

Research on the Working Mechanism of Counselors in Vocational Undergraduate Colleges to Promote High-Quality Employment of College Students

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Abstract: With the vigorous development of vocational education, students in vocational undergraduate institutions are increasingly characterized by specialization and skillfulness in their employment, attracting widespread attention from all sectors of society. On one hand, the number of employed graduates continues to rise, while on the other hand, there is a phenomenon of low job matching and "slow employment" among students. University counselors play a crucial role in delivering employment information, guiding career planning, enhancing employability, and providing psychological support. This paper proposes suggestions for improving the current employment situation, offering valuable references for enhancing the employment quality of vocational undergraduate students.

Keywords: Vocational undergraduate, University counselor, College student employment

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

In the current economic and social development, vocational undergraduate institutions contribute significantly to the supply of applied technical talent for industrial upgrading and economic transformation. However, with the increasing number of university graduates year by year, the competition in the employment market is intensifying. Students in vocational undergraduate institutions face the dual challenges of employment difficulties and low employment quality. High-quality employment not only impacts students' career development and life happiness but also influences the sustainable development of vocational undergraduate institutions and the stability and prosperity of society. As the guides to students' growth and success, university counselors play an indispensable role in promoting college students' employment. In-depth research on the mechanisms by which vocational undergraduate counselors promote high-quality employment for students is of great practical significance for improving students' employability and advancing vocational education.

1.2 Research Methods and Innovations

This study utilizes literature review to organize relevant theories and practical experiences both domestically and internationally, providing a theoretical foundation and reference for the research. The case study method is employed to analyze successful experiences from typical vocational undergraduate institutions, summarizing replicable models and methods. Through interviews, the study investigates the actual employment situation of graduating students and the problems they face, making the research more grounded in real-world evidence.

The innovation of this study lies in its close alignment with the characteristics of vocational undergraduate institutions, constructing a targeted counselor-driven mechanism for promoting students' high-quality employment. Compared to previous research, this study places more emphasis on the professional and practical aspects of vocational undergraduate education, analyzing in-depth the specific work mechanisms and roles of counselors in different stages. The study provides more actionable guidance for vocational undergraduate institutions' employment efforts. Additionally, the study proposes optimization strategies based on informatization and dynamic assessment to adapt to the constantly changing employment landscape and student needs.

2. Employment Characteristics of Vocational Undergraduate Students and the Role of Counselors

2.1 Employment Characteristics of Vocational Undergraduate Students

2.1.1 Employment Directions and Job Demand

Vocational undergraduate institutions aim to cultivate high-level applied technical and skilled talent that meets the needs of economic and social development^[1]. The employment directions of students show distinct professional and vocational characteristics. According to data from the Ministry of Education, the programs offered by vocational undergraduate institutions are closely aligned with industry demands, covering various fields such as equipment manufacturing, electronic information, transportation, civil engineering, finance and trade, and medical and health sectors. Within these fields, students typically enter technical and skilled positions in corresponding industries upon graduation. For instance, graduates from mechanical manufacturing programs often work in mechanical manufacturing enterprises, engaging in CNC programming, mold design, equipment maintenance, and other tasks. Students from electronic information engineering programs are more likely to be employed in electronics companies, working in roles related to electronic product development, testing, production management, and other positions.

2.1.2 Analysis of Employment Competitiveness

Compared with students from general undergraduate institutions, vocational undergraduate students have both advantages and challenges in terms of employment competitiveness.

Vocational undergraduate students have a competitive edge in practical skills. As these institutions emphasize practical teaching, with content that aligns with industry needs, students have ample time for internships and practical training. Upon graduation, they can quickly adapt to the workplace. For example, hotel management students, through internships and simulated operations, become familiar with work processes and management knowledge, enabling them to quickly enter the workforce with strong hands-on abilities.

However, vocational undergraduate students also face challenges when entering the job market. Students from general undergraduate institutions have a more systematic theoretical knowledge structure, which may make them more competitive for positions that require high-level theoretical research. Moreover, the recognition of vocational undergraduate education by society needs to be improved, as some companies show degree bias during recruitment, preferring general undergraduate graduates. This limits the employment options for vocational undergraduate students^[3].

2.2 The Role of Vocational Undergraduate Counselors in Employment

2.2.1 The Conveyors of Employment Information

As an important bridge between the school and students, counselors play a crucial role in the transmission of employment information. They are able to timely obtain various recruitment information released by the school's employment guidance center, including job openings, recruitment requirements, salary packages, etc., and accurately convey this information to each student. Through multiple channels such as class groups, employment seminars, and one-on-one conversations, counselors ensure that students do not miss any employment opportunities^[5]. For instance, a counselor at a vocational undergraduate institution has established a comprehensive employment information release system, regularly pushing job information relevant to students' majors in the class group and highlighting and explaining key information. Additionally, through school-enterprise cooperation, counselors actively visit enterprises to obtain more internal recruitment information, offering students broader employment options.

2.2.2 The Career Planning Guides

Counselors play an important guiding role in students' career planning. From the moment students enter the school, counselors guide them to understand their interests, hobbies, strengths, and weaknesses, helping them become aware of the characteristics and development prospects of different professions^[2]. During their university years, counselors provide career planning guidance to students in phases, based on the characteristics of different grade levels. For lower-year students, activities such as career interest tests and career exploration are organized to help them initially determine their career direction. For upper-year students, in combination with internships and graduation projects, counselors

guide them to create specific career plans and provide job-search skills training, resume revisions, and other services. For example, counselors at a vocational undergraduate institution have created career planning files for each student, regularly communicating with students to track their career planning progress, and adjusting and improving the plans according to the students' actual situations.

2.2.3 The Enhancers of Employment Skills

To enhance students' employability, counselors actively organize various practical activities and training courses. They encourage students to participate in club activities, volunteer services, and academic competitions to develop their communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Meanwhile, counselors invite industry experts and business elites to hold lectures and training sessions at the school, allowing students to learn about the latest industry trends and the actual needs of enterprises, as well as acquire practical career skills. For example, counselors at a vocational undergraduate institution collaborate with several enterprises to establish internship and training bases, regularly organizing students to intern at these companies, allowing them to accumulate work experience and improve their employability. Furthermore, activities such as mock interviews and workplace etiquette training are organized to help students familiarize themselves with the job application process, enhancing their interview skills and workplace literacy.

2.2.4 The Providers of Psychological Support

During the employment process, students often face various psychological pressures such as anxiety, confusion, and low self-esteem. As close friends of students, counselors pay close attention to students' mental states, promptly identifying and addressing any psychological issues^[6]. Through mental health education courses, individual psychological counseling, and group guidance, counselors help students establish a positive employment mindset, boost their confidence, and cope with setbacks in the job market. Counselors organize multiple employment-related psychological guidance lectures during graduation season, inviting psychological experts to explain methods for psychological adjustment during the employment process. At the same time, they establish student psychological files to provide focused attention and follow-up counseling for students with psychological tendencies, ensuring that students approach employment challenges with a positive mindset.

3. The Work Mechanism of Counselors in Promoting High-Quality Employment for Vocational Undergraduate Students

3.1 Building a Comprehensive Career Planning Guidance System

3.1.1 Career Enlightenment Education at the Beginning of Enrollment

At the start of their studies, counselors should conduct career enlightenment education to guide students in recognizing the characteristics and advantages of vocational undergraduate education, and to help them understand the employment prospects and development directions of their chosen majors^[7]. By organizing professional introduction meetings, inviting industry experts for lectures, and arranging company visits, counselors can stimulate students' career interests and learning motivation. During the first week of the academic year, counselors organize visits to the school's training bases and partner companies, allowing students to directly experience future work environments and content, enhancing their recognition of the major.

3.1.2 Career Planning Follow-up During Schooling

As students progress in their studies, counselors should provide personalized career planning guidance in stages based on the characteristics of different grade levels. In the lower years, counselors help students with self-awareness, using career assessment tools to understand their interests, personality, and abilities, and guide them to initially determine their career goals. In the higher years, counselors combine students' major courses and practical experiences to guide them in creating detailed career plans, which can be dynamically adjusted based on market changes and personal development. For example, one-on-one career planning discussions are held regularly each year, offering targeted advice and guidance to students.

3.2 Improving Employment Information Service Platforms

3.2.1 Diversified Employment Information Collection Channels

Counselors should actively expand the channels for collecting employment information,

establishing broad connections with the school's employment guidance center, corporate human resources departments, industry associations, alumni networks, and more, ensuring the acquisition of comprehensive, timely, and accurate employment information. In addition to traditional recruitment websites and campus job fairs, counselors should also pay attention to official company websites, social media recruitment information, and local government employment service platforms. Counselors can use WeChat public accounts to create employment information sharing platforms, timely pushing various recruitment information and encouraging students to share the information they collect, achieving information sharing.

3.2.2 Precise Employment Information Push and Matching

After acquiring a large amount of employment information, counselors need to filter and categorize the information, precisely pushing it to relevant students based on their major, interests, and employment intentions. By leveraging information technology, a student employment information database can be established to enable intelligent matching between employment information and student needs. Counselors can develop employment information recommendation systems, which automatically filter suitable recruitment information based on students' job preferences, skills, and other details entered in the system, thereby improving the utilization rate of employment information.

3.3 Establishing Employment Psychological Support and Adjustment Mechanisms

3.3.1 Mental Health Education and Counseling Services

Mental health education should be integrated into employment guidance work. Through offering mental health courses, hosting employment psychology lectures, distributing mental health promotional materials, and other methods, counselors can popularize mental health knowledge and improve students' ability to adjust mentally. A psychological counseling room should be established, staffed with professional counselors to provide one-on-one psychological counseling services, helping students cope with anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and other psychological issues during the employment process. Vocational undergraduate institutions can increase the course hours for mental health education during the graduation season and set up specialized topics for employment psychology counseling, inviting psychological experts to conduct group counseling and individual consultations for students^[4].

3.3.2 Employment Setback Education and Attitude Guidance

Counselors should guide students to properly face setbacks in employment, helping them analyze the reasons for failure, summarize lessons learned, and establish a positive and optimistic employment attitude. Through sharing success stories and organizing motivational lectures, counselors can inspire students to persist in pursuing their employment goals. When students experience interview failures or encounter obstacles in their job search, counselors should communicate with students in a timely manner, providing encouragement and support, helping them readjust their mindset and job search strategies. Counselors can organize "Employment Star" experience-sharing sessions, inviting outstanding graduates who have successfully found employment to share their job-hunting experiences and insights, encouraging younger students to face difficulties with courage.

4. Strategies for Optimizing the Employment Work Mechanism of Counselors

4.1 Establishing a Precise Career Planning Guidance System

Counselors should gain a deep understanding of each student's family background, academic performance, interests, personality traits, and other relevant information. This can be done through one-on-one conversations, surveys, psychological assessments, and other methods to comprehensively grasp the individual circumstances of students. Based on students' major characteristics and market demands, counselors can assist students in career positioning and clarifying their career development directions. For students with outgoing personalities, strong communication skills, and an interest in marketing, counselors should guide them toward careers in sales and marketing. For students with strong logical thinking and an interest in technology, counselors should suggest pursuing careers in technical research and development, or engineering design.

4.1.1 Career Planning Courses and Counseling Activities

Systematic career planning courses should be offered to integrate career planning education

throughout the four years of a student's academic life. The course content should include career development theory, the use of career assessment tools, career decision-making methods, job-seeking skills, and more. Additionally, a variety of career planning counseling activities should be organized, such as career planning competitions, mock interview contests, and workplace experience sharing sessions, allowing students to enhance their career planning abilities through practice. Counselors in vocational undergraduate institutions, in collaboration with the school's recruitment and employment department, should organize an annual career planning competition. Students are required to develop detailed plans based on their career goals and planning, and present and defend their plans during the competition. Through the competition, students not only gain a deeper understanding of their career plans but also draw inspiration from the works of other students.

4.2 Strengthening Employment Information Services and Management

4.2.1 Expanding Employment Information Channels

Counselors should actively expand the channels for collecting employment information, maintaining close communication with the school's employment guidance center, corporate human resources departments, alumni networks, and other relevant sources, ensuring a broad collection of employment information. In addition to traditional sources such as recruitment websites and campus recruitment fairs, counselors should also utilize emerging channels like social media and industry forums to obtain recruitment information. A class employment information sharing group should be established to encourage students to share the employment information they collect, facilitating information sharing. Counselors should also monitor companies' official WeChat accounts, Weibo accounts, and other social media platforms to stay updated on the latest recruitment trends^[8].

4.2.2 Employment Information Screening and Precise Push

Given the overwhelming volume of employment information, counselors must filter and organize the information, accurately pushing relevant information to students based on their major, interests, and employment intentions. This helps avoid information overload that may cause confusion for students, thereby improving the effectiveness of employment information. By utilizing the National College Employment Information Management System, counselors can categorize and tag recruitment information, providing personalized employment information push services based on students' personal data and employment preferences.

4.3 Improving the Mechanism for Developing Students' Employment Skills

4.3.1 Practical Teaching and Internship Training

Counselors should strengthen cooperation with enterprises and establish stable internship and training bases to provide students with more practical opportunities. Through practical teaching components, students can apply their theoretical knowledge to real work situations, improving their practical skills and problem-solving abilities. During the internship training process, professional teachers and enterprise mentors should jointly guide students to ensure they receive effective practical guidance. Vocational undergraduate institutions can collaborate with several well-known local enterprises to set up internship training bases, allowing students to intern at enterprises for six months to one year during their third and fourth years. During the internship, enterprise mentors should assess students' performance and provide feedback and suggestions. After the internship, enterprises should prioritize the recruitment of outstanding students^[9].

4.3.2 Employment Skills Training and Certification Guidance

Based on market demand and industry standards, various employment skills training sessions should be organized, such as computer skills training, professional software application training, and vocational qualification exam training. These programs help students acquire essential employment skills and enhance their competitiveness in the job market. Additionally, certification guidance should be provided, including advice on certificate selection, exam registration, and exam preparation. For example, for accounting students, counselors can organize training for computerized accounting and certified public accountant exams, while for computer science students, programming skills improvement training and network engineer certification guidance should be offered.

5. Conclusion and Outlook

This study thoroughly analyzes the employment characteristics of students in vocational undergraduate institutions and the current status of counselor work, establishing a work mechanism to promote high-quality employment for college students. The mechanism includes comprehensive career planning guidance, employment skills enhancement, employment information services, psychological support and adjustment, and the promotion of employment through school-enterprise cooperation. At the same time, optimization strategies are proposed, such as improving counselors' professional competence, refining incentive mechanisms, strengthening information technology infrastructure, and establishing dynamic evaluation systems. The implementation of these mechanisms and strategies will help improve the employability of vocational undergraduate students and promote their high-quality employment.

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