Phenomenon behind why the high school graduates blindly choose a major: a qualitative research based on the 132 recollections of prose in choosing a major

DAI Xian[1,a], XIE Jinyu[2,b], Sung Liang-Yi[3,c]

[1]Room 507b, Business School, WangJiang Campus, Sichuan University, Wuhou District, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

[2]Room 507b, Business School, WangJiang Campus, Sichuan University, Wuhou District, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

[3]No.6, Puzhong 2nd St., Changhua City, Changhua County 500, Taiwan

[a]1196986233@qq.com, [b]3075358242@qq.com, [c]o605142@gmail.com

Abstract：Choosing major results from College Entrance Examination is vital for high school graduates. It may not only affect the learning direction in subsequent four years but also affects their future career choices. But we found that students and parents are always perplexed, blind, or even follow the trend of conformity when choosing a major. Students do not know what kind of major is suitable for his or her aspirations. And parents blindly asked their children to follow the popular trend. These kinds of behaviors seriously affect children learning and future career. Study of existing choice of major for high school graduates even stays in the level of choosing major. Until now, there is no scholar digs the detailed reasons behind these varied phenomena resulting from choosing a major. A recallable essay by 132 College freshmen from the college of business in selecting a major with qualitative research methods to explore the cognitive problems for high school graduates. Eventually we found the following results: (1) The wrong direction and motive deviation appear when high school students choose their major (2) A serious shortage of self-awareness for high school students; (3) the presence of social culture when choose a major

1. Introduction

College entrance examination, for the Chinese students, is one of the most important exams in life, this relatively fair talent selection form and even once considered the best way to change the fate. In order to meet the needs of the development of society, the University's settings of major are becoming more diverse. From the initial simple classification of major to now a variety of market oriented major, such as human resources management, logistics management, housecraft, secretarial science and other majors. There is no doubt that students have more choices, and it is more helpful to their future career.

The importance of choosing a major is self-evident. Choosing a major is not only related to the students' learning experience in the next four years, but also related to their career planning and career development for the future. With the rapid development of social progress and the network communication technology, information is more open and transparent. Students and parents may easily acquaint themselves with major's details, training objectives, curriculum setting and employment prospects through various channels, so they might choose a suitable major. But in reality we see that students and parents are still confused and helpless during major-choosing

moment. They do not know which major they are suitable for, and do not know what they are interested in, either. Eventually, they follow the crowd tendency to choose the so-called popular major. Hossler (1989) said: "Choosing a major not only affects the high school students' higher education situation, but also affects student's future career." Therefore, it is no doubt important to study the high school students' behavior in choosing a major.

Choosing a major is not only the individual behavior but also reflects the views and understanding of whole society. It also reflects the cognition and psychological state of the students, parents and social groups.

Therefore, this article will focus on the cognitive status of the whole society from the perspective of the major-choosing of the behavior of the students, parents and social groups. And we would like to go into, in China, how this particular environmental, culture, social cognition and social attitudes affect the choices of major and career.

2. Research Method

This paper uses qualitative research. In this study, the data collection method of physical analysis is used. The research object of this paper is freshmen of Sichuan University business school. The writing of the memory of the essay is a semi-open type. We have collected 132 useful memories, 19436 words. After collecting data, we have carried on the serial number and analysis to these data.

3. Analysis of the qualitative data

3.1 The inner cognitive conflict of high school graduates in choosing a major

In the analysis of high school graduates of major selection criteria, we found that most of the students consider that major should match their personal character, interest, and hobby. But in the actual choice they tend to consider the employment prospects, includes income, work stability, development potential, social demand, popular situation and school reputation. (Table.1)

Table.1 Cognitive coding of high school graduates' standards in choosing a major

First Level Coding	Second Level Coding		Third Level Coding
Cognition of choosing a major factors (1)	Personal Interests		*I personally prefer interest to hobby when choosing a major. Until the third year, I decided to choose the Management. Because it is much closer to my ideal job, I have a strong interest in it（STU31）*
			Consider fully of my interests, personal gifts and career development prospects before making a decision. (STU54)
	Personality traits		*I am an outgoing personality person, and like to deal with people. Therefore, I want to be able to engage in the relevant areas. (STU73)*
			I found that it's neither good for me in some medical fields, nor is it a person who has a sudden event to be calm. My character is very careless, forgetful (STU112)
Cognition of choosing a major factors (2)	Present value	Popular degree	*I choose the Management because it is the Xiamen University's celebrated major. It benefits my future job search as well, so I make my decision. (STU53)*
		School reputation	*It is useful to look for a job and personal development by Zhejiang University's reputation (STU81)*
	Future value	Social demand（Major match job）	*I consider the issues of personal ability, future employment, but I ignore my own interests. (STU85)*
		Income（Major match job）	*At present, I do not know what direction to develop. I will consider employment, income and job location whether suit myself or not. (STU95)*

| | | Development potential
（Major match job） | *I always liked English in high school, so I decided to choose it as my major. My teacher told me that English is just a tool, and language learning is not end. It is difficult to rely it for making a living, so I decided to rethink choosing another major. (STU114)* |
| | | Job stability
（Major match job） | *My family all hope I could choose the Normal University. They say it is better for girl to have a stable job. (STU115)* |

On the one hand, we could found high school graduates choose major by utilitarian factors and choose their major for pursuing external value such as money and status without considering heart. On the other hand, we can also see that most of high school graduates are not aware of their own cognition. Many of them do not know what their true interests are, nor is their specialty.

3.2 The conflict between high school graduates and their parents' cognition in the process of choice a major

3.2.1 Model for choosing a major in the face of parent pressure

We set achievement value oriented as abscissa, and the obedient circumstance in face of parent pressure as ordinate. Simultaneously, take the "inner value oriented" and "external value oriented" as the poles of the horizontal coordinates, and "obedience", "autonomy" as the poles of the vertical coordinate. Therefore, it constitutes a four quadrant of the choosing a major model. (Fig.1, table.2)
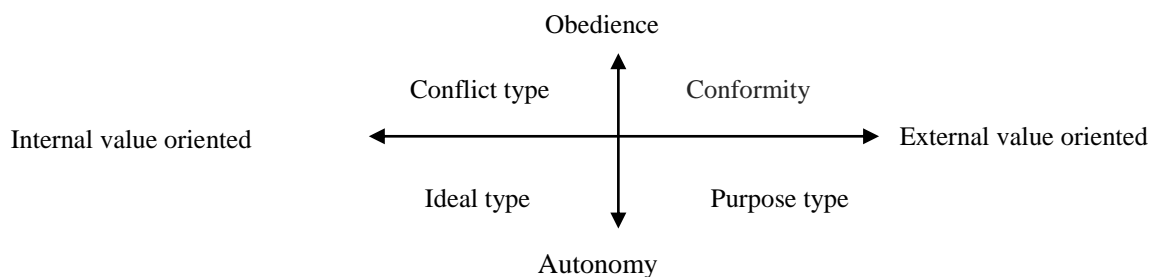

Fig.1 Two dimensional model for choosing a model

3.2.2 Two kinds of situations of students' adaption to parents' cognition

① Students have no idea, obeying their parents' arrangement completely.

These students have no clear idea to choose their majors, so they let their parents to choose for them; eventually, they follow their parents' decision.

② Students have conflict with parents, but they subject to parental opinion in the end.

These kinds of students have their own ideas to choose major and have certain cognition on themselves. They clearly know what their interests are, and have ideal major or job. But they will have such a contradiction that they think their social experience and life experience is poorer than parents. Therefore, when they confront the outside pressure from society and economy, they choose to obey their parents' arrangement. After implementation of the decision, some students will actively adapt to the status, and the others will be in a contradiction.

4. Discussion

4.1 There is a lack of right course and motivation to high school graduates for behavior of choosing a major

From the investigation we could see that the salary condition of job is a general concerns in the current society. The most obvious feature is the pursuit of high salary. The social universal motivation of job is to obtain the affirmation from others, and this kind of affirmation is almost an economic condition. Current social major needs, career motivation and work value orientation

Table.2 Four kinds of model analysis for choosing a major

	Obedience		Autonomy	
	Conflict type		**Ideal type**	
	Type description	Representative statement（STU89）	Type description	Representative statement (STU94)
Inner Value Oriented	The conflict types are more concerned with inner value. This type of students commonly focus on self-esteem and heart, so choose a major only to achieve self-worth. They define success criteria by their mental satisfaction. But in the face of social, family pressure, they are also very easy to be guided or suggested to obey the society, family expected behavior. Self-fulfillment and the reality has a strong conflict. They feel contradictory after finishing making a decision, hoping it may change someday.	① On that night, I called my best friend, I said I would give up. I might probably go to learn the Accounting. ②Until that day, I also don't understand the content of this major in business administration. ③ My parents placed me here, and they impose themselves upon me. I feel that I am like other Chinese student, roll with the punches. ④ Only Two tenth friends who are still against their parents are successful. ⑤ We walk into the college with confusion. ⑥Until now, I long for medical fantasy, but I will stay silent when my medical classmates complain.	The ideal types seek after inner value and self-worth. They are very stick to their initial wish, and will be not easy to change their mind by external pressures. This type of students seeks after mental satisfaction and achievements. They follow their heart and interest to choose, and they will not change mind due to reality. Sometimes, they seem not very obedient, gregarious, but they definitely could develop their potential on work or study. And they gain happiness from it.	① Parents have blamed me, but I insist on it.。 ②In my opinion, they are too shortsighted, too utilitarian, not to take my future development into account. ③ My parents asked me to sign up Chinese top 10 college, saying I don't need to worry anymore since graduating. ④Ridiculous! I am the master of mine, not anyone else.
	Conformity type		**Purpose type**	
	Type description	Representative statement (STU79)	Type description	Representative statement (STU53)
External Value Oriented	The conformity types are more concerned with external value, hoping society or family could recognize them. They might be easy to change their minds to fit others expectation in face of external pressure, regardless of grievance. They can quickly change and adjust themselves, so they can adapt to the environment and not to fight with the existing state. So they don't regret after making a decision.	①In the face of the ideal and the reality, I finally compromise with the ideal. ②Now I come here to learn this major, so I think I will be very serious about it. ③It's soon for me to accept new things, and I am get used to it after recent lecture and learning. ④Even I am not fully interested in it, but I start studying hard recently.	The purpose types are characteristic for external value oriented and independence. They are more concerned with external value, such as social status, social reputation, and family recognition. They also have a strong heart, not being easy to compromise to change their minds due to outside pressure. In choosing a major, this kind of students will choose the major which is be able to bring their income and higher social status. Even if they have something else to do, they usually only take it as a personal hobby.	①I have been fond of literature, history, and philosophy since I was little. But I rationally know it will be hard for me to get a job after choosing these majors, I also know my own mission, responsibility. ② Since my sister followed her hobby to plan her life, I can't let any extra trouble happen to my family due to my decision.

cause a pressure on the social group, and therefore leave a lot of bad community psychology. The consequence of problem of direction and motivation in choosing a major results in China talents surplus, and it makes employment more difficult, instead.

4.2 High school students have lack of self-cognition in choosing a major

The reason why high school graduates show no ability to make a decision in choosing a major is that it results from social values, penetration of social cognition and family constraint; however, it exposes that high school students is lack of self-cognition under their high obedience.

4.3 Social culture is embedded in the process of choosing a major.

In China special social background, the individual behavior must be interpreted with the function of culture. With the Western emphasis on individual independence and individual rights of the individual values, the core of the family is the value of China. It's kind of show of collectivism. In this value, there is a very close relationship between family members. In the Chinese family, the children may sacrifice themselves for obeying to the parent's arrangement. Because of obedience, the children are not able to make an important decision in life.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the problems that the high school graduate students reflect in the course of choosing a major are derived from the huge population and limited resources in China. With the great influence of traditional culture, family values, society, social motivation, social cognition, social attitudes, it exists some deviations and problems. In such a bad social environment, how the individual maintain the independence of the psychological and behavior so that they are not affected by the external adverse information and influence. It is an urgent issue to discuss.

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