

The Willingness and Action of Engineering Students in Career Choice: A Mixed-Method Research from the Perspective of the Rational Choice Theory

Authors : Juan Wang, Xiuxiu Wang, Di Wang

Abstract : Engineers are an important force supporting the economic and social development of a country. As China has the largest scale of engineering education in the world, the career choice of engineering students will affect the contribution of human capital to national scientific and technological progress and economic development. A questionnaire survey shows the following: on the whole, the students surveyed were willing to engage in an engineering career, but their willingness needed to be enhanced, and their willingness was affected by such factors as their understanding of the value of the engineering career; the resources from individual benefits, resources from career and individual strengths. Also, based on in-depth interviews with some engineering students, it is found that engineering students' career choice behaviors totally based on survival rationality, economic rationality, social rationality and other combinations. Based on this, policy support should be given to the enrollment, training, employment and other aspects of engineering education; improve the professional status and treatment of engineers through multiple measures; ensure a smooth career path to enhance the willingness of engineering students to choose careers.

Keywords : engineering students, career choice, engineer, human capital

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