

Communication problems and solutions faced by Chinese college students entering the workplace

Linfei Ma

Óbuda University, Hungary

Chenhe Ge

Óbuda University, Hungary

Yameng Xue

Óbuda University, Hungary

Andrea Tick

Óbuda University, Hungary

Abstract

Communication skills are one of the key competences for employability in the 21st century that contribute freshly graduates' successful career at the workplace. Furthermore, effective communication is one of the necessary competences for interpersonal communication and modern business management. For college students initially entering the workplace, the skills how to convey information and how to achieve actionable results at work are part of the key competences for communication and cooperation with colleagues and superiors at the workplace. It is a prerequisite and basis for decision making, a tool for unifying thoughts and actions, the key to establishing good interpersonal relationships and an important cornerstone for achieving harmonious development of the enterprise. This paper focuses on Chinese graduates entering the workplace as the research object and explores the communication barriers that hinder effective communication when entering the labor market. The quantitative research revealed that besides the problems resulted from the lack of communication awareness, ineffective and poor communication between fresh graduates and superiors at workplace might be the consequence of the inconsistency of thoughts with the communication targets and of poor communication skills. By detecting the above communication problems, this paper proposes communication management actions to mitigate the impacts at the workplace and improve Chinese students' communication competences for employability.

Keywords: college students, communication barriers, fresh graduates, internal communication, workplace communication skills

1. Introduction

Communication is handled differently in different cultures and by different generations. Communication skills acquired through upbringing and education contribute significantly to the success at workplace and to career building. Next to hard skills and professional knowledge, personal soft skills like communication skills for employability are becoming more and more important. Communicating with classmates in school or with colleagues at the workplace after graduation depends greatly on skill development throughout the years of education. The lack of interpersonal communication skills is a common problem for graduates with different cultural and educational background all around the world. It is especially true in China, where

the culture of communication is determined and heavily dependent on the societal pattern and system. Communication culture is inherited throughout generations and the openness and internationalization of organizational structures require changed communication attitude and behavior from freshly graduates at workplaces. Consequently, due to its relevance and urgency, it is valuable to study the issue based on its broad applicability.

University students first encounter interpersonal communication problems and challenges when they enter the labor market first, find their first full-time job, which presumably happens during university studies or after graduation. On leaving university and entering the workplace, seniors become employees from students, and they are required to learn to change roles. However, having been accustomed to non-standardised nature of online chatting, most 'freshers' encounter barriers since they have not been systematically taught the skills of communication. A lot of students lack the systematic education and training of effective interpersonal communication with colleagues or supervisors, the right handling of emotion, the correct tone of voice and the decent logic of words. Communication skills are part of the labor market soft skills-based competency measurement system that rates four focus areas including: (1) relationship management, (2) psychology, (3) self-management, and (4) communication and numerical skills. The complexity of the measurement system proves that communication skills have become an integral component of the soft skills necessary for success at the workplace and employees with good communication skills have a better chance to bridge communication gap and mitigate problems occurring from communication misunderstanding (Tóth, Lendvai, & Beke, 2021). Newly recruited freshmen might raise the question whether the supervisor understands what they are saying in communication sensitive situations and a freshman well-trained in personal skills will have proper communication skills to resolve the situation. In the course of the research, a questionnaire was developed based on the existing situation to understand the difficulties encountered by fresh graduates entering the Chinese labor market and their expectations of resolution of communication problems. This paper presents the findings of the survey, gives the characteristics of today's university students, the problematic communication situations, the modes of mitigation of such situations with the aim of helping new graduates to improve on communication competences and provide best practices to become an efficient and successful communicator at the workplace.

2. Research questions and aims

The main research focuses on the following questions and aims to find answers to the following: (1) what the biggest communication problems are that Chinese college students face when entering the workplace; (2) whether personality differences affect communication fluency; (3) whether communication awareness plays an important role in mitigation of communication conflicts; and finally (4) whether communication skills need to be taken into account by companies when training new employees. The research aims to help Chinese graduates entering the workplace to identify their own communication problems, find suitable solutions and responsive techniques while improving their communication skills.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 3 presents the literature review, Section 4 characterizes the students in the survey, Section 5 calls attention to the communication skills deficiencies of the Chinese students in the survey while Section 6 and 7 outline some recommendations and draw conclusions.

3. Literature review

The importance of communication in the workplace cannot be overstated, many scholars have conducted in-depth investigations and studies on this area. Fitsimmons (Fitsimmon, 2014) defined the elements of the communication process, showed the most likely problem points in the communication process, and discussed what good communication practices look like. The results show that (1) the key to good communication practices is a strong relationship of trust between communicators, that (2) good communication habits affect productivity, which in turn affects the bottom line, and that (3) workplace relationships affect the quality of workplace communication. Chan, Yedder and Vipulakom (Chan, Yedder, & Vipulakom, 2020) had surveyed 795 college students from China, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates, and explored the relationship between college students' work values, job quality expectations and work communication environment. The results showed that work values had a significant effect on the job quality expectations and workplace communication environment, highlighting the importance of job quality and workplace communication environment as important motivators in the workplace. Masatsugu, Chihiro, Yurio et al. (Masatsugu, et al., 2020) also pointed out that well-managed workplace communication can promote good mental health of employees while only communication with supervisors or managers in the workplace can lead to lower psychological stress, even after drastic changes in the workplace.

It is well known that communication in the workplace is very important, but when looking at the global workplace, it seems that there are problems with communication that cannot be ignored. Jelani and Nordin (Nordin & Jelani, 2019) interviewed 41 employees in a Malaysian company and concluded that the respondents agreed that language barriers such as not understanding or being unfamiliar with the terms or jargon used by another individual, and the physical environment such as nearby sounds interrupting the respondents' concentration during communication can lead to miscommunication in the workplace. Jenifer and Raman (Jenifer & Raman, 2015) describe five common communication barriers in the cross-cultural workplace, the first being misunderstandings in communication due to differences in values and beliefs and cultural backgrounds. The second is the lack of understanding due to different definitions of norms and roles in different cultures. The third is the inability to communicate effectively because of a lack of understanding of each other's beliefs and values. The fourth is communication barriers due to stereotypes and lack of understanding of each other's culture. The fifth is anxiety due to ethnocentrism, which leads to miscommunication. Meanwhile, Wilczewski, Söderberg and Gut (Wilczewski, Söderberg, & Gut, 2018) point out that in multinational companies, expatriates' low proficiency in the host language is a serious obstacle to their expatriate socialization, which also leads to exclusion and social isolation in the workplace, thus these lead to stress, frustration, and a negative attitude toward working with local personnel. In addition, language barriers prevent expatriates from receiving information from their supervisors, understanding team issues, and participating in decision-making.

When confronted with communication issues, there are often major differences in the communication cultures displayed by the West and China. Yang (Yang, 2014) found that the level of emotional arousal in Chinese and Western cultures is quite different. Western cultures will directly express their own opinions and try to influence others, while eastern cultures will adjust to others in order to express respect and politeness. Chen (Chen M.-J. , 2015) believes that in Western cultures managers view business communication as an exchange of information

that often ends when the transaction is completed. The Chinese, on the other hand, view communication as an integral part of building and maintaining long-term relationships.

Although there are cultural differences in communication between China and the West, communication problems at the workplace arise within the same culture but between different generations. Regardless of culture, when college students first enter the workplace all over the world, they might encounter internal communication problems that are a hurdle they cannot overcome in their careers. Since this research focuses on Chinese college students, more literature was reviewed narrowing down the population.

Using newly employed college students in China as the study population, Bai Yanhong (Bai, 2019) found that they often lack expression ability and argument skills. The lack of communication skills also leads to the problem of internal communication when college students enter the workplace. Liu Wei (Liu, 2020) created the employment pressure scale, combined with four aspects of psychology, family, lack of help, frustration experience, more comprehensively considered the factors affecting the communication problems of contemporary college students, making the data more real. With the continuous development and strengthening of enterprise management system, the role of effective communication in enterprises is highlighted. Qu (Qu, 2011) believes that due to the time and family factors, contemporary college students may be self-centered and have shallow team consciousness. Li (Li D. , 2017) also believes that the main reason for communication barriers is that contemporary college students pay more attention to themselves and emphasize the awareness of personal rights and interests. Chen and Chen (Chen & Chen, 2010) proposed that college students who have just entered the workplace will have a sense of occupational insecurity because they do not understand the organization and other members, which also causes internal communication barriers to a certain extent. Zhai and Guo (Zhai & Guo, 2014) believe that the traditional Chinese family education and the old school education mode make children's thoughts and expression always in a state of being suppressed. This makes it appropriate for students to enter the workplace due to the lack of awareness of active communication and cause internal communication barriers. Li and Tang (Li & Tang, 2017) and others analyzed the meaning and importance of management communication, found out the causes of ineffective communication in enterprises, and put forward corresponding countermeasures. Liang (Liang, 2012) analyzed the living environment, era background, ideological characteristics and behaviors patterns of contemporary college students. On how to improve the effective communication with contemporary college students, in order to better promote the development of enterprises, this paper puts forward corresponding opinions and suggestions to the enterprise management. Li (Li J. , 2017) put forward the corresponding management countermeasures by analyzing the problems existing in the current enterprise management communication in China. The purpose is to achieve the unity of enterprise strategic objectives, improve employee satisfaction and sense of belonging.

3.1. Data and Methods

The adequately chosen research method can make twice the result with half the effort, better reflect the characteristics of the data, more clearly analyze the fluctuations caused by the data and explain the causes in conjunction with relevant professional theories. Through a survey of Chinese and foreign literature, information has been obtained in order to have a comprehensive and correct understanding of the issues to be studied. The relevant information on

communication barriers has been collected, compared, analyzed and summarized. The research used quantitative analysis with the use of an online questionnaire. Self-administered online questionnaire was developed to collect data of Chinese and international students. The questionnaire was developed in Chinese and in English. Questionnaires are a tool used in social surveys to measure respondents' behavior, attitudes, social characteristics or to collect other information. A pilot test of the survey was run to confirm the validity of the questionnaire, using several random university students from China. The questions were revised after the pilot testing was completed. The targeted respondents received the online questionnaire via wjx.cn – a Chinese online questionnaire design tool called ‘sojump’, - and were asked to spend from 5 to 7 minutes answering the questions. Apart from single and multiple-choice questions, the survey tool of Likert scale ranging from 1-5 was applied. The online questionnaire data collection resulted on 201 responses, 190 of them were valid responses from Chinese students. Due to the scarce number of responses from international students, they were excluded from the analysis. The research applied convenient type sampling via social media, email, and online apps, which failed to ensure representativeness, but the number of responses allowed the researchers to draw conclusions on the sample of Chinese students. Due to the limitations in the research, it has not allowed generalizations about the Chinese population of students, but it gives ground to further research in international field.

Quantitative analysis was conducted to analyze the collected data, applying descriptive statistics, mainly percentages to show the most important factors of inefficient communication and self-assessment. The quantitative analysis can provide some assurance of the authenticity of the data. Inductive reasoning method has been used to reveal common characteristics and common problems that can result from inadequate and scarce communication skill development. The method applied helps the authors to give recommendations and outline best practices to overcome communication problems at the workplace.

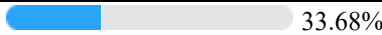
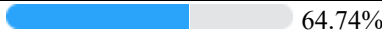
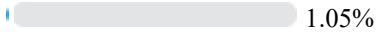
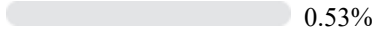
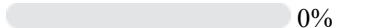
4. Characteristics of Contemporary College Students in China

4.1. Demographic profile of students

With the progress of society and the development of science and technology, contemporary college students get more opportunities for higher quality education. Among the 190 students in this survey, two-thirds of the respondents were female (64.74%), 94.22% of them have bachelor's degree or above, and their majors are related to various fields such as natural sciences (32.63%), humanities and social sciences (31.58%), medical, engineering and so on (Table 1).

Students in the survey are evenly distributed between the age group 18-23 and 24-29 so the respondents are either university students or young adults in the labor market. 66.32% of them finished undergraduate studies and 25.78% of them graduated with master's degree.

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

<i>Gender</i>		Proportion (%)
Male	64	 33.68%
Female	123	 64.74%
Non-binary	2	 1.05%
Does not wish to say	1	 0.53%
<i>Age</i>		
<18	0	 0%

	18-23	93		48.95%
	24-29	92		48.42%
	30-35	1		0.53%
	>35	4		2.11%
<i>Highest qualification</i>				
	Post-secondary education	11		5.79%
	Undergraduate	126		66.32%
	Master	49		25.79%
	Doctor or above	4		2.11%
<i>Major</i>				
	Natural Science	62		32.63%
	Humanities and Social Sciences	60		31.58%
	Other (please specify)	68		35.79%
Total		190		

Source: wjx output

4.2. Self-assessment of personality

The living environment of contemporary college students is more superior. They have become the center of their families since they were born, and they are used to paying more attention to themselves (Qu, 2011). They prefer to emphasize subjective feelings and individual consciousness, and it is difficult for them to objectively accept other people's criticism and suggestions. Almost half of the student respondents (46.32%) assess themselves as having an open personality – both introvert and extrovert personality – assuming that their communication skill have improved (Table 2). However, one quarter of the Chinese students are introvert (26.84%) and one quarter of them are extrovert (21.05%).

TABLE 2. RESPONDENTS' PERSONALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

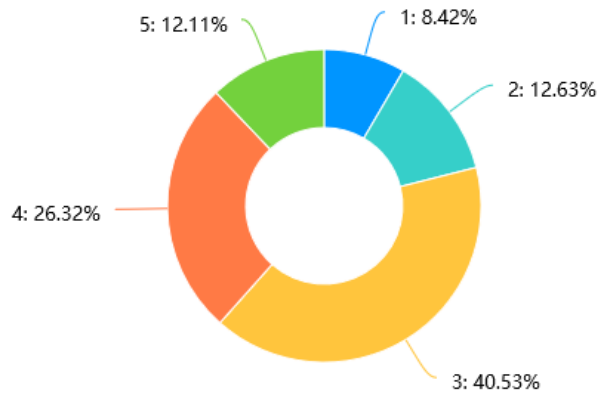
Personality assessment		Proportion (%)
Introvert	51	26.84%
Extrovert	40	21.05%
Both inside and outside	88	46.32%
I don't know	11	5.79%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

In this survey, students were asked to rate how they react to constructive criticism on a Likert scale from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”. 38.43% of the students agreed that they sometimes ignored or contradicted the constructive opinions or criticisms given by others (Figure 2) thus causing poor communication. Only 21.05% disagreed with the statement while the majority 40.53% could not decide (marked “neutral”). They don't like dogmatic indoctrination and rigid teaching methods. They like to show their ideas freely, pursuit independent thinking, form opinions through argument and collision. But because they are too self-centered, lack of team consciousness, interpersonal coping ability and psychological endurance are relatively weak. 42.11% of the students have said when there is a certain prejudice against certain people or things, it will lead to ineffective communication (Source: wjx output

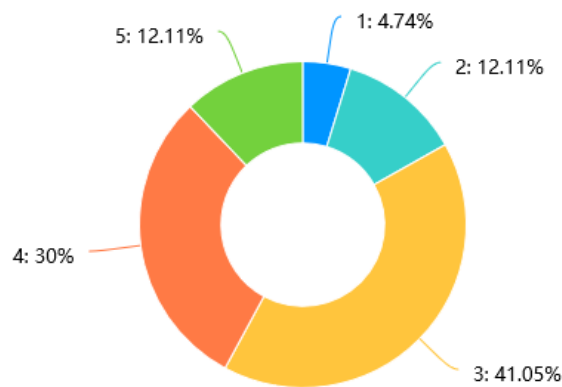
Figure 3), while only 16.85% disagree. 41.05% did not consider preconceptions as a cause of poor communication.

FIGURE 2. RESPONSES TO “SOMETIMES IGNORE OR RESIST THE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM GIVEN BY OTHERS” ON A LIKERT SCALE WHERE 1 MEANS “TOTALLY DISAGREE” AND 5 EQUALS “TOTALLY AGREE”



Source: wjx output

FIGURE 3. RESPONSES TO “SOME PEOPLE OR SOME THINGS HAVE CERTAIN PREJUDICES RESULTING IN POOR COMMUNICATION WITH EACH OTHER.” ON A LIKERT SCALE WHERE 1 MEANS “TOTALLY DISAGREE” AND 5 MEANS “TOTALLY AGREE”








Source: wjx output

The two figures with the relatively high percentage of “neutral” answer reflect to the even distribution of introvert and extrovert personalities with a double share of responses claiming a mixed personality of introvert and extrovert.

4.3. Self-assessment on communication skills

Students were asked whether they attach importance to communication skills. The responses ranged from “I don’t value communication skills at all,” to “I place great importance on communication skills”. More than half of the respondents (57.89%) place importance to communication skills while 30.53% of them are indifferent, and only 11.58% of the respondents do not consider communication skills valuable (Table 3).

TABLE 3. RESPONSES TO THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Do you think you attach importance to communication skills?		Proportion (%)
I don't value communication skills at all.	4	 2.11%
I value communication skills to a small degree.	18	 9.47%
Communication skills are indifferent for me.	58	 30.53%
I place some importance on communication skills.	59	 31.05%
I place great importance on communication skills.	51	 26.84%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

Students think that conversation content (63.68%), expressions (87.37%), the tone of voice (72.63%) and other details of action are all important aspects of good communication and 45.26% of them think that their communication skills are general, 27.89% and 4.74% of them consider themselves as good and very good communicators and 15.79% of them think their communication skills could be improved. Almost three quarters of the students faced inability to communication equally due to lack of self-confidence (72.63%).

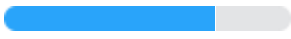
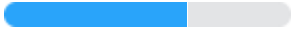


4.4. Anxiety factor of communication

The network age is the main characteristic of the living environment of people. The convenience of the network makes them obtain information more quickly, have more rich knowledge, broader vision and more active thinking. Among them, 26.84% and 21.05% of them are either introverted or extroverted, respectively, and most of them are both introverted and extroverted (Table 2). On the other hand, due to excessive dependence on the Internet, they have a sense of emptiness while knowing a lot of information. They either indulge in online chat or games to seek spiritual sustenance or escape from society and family because they can't get a sense of identity in real life (Liang, 2012). In this survey, 93.68% of the students will feel psychological anxiety because of poor communication, within which 37.89% often and 28.42% regularly feel anxiety due to poor communication. Moreover, 30.53% of the students said they would only confide their thoughts and secrets to those friends who had been together for a long time and thought they were reliable.

5. Problems with internal communication

The following chapter focuses on communication problems that freshly graduated students in China face at workplaces. The chapter examines what barriers and factors students are aware of that could hinder effective communication. Furthermore, the lack of awareness and poor communication skills will also be studied based on the responses. The barriers listed by the students included (1) different attitude personalities or positions of the parties in communication, i.e., the inconsistency of thoughts, (2) the lack of communication awareness as well as the lack of comfortable communication atmosphere and (3) the inefficient communication skills (Table 4).

TABLE 4. IN THE PROCESS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION, THE MAIN REASON THAT CAUSES COMMUNICATION BARRIERS ARE...

The main reason that causes communication barriers		Proportion (%)
1. different attitudes, personalities or positions of both parties (inconsistency of thoughts)	141	 74.21%
2. no communication awareness as well as communication atmosphere, feel no need, too lazy to communicate	122	 64.21%
3. communication skills are not high	90	 47.37%
other (please specify)	1	 0.53%
Total	190	




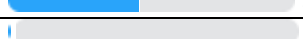
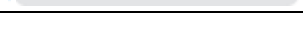
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5.1. Inconsistency of thoughts between communicating parties at workplace

According to the survey questionnaire, the biggest communication problem faced by college students who have just entered the workplace is the inconsistency of their ideas with the people they communicate with. Contemporary college students are advanced and independent in their thinking. Growing up in the era of collision of cultural trends, Chinese college students pay more attention to themselves, which is manifested by having the right to self-decision, attaching importance to personal privacy, strong awareness of personal rights and interests, and having a deeper understanding of themselves (Li D. , 2017). The vast majority of the respondents advocate individualized thinking and lifestyle, as shown in Table 4 **Error! Reference source not found.**, according to the results 74.21% of the respondents have responded that they have obvious communication barriers when facing people with different personalities and attitudes from themselves.

College students who are new to the workplace are still in the exploratory stage of their own careers, and as such they can develop career insecurity because they do not understand their situation toward the organization and other members (Chen & Chen, 2010). The psychological disconnection caused by the different status of organization members is a relatively common communication barrier, which is also known as Status Differential Effect (SDE) (Li Y. , 2014), and college students entering the workplace are more likely to have inferiority complex, fear and obedience psychology toward their superiors. In addition, at the beginning of their careers, freshly graduated have not yet established a basic mutual trust relationship with their peers, and they carry psychological defences in the process of communication with their peers. This fear of superiors and mistrust among peers lead to the problem of communication barriers arising from inconsistent ideas with the communication targets, which is especially prominent when they face leaders and peers. As shown in Table 5. 66.32% of the respondents facing their superiors and 47.37% of the respondents facing members of the same level are easily hindered by communication due to different levels or ideological differences, values and other reasons.

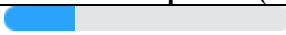





TABLE 5. WHO IS THE HARDEST TO COMMUNICATE WITH

Who is the hardest to communicate with		Proportion (%)
The superior leadership	126	 66.32%
Subordinate colleagues	56	 29.47%
Colleagues at the same level in the department, peers	90	 47.37%
Other departments	87	 45.79%
Other (please specify)	2	 1.05%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

In case of communication with the superiors, according to the responses over 50% of the starting workers faced situations in which the work guidance given by the superior was not quite in line with the actual situation of the work and it was difficult to follow the guidance and also over 50% of the respondents did not know how to finish the work assigned by the superior and were afraid to ask the superiors. In 43.68% superiors asked for adjustments and modifications after the job was done properly (Table 6).





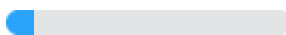
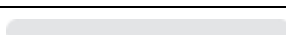
TABLE 6. AMBIGUOUS COMMUNICATION SITUATIONS WITH SUPERIORS

Communication situations		Proportion (%)
My suggestions are not easy to be accepted.	47	 24.74%
I don't know how to finish the work assigned by my superiors, but I am afraid to ask my superiors.	97	 51.05%
The work guidance given by my superior is not quite in line with the actual situation of my work, and it is difficult to implement according to the guidance.	108	 56.84%
After doing something well according to the superior's requirements, the superior asked me to make repeated adjustments and modifications.	83	 43.68%
None of the above.	22	 11.58%
Other (please specify)	1	 0.53%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

Regarding communication situations with peers, over 50% of the respondents found that the work requirements by colleagues from other departments were not clear and consistent, and 46.32% of them found deadlines unmeetable and approximately the same percentage of respondents could rarely have the opportunity to communicate across departments while when there was a dispute the solution was difficult to reach (Table 7Table 7).

TABLE 7. AMBIGUOUS COMMUNICATION SITUATIONS WITH PEERS

Options		Proportion (%)
Colleagues in other departments with the completion of the work often cannot be completed as scheduled or cannot achieve the expected results.	88	 46.32%
The work requirements given by colleagues in other departments are not very clear and consistent.	110	 57.89%
Rarely have the opportunity to communicate across departments.	63	 33.16%
Communication process when there is a dispute, the solution is difficult to reach agreement.	62	 32.63%
None of the above situations have occurred.	19	 10%
Other (please specify)	1	 0.53%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

As responses show several ambiguous communication situations freshly graduates observe and perceive, however, they cannot always resolve and mitigate these situations due to lack of communication awareness and/or lack of effective communication skills. The following subchapters discuss these issues.

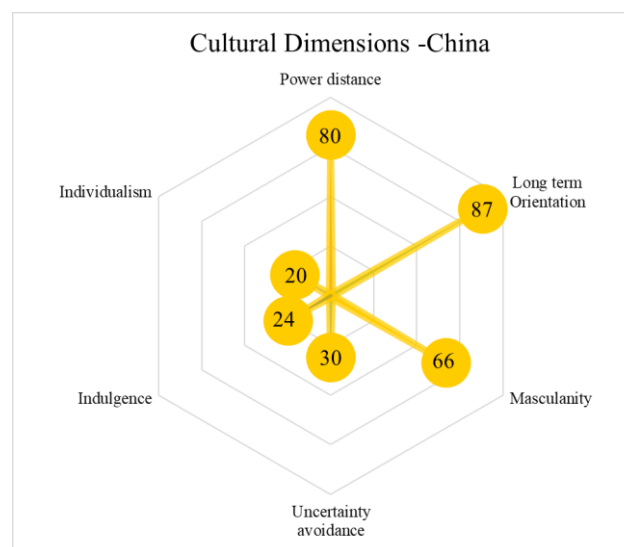
5.2. No awareness of communication

The second major communication problem faced by college students who have just entered the workplace nowadays is that most of college students have no communication consciousness.

Traditional Chinese family education and the old indoctrination education mode in primary and secondary schools have to a certain extent lead to and resulted in the current situation, namely that college students have little communication awareness. In today's Chinese family, although parents care about their children a lot and even consider children upbringing as the only important commitment in their lives, majority of parents find themselves in difficulties in getting along with their children equally in terms of ideas and beliefs, and most of them still stand up for the traditional education mode. As a result, children's thoughts and expressions are always suppressed. In primary and secondary education, quality education is often not really implemented, and indoctrination education is still the mode of education adopted by most schools at this stage, with schools and parents still focusing on academic performance, and students generally do not have their own independent thoughts, which eventually leads to the loss of active communication (Zhai & Guo, 2014). In this educational environment, students are often afraid of making mistakes, and some students may even mistakenly believe that they are humiliated and useless because of a communication failure, such as being ridiculed by their classmates, and lose their so-called “self-esteem”, thus considering themselves as people that others do not want to accept. Over time, introverted students and students who lack self-confidence develop the habit of “not wanting to communicate” (Zhou & Wang, 2013).

The communication problems at workplaces between freshly graduates entering the labour market and the superiors at workplaces can be justified by China’s high power distance (80), high Long-term orientation (87) and high Masculinity (66) cultural dimension score, in contrast with low Individualism (20), low Uncertainty Avoidance (30) and low Indulgence (24) scores (HofstedeInsights, 2021) as seen on Figure 4. China’s high power distance score implies that hierarchy is respected, subordinate-superior distance is high, formal authority is accepted. Due to high long-term orientation score in China “people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context and time” (HofstedeInsights, 2021).

FIGURE 4. CULTURAL DIMENSIONS - CHINA



Source: (HofstedeInsights, 2021)




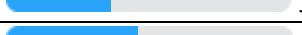
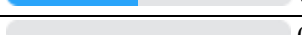
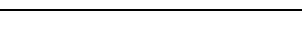
Moreover, high masculinity calls for a success-oriented and -driven society. Young graduated Chinese care a lot about their success, they have the motivation to become successful at work, which can be achieved through better communication with superiors and peers thus the communication awareness must be improved. Due to the low score in individualism young employees are brought up to act and communicate in the interest of the groups which does not require as much communication awareness for young workers to communicate for themselves. Low uncertainty avoidance enforces ambiguity in which Chinese are comfortable with, the Chinese language uses complex expressions and pictographs/ideograms with ambiguous meanings that can lead to misunderstandings in communication. As Indulgence concerned the low score assumes that China is a restrained society in which the control over the gratification of desires is present (HofstedeInsights, 2021).

On the other hand, many college students who are starting to enter the workplace begin to awaken their self-awareness, they pay more attention to subjective feelings but lack the awareness of communication, they are too lazy to communicate or even avoid communication, and as a result, they can avoid internal communication. Table 4 presents that the proportion of Chinese college students who have initially entered the workplace without communication awareness is as high as 64.21%.

5.3. Poor communication skills

Good communication skills often enable both sides to communicate better to transmit and receive information, thus making the communication effect twice as effective with half the effort, so good communication skills are indispensable in the workplace. However, as shown in Table 4, according to the survey data, 47.37% of college students who have just started their careers have communication problems due to their poor communication skills. They lack effective expression skills and proper arguing skills, etc. (Bai, 2019). Three options of the great difficulties they can encounter in internal communication were selected by over 55% of the respondents (1) properly resolve objections in communication, (2) accurately understand the views of others, (3) correctly and clearly state their views while 45.79% find difficult to communicate with people of different personalities and 37.37% of them have difficulties to persuade and influence other (Table 8).

TABLE 8. DIFFICULTIES MET IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Difficulties encountered in internal communication...		Proportion (%)
correctly and clearly state their views	106	 55.79%
accurately understand the views of others	115	 60.53%
properly resolve objections in communication	123	 64.74%
persuade and influence others	71	 37.37%
communicate with people of different personalities	87	 45.79%
other (please specify)	0	 0%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

6. Solutions and suggestions to the communication problems

With more and more graduates entering the workplace, a new generation of young people have become the main force of the industry and enterprises in China. Consequently, HR concerns have arisen, and human resource managers need to find alternative ways to adopt to the changed

situation. In order to make graduates better adapt to the workplace environment after graduation, this paper gives the following suggestions to improve communication skills and help more effective communication at workplaces.

6.1. Student perspectives

6.1.1. Higher attention to self-communication, clear self-positioning

New employees in the workplace should pay attention to modest communication in their study. The survey found that some graduates think they have accumulated a lot of social experience in the university and have good communication skills, but in the process of communication in the actual work, they often cause unnecessary misunderstanding. Therefore, graduates should interact with their superiors and colleagues and participate in group activities to build the same values as the members of the organization. There are also some students who are over modest and prudent, they lack self-confidence and think they have poor communication skills. In the process of communication, they are too nervous and anxious (Gao & Hu, 2021). Therefore, graduates should have a correct self-positioning, peace of mind, to maintain polite respect for the elders to ask questions. And graduates should also make sure that they do not make excuses for mistakes and accept the criticism and suggestions of the leaders with an open mind (Table 9). 40% of the students expect more training to increase knowledge on communication.

TABLE 9. EFFECTIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Effective ways to improve internal communication		Proportion (%)
Emphasis on self-communication clear self-positioning. Make yourself able to use the appropriate communication methods to achieve the purpose of communication.	122	64.21%
Communicate more with superiors and colleagues and participate in collective activities to build the same values as members of the organization.	140	73.68%
Attend more seminars and trainings on the topic of communication to develop communication knowledge.	114	60%
Attend more lectures and training about Communication Science to increase knowledge of communication.	77	40.53%
Other (please specify)	1	0.53%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

6.1.2. Listening and emotional sensitivity and clarification

On the other hand, to build rapport with the superiors and peers, students believe that listening carefully to different views, to emotional reactions of the parties and completely clear the facts in the situation are all important for effective communication at workplace (Table 10) that should be followed.







TABLE 10. IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

Important aspects of communication to express		Proportion (%)
Completely clear the facts of the situation	110	57.89%
Listen carefully to the different views of the communication parties	151	79.47%
Take care of the emotional reactions of the communication parties	131	68.95%
Trying to understand the different values that appear in the communication	73	38.42%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

However, next to face-to-face communication (74.21%) the second most preferable form of communication of the respondents is SMS/QQ/MSN/microblogging and other instant communication which allows for self-expressions and self-assurance, helps to improve self-confidence and self-esteem but does not allow for careful listening and better understanding of emotional reactions (Table 11).

TABLE 11. PREFERRED INTERNAL COMMUNICATION FORMS





Preferred internal communication forms		Proportion (%)
Face-to-face communication	141	 74.21%
E-mail communication	69	 36.32%
SMS / QQ / MSN / microblogging and other instant communication	135	 71.05%
Telephone communication	105	 55.26%
Meeting communication	45	 23.68%
Other (please specify)	2	 1.05%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

6.1.3. Communication skills expected to be trained

Even though the survey showed that freshly graduates need better listening skills and empathy in the course of internal communication only half of the respondents would like to get more training on listening skills as well as arguing skills. However, 77.89% of them would like to be trained more in how to express themselves (Table 12). Students mention persuasive abilities and some training on handling communication situations without becoming nervous as well.

TABLE 12. PREFERRED TYPES OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING

Types of communication skills preferred to be trained		Proportion (%)
Expression skills	148	 77.89%
Arguing skills	98	 51.58%
Listening skills	100	 52.63%
Other (please specify)	4	 2.11%
Total	190	

Source: wjx output

6.2. Enterprise perspective

6.2.1. Better understanding of college students

Many people regard that college students only think of their personality, strong self-awareness, no team spirit, difficult to manage. But in fact, it is not comprehensive to look at them from this perspective. They can quickly accept new things, and have strong learning ability, active thinking and rich creativity, which cannot be ignored. Therefore, in order to have a good communication with contemporary college students and improve their communication ability, enterprises must change the stereotype of them and if necessary, enterprises should also hold communication-themed related lectures and relevant trainings to improve college students' communication skills while taking the opportunity to have a correct and comprehensive understanding of this generation (Li & Tang, 2017).

6.2.2. *Changed management style*

News about the high turnover rate of contemporary college students has emerged in recent years (Li D. , 2017). Employers should analyze the essential reasons. After all, more and more young people will become the backbone of the workplace. Because most of them have received systematic education, have certain professional skills, and they are eager for innovation, so the authoritative leadership will make them feel bound. Therefore, when facing them, enterprises should abandon the rigid management system, pay attention to the communication and exchange with employees, listen to their real ideas and suggestions, and enhance the sense of belonging of employees (Li J. , 2017).

7. Conclusion

This paper focuses on internal communication problems at the workplace where freshly graduated workers are employed. The research conducted among Chinese college students collected 190 responses and aimed to reveal the causes of inefficient communication problems at workplaces and strives to recommend some solutions being either attitude change or communication skill trainings.

This paper adopts quantitative research method by means of a questionnaire survey to discover and summarize the characteristics of contemporary college students who are highly educated and have high learning ability, but are too much in pursuit of independent thinking, lack of team consciousness, and lack of confidence in communicating with the outside world although they easily accept new things. The paper analyses the problems faced by the contemporary college students in internal communication, such as inconsistency with the communication target, lack of communication awareness and lack of communication skills. Finally, according to the above internal communication problems faced by college students, this paper suggests some solutions to them.

Firstly, college students should give themselves a clear position in the enterprise and cultivate communication awareness, communicate moderately, and build the same values as the organization members; secondly, enterprises should change the stereotypes of college students, discover the advantages of college students, take the initiative to communicate with college students, and if necessary, hold communication-themed related lectures and relevant trainings to improve the communication skills of college students. Finally, the leaders of enterprises should try to avoid rigid management system and adopt more personalized management to understand the inner thoughts of college students and avoid communication barriers to the greatest extent.

With more and more young people entering the workplace, effective communication between enterprises and employees is particularly important. Employers should correctly recognize the unique way of thinking and personality characteristics of contemporary college students and recognize their advantages. At the same time, contemporary college students should also form a correct self-positioning in the workplace, find a suitable way of communication, so as to achieve the purpose of effective communication and ensure the steady development of enterprises (Wang, 2017).

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