optimistic and positive personality traits generally exhibit a healthier mindset when facing subjective career barriers and are more likely to actively seek ways to overcome these barriers, demonstrating strong adaptability. Conversely, students with negative personality traits tend to respond to subjective career barriers more passively and negatively.

To address the common phenomenon of subjective career barriers among college students, both schools and families should play an active role. Families should provide enough support and encouragement to college students, serving as a strong backing for them to overcome subjective career barriers. Schools should enhance employment guidance for college students and pay more attention to their mental health. By considering the personality traits of college students, schools should offer targeted counseling, foster well-rounded personalities, and train students in their ability to cope with subjective career barriers.

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