

## Person-Job Fit and Career Self-Efficacy : The Mediation of Employability?

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### Abstract

**This paper took the perspectives of social exchange to examine the effect of person-job fit on career self-efficacy for new generation employees, and how to play a mediating role in employability between person-job fit and career self-efficacy. In this research, we collected 343 pairing investigation data from employees and supervisors of enterprises in 12 provinces for statistical analysis. Finally the results indicated that person-job fit has a significant positive impact on career self-efficacy. What's more, employability can make a mediating effect between person-job fit and career self-efficacy.**

### Keywords

**Person-job Fit, Career Self-efficacy, Employability.**

### 1. Introduction

With increasing the employment of college student by the educational researchers around the world attention, many scholars hope to improve the college students' employability force to cater to the social and corporate needs of high-quality personnel. At present, with a quite sharp slowdown in Chinese economic growth, employment situation shows a "new normal" phenomenon, the quantity of the new generation of post-90s job hunters continue to increase, Compared to the older generation, they give more weight to their individual development and self-respect instead of salary or their work loyalty. All the problems contribute to the high unemployment and high employment pressure. So how to improve the Employability and work loyalty of the new generation of post-90s job hunters become a heated topic which has been discussed by more and more economist and sociologist.

Research shows that obtaining the first-time job is related to individuals' Employability (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Harvey, 2001; Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson 2003). Employability is an important aspect of Human Resource Management. It was proposed by Beveridge in the early 20th century and developed from 1990s to now. As a kind of complex concepts, it contains personal ability: learning ability, working ability, adaptability; job market demand; individual professional development; job-switch and working willingness (Heijde & Heijden 2006). Today more and more researches of Employability in micro-level have found that various factors are able to act on Employability including personality characteristics, learning attitudes, knowledge and ability, job characteristics. Scholars have pointed out that Employability could affect people's behavior, occupational commitment and their Career Self-efficacy.

Person-job Fit is a significant research of organizational behaviors (Edwards and Cooper 1990). Pretty of researchers have found that Person-job Fit is related with employees' job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment and professional mental health (Kristof 1996; Verquer et al. 2003; Xiao et al. 2014). Person-job Fit is widely used by the researchers, and the empirical study indicated that Person-job Fit has a positive influence on employees' attitude towards their work (Tinsley, 2000).

The concept of Career Self-efficacy was proposed by Bandura (1977a) at the earliest. It was defined as a belief which was gotten by doing a particular job in a particular area (Betz & Hackett, 1986). Career Self-efficacy can be explained as a self-recognition of doing a decent job. Career Self-efficacy

is in the reciprocal process between the self and job. In this process, many factors such as society, environment, education and one's own quality show their influence to Career Self-efficacy and evaluation. A person will feel more positive about its future career if it has high Career Self-efficacy, as the same time, it hunts the job more proactively.

We designed and tested a model that posited Employability as a moderate variable intervened in the relation between Person-job Fit and Career Self-efficacy. And our study adopted employee paired off with employer in the questionnaire, to explore influence in the Employability of the new generation of post-90s employees under different background. In order to test whether the new generation of young people showed a higher degree of Person-job Fit, the more his Employability higher. And proved Person-job Fit whether or not has positively related to Career Self-efficacy. We hope this studying will give enterprises helps to implement human resource management well, and to solve the new generation of youth problem of employment.

## 2. Literature review and hypothesis

### 2.1 Person-job Fit

Person-job Fit refers to the degree of compatibility between personal characteristics of employees and characteristics of jobs. Kristof (1996) defined this type of fit as a needs-supplies match, where the desires of the employees (e.g. needs, interest or preference) match the demands of the job (e.g. characters of career or jobs); or the abilities of employees (e.g. interest, work experiences, education degree) meet the requirements of the job (e.g. the standard of job performance) The former is named as supply-value fit and the latter is called demand-abilities fit. Similarly, Edwards (1996), Livingstone, Nelson & Barr (1997) and Van Vianen (2000) illustrated that supply-value fit (S-V fit) means the needs; desires or hobbies of the person match the supplies in the job like growth opportunities. Edwards (1996) and Wervel & Johnson (2001) pointed out that demand-abilities fit (D-A fit) contains the scope to which the abilities of a person match the demands of a job. A person's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) are emphasized in this approach in terms of how well they can perform the tasks required of the job (Livingstone et al 1997).

However, these previous studies of Person-job Fit just belong to one view point of complementarily fit (Bretz & Judge. 1994; Cable & Judge. 1997; Edwards. 1996; Kristof, 1996). As research continues, scholars found that Person-job Fit is not only made up of a complementarily fit, but also, a consistency fit. Thus, Scrogging (2003) proposed a self-concept fit, which means individual's subjective perception meet the job characteristics and job behaviors. Individual would feel consistency between the present job and what he is (e.g. objective perception) or what he wants to be (e.g. subjective perception), which is one kind of fit that external matches interior.

### 2.2 Career Self-efficacy

The development of several theories had helped understand and explain Career Self-efficacy which was a significant influence for college students. Self-efficacy was put forward by Bandura (1977) for the first time; she defined it as "the individual's ability of belief achieved a behavior process of a specific target". And then, Hackett and Betz (1981) had started to use Bandura's self-efficacy theory to research in the field of professional problem. They defined Career Self-efficacy as "the individual engaged in specific careers' ability of belief". Later, Lent and Hackett (1987) defined it again, "Individuals in career choice and career adjustment had the judging ability of self-efficacy." With Betz and Hackett (1997) deeply studied, they specifically defined Career Self-efficacy to "an individual in the implementation of career-related behavioral, educational, and occupational choices, as well as persuasive beliefs."

At the beginning of the 21st century, many researchers wanted to know which factors can affect the Career Self-efficacy. On the one hand, some researchers summarized the influence factors of Career Self-efficacy. Rottinghaus et al. (2002) and Nauta (2004) summarized the five generalized effects on career self-efficacy. The study of Betz and Hartman (2007) showed that, the impact of self-efficacy could be summarized as three types of effects (e.g. neuroticism, aesthesia and extraversion). On the

other hand, some researchers used the validation of the model to identify influencing factors. Soresi and Nota (1998) have shown that students attended college preparatory high schools experience higher levels of decision-making and Career Self-efficacy and using better decision-making skills, meanwhile, Career Self-efficacy play a important role In the relationship between career decision-making and family support by using a sample of Italian high school youth (Lent, 2003). Yi-Jiun Lin and Lisa Y. Flores (2011) tested the mediation effect of Career Self-efficacy in the relationship between effectiveness source variables and job search behavior. And Career Self-efficacy widely used to do as a mediator in many research models. Kalliopi Kounenou (2012) found that the mediating role of career decision self-efficacy between core self-evaluations (CSE).

### 2.3 Person-job Fit and Career Self-efficacy

Researches on Person-job Fit are rooted in several theories, including Work Adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), Need-press theory (Murray's, 1938), Vocational behavior (Holland's, 1973), Attraction–Selection–Attrition theory (Schneider, 1987) and interactional psychology (Schneider, Smith, & Goldstein, 2000 & Terborg, 1981). These theories share an interest in the role of both person and situation in contributing to behavior, and they summarized that the fit between person and their environments shows a positive psychological result.

Many researches demonstrated that Person-job Fit has positively related with the individuals' life satisfaction (Jeni & Jeffrey, 2013), employee performance (Meyer et. al1993; Ambrose et. al2008; Tzu-Shian Han et. al2015), employee engagement productivity (Julie Moreland. 2013), intent to hire (Higgins & Judge, 2004), job satisfaction and organizational identification (Kristof-Brown et al2005) as well as many attitudinal variables (Cable & Derue, 2002).

On the basis of the above theories and experience, in our research, we conjectured that a good Person-job Fit can strength the employees' job success which will make them high self-confident and keep them in a comfortable psychological and physiological conditions.

H1: Person-job Fit has a positive effect on Career Self-efficacy.

### 2.4 Employability

Employability was proposed by Beveridge in the early 20th century. It has been defined as a kind of capacity of individuals who obtain the first-time job, maintain employment and get employed in a new job to be necessary (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). The essence of Employability is a skill which can help individuals obtain the first-time job, retain the job, do the job well and switch job (Harvey, 2001), and research into it (e. g. Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson 2003) has already made significant progress. Canadian Labor Force Development Board interpreted it as an ability of obtaining the valuable employment when people interacted with their working environment. And in China, Liuqing (2009) thought that Employability is an employment status in a particular social economic environment.

There are many antecedent variables of Employability. Hillage and Pollard (1998) divided them into internal and external part. As for internal part, the evaluation of it was based on educational level, working attitude and working ability. For the external part, it was measured through the competition of labor market, employer capital and economy policy. Another views point out that influences of Employability include personality characteristics (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Tokar et al, 1998), learning attitude (Hall, 1996; Deloitte & Touche, 2001; O'Donoghue & Maguire, 2005), knowledge and ability, job characteristics (Van Dam, 2003). Based on definition and many studies of Employability, Zhang L and Nie T (2015) divided it into four dimensions as follow: environmental adaptive capacity, executive capacity, emotional control and appetency.

One important perspective was pointed out by Gaspersz and Ott in 1999. Based on Person-job Fit, They thought a factor of Employability is to develop a willingness to fit the change of working environment, conditions and job content. Knight and Yorke (2002) pointed out the antecedent variables of Employability include employment quality; it includes salaries, Person-job Fit and working environment. Sanders & Grip (2004) divided the Employability into three sectors to

discriminate different influencing factors: job-match Employability, firm-internal Employability, firm-external Employability, they found that training can boost their Person-job Fit; meanwhile, training can also increase the Employability of employee.

As for the outcome variable, Employability can affect health, happiness (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pfeffer, 1998; Cuyper & Witte, 2007; Berntson & Marklund, 2007) and belief of their occupation. The occupational belief was called Career Self-efficacy (Hackett & N. E. Bets) or Professional Efficacy, and it can affect behavior of employee (Byron, 1995; Bagshaw, 1997; Hallier & Butts, 1998; Sullivan, 1999; Cappelli, 2000; Baruch, 2001; Lawler, 2001; Guest, 2004).

This study combined theory with investigating data and analyzed the effect of Employability in different background like age, gender, educational level, occupation, and salary. Meanwhile, the Employability is divided into five basic areas-layered to be researched: practicing executive capability, cooperative ability, individual adaptability, interpersonal skill and emotional regulation ability. For employers, it involves creating a working environment that can provide opportunities for personal and professional growth (Ghoshal, 2004), for employees, the better they have Person-job Fit, the more they can improve their Employability. Meanwhile, develop the Employability will have a positive impact on Career Self-efficacy. Therefore, this article makes the second hypothesis:

H2: Employability has mediating effect between Person-job Fit and Career Self-efficacy

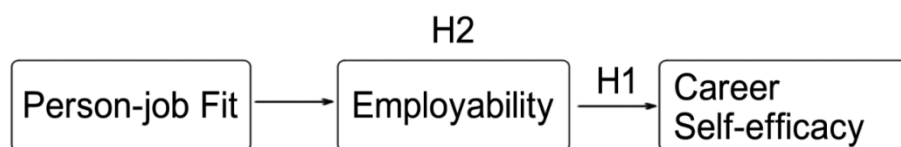


Figure 1. The Hypothetical model

### 3. Method

In order to verify the above conclusion, the research of Fujian, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Shaanxi, Hebei and Shanghai and any other provinces and cities in more than 80 different types of enterprise staff as a sample with a structured questionnaire to collect data. In order to the authenticity and validity of the questionnaire survey, the research extracted the subjects of employees as far as possible from different industries, different education and different tenures and used director- employees paired questionnaires.

Participate in the survey were 455 employees (202 men and 253 women) in different cities. The employees' age was from 18 to 28, and the means age is 26. 63 years (SD=0. 615). In all employees, there were 403 employees having received higher education (SD=0. 777), accounting for 88. 6% of the total sample. This study had enough sample size to do data analysis.

### 4. Measure

The questionnaires by the research of scale are via multilateral certification at home and abroad with high reliability and validity of scale. The report was combined with the specific situation of the employment status, and then revising the scale. The report was using a 5-point Likert-type measurement format (1 = not at all, 5 = to a great extent).

#### ■ Person-job Fit

This was assessed with 5 items (e.g. "I will try to do different kinds of professional activities") from Abdel-Halim(1981). We used the principal axis factoring to submit the ten items, and the factor could explain 54. 63%. This scale's Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is. 791.

#### ■ Employability

This was assessed with eighteen items (e.g. “I feel I am fully competent for my work”) from Xiaoxia Tao(2007). We used the principal axis factoring to submit the five items, and the item factor could explain 50. 11%. This scale’s Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  is. 890.

■ Career Self-efficacy

This was measured with seven items (e.g. “I know what kind of job which I should apply for”) from Anderson and Betz (2001). We used the principal axis factoring to submit the seven items, and the factor could explain 47. 68%. This scale’s Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  is. 815.

**5. Results**

**5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

Table1. Means, Std. D and the Correlations of Variables

	Variables	Means	Std. D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Gender	1. 556	0. 497	-							
2	Age	1. 431	0. 615	-. 021	-						
3	Education	4. 387	0. 777	. 046	-. 285**	-					
4	Industry	6. 455	2. 355	-. 010	. 047	. 049	-				
5	Tenure	1. 991	0. 718	-. 042	-. 391**	-. 018	-. 076	-			
6	PJF	3. 552	0. 684	-. 052	-. 069	. 014	. 038	. 053	-		
7	EA	3. 787	0. 486	-. 025	-. 024	-. 028	. 088	. 084	. 233**	-	
8	CSSE	3. 485	0. 622	-. 034	-. 020	. 005	. 014	. 013	. 387**	. 292**	-

Note1: PJF= Person-job Fit; EA= Employability; CSSE= Career Self-efficacy.

Note2: \*p <. 05. \*\*p <. 01

Table1 shows means, Std. D and the correlations of variables. The results showed that CESS was significantly correlated with PJF (r=. 387, p<0. 01) and EA (r=. 292, p<0. 01). PJF was significantly correlated with EA (r=. 233, p<0. 01).

Table 2. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for mediation of Career Self-efficacy

Variables	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4
	Career Self-efficacy	Career Self-efficacy	Employability	Career. self-efficacy
Gender	-. 034	-0. 014	-. 007	-. 013
Age	-. 019	0. 005	. 011	. 002
Education	. 001	0. 002	-. 030	. 008
Industry	. 015	-0. 001	. 086	-. 020
Tenure	. 005	-0. 006	. 082	-. 024
Person-job Fit		0. 387***	0. 226***	0. 338***
Employability				0. 217***
R <sup>2</sup>		0. 150***	0. 068***	0. 194***
adj-R <sup>2</sup>		0. 139***	0. 055***	0. 181***
F		78. 061***	24. 269***	53. 295***

Note1:N=236, \*\*\*, P<0. 001,\*\*, P<0. 01;\*, P<0. 05

For testing the mediating effect, we followed the suggestions of Frazier, Tix and Barron (2004). Except for Frazier et al. explained the procedure for testing mediating effects with three variables (independent variable, mediator variable and outcome variable), we also controlled the effects of entrepreneurs’ gender, education, industry and tenure.



As a result, we tested the hypotheses through hierarchical multiple regression analysis and table 2 provides the estimated parameters and the results of the hypotheses testing of the mediating effect of Employability between Person-job Fit and Career Self-efficacy. For H1, Person-job Fit has an important positive effect ( $\beta=0.387$ ,  $P<0.001$ ) on Career Self-efficacy. For H2, Employability plays a role of mediating effect ( $H2;\beta=0.217$ ,  $P<0.001$ ) between Person-job Fit and Career Self-efficacy. We tested two hypotheses. Firstly, Person-job Fit would have a significant effect on Career Self-efficacy; in the end, Employability would be a mediating effect between Person-job Fit and Career Self-efficacy. Following the procedure recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Ming R, W (2010), we tested the hypotheses with a sample of 236 full-time employees and 70 supervisors in Chinese. Our results support the hypothesized relationships.

## 6. Conclusion and discussion

In the past there have been numerous scholars doing researches of the influencing factors of employees' Employability, however the research develop innovative ways to take paired questionnaires from the dual perspective of generation employees and the enterprises. The research explores the relationships among generation workers' Career Self-efficacy, Person-job Fit and Employability with theoretical analysis and empirical study. One of the greatest values in the research is the introduction of "Employability" model, which is divided into practicing executive capability, cooperative ability, individual adaptability, interpersonal skill; emotional regulation ability, making corporation and supervisors understood the specific judgment criteria and essential requirement of generation employees. What's more, based on the research, we give a further suggestion that can improve the generation workers Employability to make them meet job requirements, the fit of college students and enterprise.

In this research, we found that Employability has a mediating effect between Person-job Fit and Career Self-efficacy. The more generation employees fit the job, the better they perform in the job. What's more, they will more loyal to their job or their enterprise. When generation employees have a clear understanding and position of their career development, they are more enthusiasm about their work, which will enhance their job validity. Generation employees are more aware of how to make work choices and understand how to get a job; they can help employees find the fit job. Therefore, universities could perfect the career development courses and provide the professional evaluation system for students to make a right choice, so that students have a certain understanding and planning of their career development. Universities also should enhance students' understanding of the market and the enterprise, so that they can find a right position of their work before entering the community consciously to stimulate the enthusiasm of future work.

At the same time, universities can set up targeted courses to improve students' Employability skills in order that they can adapt the society quickly, adapt to the market for the employees' professional requirements. Meanwhile, enterprises need to further update the professional matching degree test of the employees, in the aspect of human resource management, and arrange the fit job of the individual's psychological and the ability, communicate with the employees regularly.

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