

Research on the Current Status of Career Confusion Among Higher Vocational Logistics Students and Ideological and Political Guidance Strategies

Liang Guan*, Lingmu Liu, Min Tang, Shiyi Yang

Sichuan Vocational and Technical College, Suining 629000, China

*Corresponding author: 9112754500@163.com

Abstract: Higher vocational logistics students commonly face difficulties at the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels during the process of employment and job selection, which are specifically manifested as vague career orientation, insufficient employment confidence, mismatched job expectations, and low professional value identification. As frontline counselors, we have observed in our work that the generation of these difficulties stems from the combined effect of complex tensions among logistics industry characteristics, the higher vocational education field, and students' individual cognition. Vague career orientation and the depletion of self-efficacy reinforce each other; the dynamic evolution of job positions leads to the disruption of employment expectations; and the disconnection between curriculum and industry demand exacerbates students' value identification crisis. In response to the above difficulties, from the perspective of counselors' work, this paper proposes strategies such as career anchor reshaping integrated with ideological and political elements, guidance on career choice values based on value clarification, and stepwise construction of career identity, aiming to provide operable practical pathways for alleviating the employment anxiety of higher vocational logistics students and enhancing their career competence and employment quality.

Keywords: Higher vocational logistics major; career confusion; career orientation; counselor; value identification; ideological and political guidance.

Introduction

At the critical stage of transitioning from students to career professionals, higher vocational logistics students generally exhibit deep confusion in employment and job selection, which is not only manifested as difficulties in choosing positions, but also involves cognitive and value-level predicaments such as lack of self-efficacy and suspicion of professional value. Existing research mostly approaches from macro-level employment guidance or skill training, and there is rarely any intervention exploration that is grounded in counselors' micro-level practice, systematically analyzes the internal mechanisms of the dilemmas, and integrates ideological and political elements. To this end, based on frontline counselors' work practice, this paper focuses on the typical manifestations and generative logic of students' employment and job-selection dilemmas, and attempts to construct a set of operable guidance strategies with ideological and political educational implications, aiming to stabilize students' professional thinking, clarify career directions, and cultivate rational career identity.

1. Theoretical Analysis of Career Confusion among Higher Vocational Logistics Students

1.1 Dimensional Division and Stage Characteristics of Career Confusion

From the perspective of counselors, the dilemmas faced by students in employment and job selection are intertwined across three dimensions: cognition, emotion, and behavior. The cognitive dimension manifests as vague understanding of the responsibilities, competency requirements, and development paths of various logistics sub-sectors (such as warehousing, transportation, dispatching, supply chain, and express delivery operations), and an inability to establish an effective connection between "what I have learned" and "what I can do." The emotional dimension is reflected in anxieties about professional prospects, lack of confidence in employment competition, and doubts about professional value, often accompanied by feelings of anxiety, confusion, and even avoidance. The behavioral dimension is shown as delayed job-seeking actions (e.g., procrastination in submitting

resumes), blind mass applications, frequent changes of internship units, or switching to other industries immediately after graduation. From the perspective of temporal stages, the confusion in the early stage of enrollment stems from insufficient understanding of the major; in the middle stage of sophomore and junior years, due to the "generation gap" between course content and industry reality, students develop self-doubt about their abilities; and during the internship and graduation season, due to asymmetric job information and the gap between expectations and the harsh reality of grassroots positions, students experience a strong sense of employment gap and path disruption.

1.2 The Shaping Mechanism of Logistics Industry Characteristics on Students' Career Cognition

The characteristics of the logistics industry, including its multi-node network structure, labor intensity, and technological iteration, constitute a special shaping field for students' career cognition. The wide span of job hierarchies within the industry, with discontinuous promotion paths from grassroots operations to supply chain management, makes it difficult for students to construct linear career imaginations. The spatiotemporally fragmented operation modes of transportation, warehousing, distribution, and other links lead students to misjudge career stability. The industry's dependence on information technology and data analysis capabilities has been increasing year by year, while students' delayed response to this dynamic evolution further reinforces cognitive lag. The core of the shaping mechanism lies in the narrowing of information filtering channels: students obtain industry impressions through limited internship experiences or online evaluations, forming biased career pictures, which in turn affect the bias in subsequent absorption of career information.

1.3 The Generative Logic of Career Confusion in the Field of Higher Vocational Education

From the perspective of school education, the structural tension among the curriculum system, practical conditions, and career guidance is an important cause of students' employment difficulties. We have observed that the update of some professional course content lags behind the industry's development speed toward intelligentization and platformization, and there exists a "last mile" gap between the skills students learn and the actual needs of enterprises. Practical training sessions mostly emphasize the repetition of single operational skills, while lacking simulations of comprehensive vocational scenarios such as cross-position coordination, abnormal problem handling, and systematic decision-making. Meanwhile, traditional career guidance is mostly concentrated on the "final push" before graduation (such as resume revision and interview skills), lacking early identification of students' career anchors, continuous cultivation of professional identity, and long-term guidance on employment mentality. This makes it difficult for students to establish a stable mapping relationship between ability growth and career roles during the learning process, and thus confusion becomes an internally generated product of the field^[1].

2. Current Status Characteristics and Attribution Model of Career Confusion among Higher Vocational Logistics Students

2.1 The Dual Dilemma of Vague Career Orientation and Insufficient Employment Confidence

2.1.1 Vague Job-Seeking Objectives and Delayed Decision-Making

In our work as counselors, we have found that a considerable number of logistics major students are still unable to clearly state the specific positions they want to pursue by their junior year. They lack comparative knowledge of the responsibilities, entry requirements, salary levels, and development prospects of positions such as warehousing, transportation, distribution, freight forwarding, and supply chain coordination. This vague state is directly manifested as "choice paralysis" in the job-seeking process: when faced with multiple logistics enterprises or positions, they are unable to make decisions, either following classmates to submit resumes in a herd-like manner, or simply avoiding employment by choosing to upgrade to a bachelor's degree or adopt slow employment.

2.1.2 Symptoms of Employment Confidence Depletion

Students' loss of employment confidence is clearly manifested in their daily behaviors: first, they are "afraid" of participating in enterprise recruitment presentations, mock interviews, and skill competitions, believing that they "definitely cannot make it"; second, they "avoid" by deliberately delaying career decisions until just before graduation, when they respond in a rush; third, they "change" by frequently switching their stated career goals (e.g., "I want to do operations" → "Dispatching

requires night shifts, I can't do that" → "I'd better get a teaching qualification certificate") without corresponding preparatory actions. These behaviors form a negative cycle after repeated setbacks in job hunting, further weakening their opportunities to obtain effective feedback and growth.

2.1.3 The Cyclical Effect of the Dual Dilemma

Vague career orientation and insufficient employment confidence reinforce each other, forming a closed loop: the vaguer the goal, the harder it is for students to make targeted preparations; the less prepared they are, the higher the probability of setbacks in interviews and internships; the more setbacks they encounter, the lower their self-confidence becomes; and the lower their self-confidence, the less willing they are to actively explore and clarify their career directions. To break this deadlock, counselors must intervene simultaneously from both the "cognitive anchor" and the "source of efficacy" aspects^[2].

2.2 Misalignment of Employment Expectations Caused by the Dynamic Evolution of Job Positions

2.2.1 The Disconnect between Technological Upgrading and Job Competency Requirements

At present, the logistics industry is rapidly transforming from traditional manual operations toward automation, intelligence, and digitalization. The demand of enterprises for talent has shifted from "being able to move goods and issue invoices" to "understanding data, performing analysis, and optimizing processes," and the job competency model has undergone a substantial leap. However, students' career expectations often lag behind this change; many students still simplistically equate logistics employment with being a "warehouse clerk" or a "courier," and fail to recognize the existence and value of emerging positions such as supply chain data analysts, logistics operation and maintenance engineers, and transportation coordination management. The root cause of this cognitive lag lies in the fact that the channels through which students obtain industry information are mostly second-hand narratives (e.g., relatives' experiences and fragmented online sources), and they lack active exposure to official job descriptions and industry reports.

2.2.2 The Psychological Gap Caused by Misaligned Expectations

Due to limited channels of information acquisition, students tend to develop two extreme expectations regarding the salary, working environment, and promotion pace of logistics positions: on the one hand, excessive optimism, believing that they will "become supervisors right after graduation," only to find that they cannot accept starting from grassroots positions after internships; on the other hand, excessive pessimism, equating logistics careers with "exposure to harsh weather and no future," and thus giving up job hunting in their own major. Both types of misalignment directly lead to a severe psychological gap during the job-seeking season, and may even trigger anxiety and depression. From the perspective of psychological resilience, this gap is essentially an emotional turbulence caused by an "expectation-reality mismatch," and its destructive power depends on whether students possess a true understanding of the industry's baseline level.

2.2.3 Path Disruption and Frequent Job Changes

The direct consequence of misaligned expectations is the disruption of career development paths. Some students are unable to accept the intensity of warehouse operations or the shift system after one or two weeks of internship and choose to resign, subsequently falling into a vicious cycle of "frequent job changes – repeated setbacks – increasing confusion." This not only affects the development of individual students but also damages the cooperative reputation between the school and enterprises. The deeper issue lies in the fact that the act of resignation replaces the act of reflection: students attribute adaptation difficulties to "choosing the wrong position" rather than "needing to adjust expectations and persevere for a period of time," thereby losing the opportunity to accumulate a sense of efficacy from the real workplace.

2.3 Value Identity Dilemma Caused by Lagging Curriculum Content

2.3.1 The Disconnect between Learning Content and Job Requirements

The course content that students learn at school, such as traditional modules like warehousing operation processes and transportation document filling, exhibits a generation gap compared with the WMS (Warehouse Management System), TMS (Transportation Management System), and data analysis tools actually used by enterprises. When students discover that some operations they have repeatedly practiced in class have already been automatically completed by the systems, they develop a

sense of helplessness that "what they have learned is useless."

2.3.2 Dissolution of Sense of Meaning and Weakening of Professional Identity

The fracture of this instrumental connection directly dissolves students' sense of meaning in learning. The less students perceive a clear causal chain between what they have learned and the returns from future job positions, the more likely they are to question the value of their major, which in turn manifests as perfunctory responses to examinations, refusal to participate in advanced projects or practical training activities. We often hear students say, "Anyway, we won't need this in the future, so why bother learning it?"

2.3.3 The Erosion of Employment Commitment by Value Identity Crisis

The value identity dilemma ultimately erodes students' long-term commitment to logistics careers (i.e., emotional attachment). Although many students major in logistics, they are unwilling to admit internally that they will engage in logistics work in the future, and even avoid mentioning their major in front of relatives and friends. This "identity shame" leads them to actively lower their requirements during job hunting, and even if they obtain a position, they are more likely to resign due to minor setbacks within a short period, thus forming a negative closed loop of "trying – disappointment – escaping."

3. Ideological and Political Education Guidance Strategies for Career Confusion among Higher Vocational Logistics Students

3.1 Career Anchor Reshaping and Employment Cognitive Intervention Integrated with Ideological and Political Elements

3.1.1 Guiding Students to Clarify Career Values through Heart-to-Heart Talks

Counselors can take advantage of opportunities such as class meetings, individual consultations, and dormitory visits to engage in in-depth communication with students, and use tools like "career values card sorting" and "a day of ideal work" to help students make their implicit career preferences explicit. In this process, they can consciously integrate the logistics industry with major national strategies such as the Belt and Road Initiative, rural revitalization, and the domestic and international dual circulation, guiding students to recognize that logistics is a fundamental and strategic industry of the national economy, thereby enhancing their macro-level understanding of professional value. The essence of this conversational strategy is to embed individual career choices into the framework of national development narratives, and through "meaning empowerment," alleviate students' sense of value emptiness and strengthen their internal affirmation of the legitimacy of their career choices.

3.1.2 Conducting Thematic Ideological and Political Education Classes on "Logistics Industry Cognition"

Counselors invite outstanding alumni, industry model workers, and corporate HR representatives to the campus to deliver thematic classes on topics such as "A Day in the Life of a Logistics Professional" and "My Career Growth Path," using authentic and multifaceted career stories to break students' stereotypes about logistics positions. During the sharing sessions, they focus on narrating the professional ethics stories of frontline logistics workers, including their dedication to work, perseverance, honesty, and trustworthiness, and subtly instill the "craftsmanship spirit" and "labor spirit" into students' minds. The innovative aspect of this strategy lies in transforming "exemplar narratives" into "cognitive scaffolding," enabling students to automatically correct their biased career schemas through emotional resonance, rather than relying on external preaching^[3].

3.1.3 Establishing Individualized Employment Cognition

Files with a "One Student, One Policy" Approach. Counselors, in collaboration with professional teachers, establish dynamic employment cognition files for students, continuously tracking changes in their career anchors and employment mentality. For students with severely deviated career positioning or extremely low employment confidence, counselors provide "one-on-one" targeted assistance, offering personalized information provision, psychological counseling, and resource connections, so that career anchor reshaping becomes a continuous care process of ongoing calibration. This mechanism realizes a paradigm shift from "group-based guidance" to "precision intervention," and its core lies in identifying the confusion-triggering nodes of students with different career anchor types and implementing differentiated cognitive repair strategies.

3.2 Career Choice Value Education and Decision-Making Training Integrated with Core Socialist Values

3.2.1 Resolving Career Value Conflicts through Education on "Integrity and Dedication"

The logistics industry is a typical service-oriented industry, which often faces value conflicts such as efficiency versus norms, cost versus safety, and customer privacy versus corporate interests. Counselors can organize "logistics professional ethics debate competitions" or scenario-simulated class meetings to guide students in analyzing cases through discussions. During the discussions, they can guide students to use core socialist values such as "dedication, integrity, and friendliness" as judgment criteria, thereby establishing internalized professional conduct guidelines. The value of this approach lies in transforming abstract core values into operable career decision-making heuristics, enabling students to activate their internal value ranking systems when facing dilemmas, rather than relying on external rules for compulsory restraint.

3.2.2 Promoting a Grand Discussion on "My View on Career Choice" to Clarify the Value Ranking in Employment

Counselors organize class- or grade-level "career choice sharing sessions," encouraging students to share the professional factors they value most (such as salary, development, stability, interest, family, and social contribution) and to articulate the reasons for their rankings. At appropriate moments, counselors provide guidance to help students establish a broad perspective of integrating personal development into national development, and encourage them to take up positions at the grassroots level, in the central and western regions, and in places where the construction of national logistics hubs is most needed. This strategy breaks the cognitive ambiguity in students' career choices by "making value rankings explicit," and its underlying mechanism leverages the social comparison effect generated by group discussions to prompt individuals to re-examine and adjust their own value weight allocations.

3.2.3 Utilizing New Media Platforms to Conduct Role Model Publicity and Education

Counselors make full use of the educational functions of new media such as WeChat official accounts and short videos, regularly promoting columns like "Logistics Pioneers" and "Alumni Highlights" to disseminate stories of logistics workers who have made extraordinary contributions in ordinary positions. Through the power of vivid role models, they stimulate students' professional honor and social responsibility. The advantage of new media role model education lies in its communication characteristics of "low resistance and high penetration"—when students actively or passively encounter positive career information, their defensive mindset is weaker, making it easier for them to complete the psychological identity reconstruction of the social image of the logistics profession.

3.3 Constructing a Stepwise Career Identity Strengthening Mechanism with Curriculum Ideological and Political Embedding

3.3.1 Lower Grades: Initial Experience of Professional Identity and Curriculum Ideological and Political Elements in "Industry Cognition"

In the freshman and sophomore years, a "professional identity preview" session is embedded into the introductory courses or cognitive internships. After the simulation, counselors organize reflective discussions to guide students in appreciating the responsibilities and challenges behind the positions. Meanwhile, in courses such as Introduction to Logistics, ideological and political elements such as "achievements of China's logistics development" are incorporated to enhance students' professional pride. The key in the lower-grade stage lies in using "low-risk, high-fidelity" professional role-playing to reduce students' psychological distance from the logistics profession, so that professional pride is built on embodied experience rather than abstract preaching.

3.3.2 Middle Grades: Strengthening Identity through "Labor Education" in Professional Practice

In the second and third years, during professional practical training and on-the-job internship sessions, counselors should collaborate with professional teachers to integrate "labor education" throughout the entire process. When students engage in physical labor such as warehouse inventory counting and sorting and packaging, counselors should conduct timely on-site mini class meetings to guide students in understanding the principle that "the grassroots frontline is a required course for growth." Counselors should encourage students to write "internship logs" to record their reflections and growth during work, and provide feedback, transforming arduous practice into meaningful growth experiences. The innovation of this design lies in transforming "labor education" from a task

requirement into a meaning-generation process — through systematic reflective writing, helping students complete the cognitive transformation from "physical labor" to "occupational identity possession."

3.3.3 Upper Grades: The "Career Commitment" and "Social Responsibility" Oath-Taking Ceremony before Employment

During the graduation project, post-based internship mobilization, and career guidance courses, counselors design a "career commitment letter" signing or a "logistics professional oath-taking" ceremony. The content of the commitment letter includes individual career goals, ability improvement plans, and commitments of responsibility to the industry and society. Counselors organize a solemn ceremony, inviting parents, teachers, and enterprise representatives to witness the event, and use the sanctity of the ritual to strengthen students' career commitment. After the ceremony, counselors conduct continuous follow-up visits to help students consolidate their identity in the real workplace and successfully complete the transition from "student" to "career professional." The mechanism of ritual education lies in the "enhancement of self-restraint brought by public commitment"—when students externalize their career commitment into formal documents and have them witnessed, their subsequent behaviors tend to be more consistent with the commitment, thereby effectively reducing the risk of path disruption after career choice.

Conclusion

Based on the daily work practice of counselors in higher vocational logistics majors, this study systematically analyzes the real dilemmas faced by students during the employment and job-seeking process and their internal generative mechanisms. We have found that vague career orientation, insufficient employment confidence, misaligned job expectations, and value identity crises are not isolated issues, but rather a complex system of mutual coupling. In response to these dilemmas, this paper proposes a set of guidance strategies integrated with ideological and political education concepts, including value guidance in career anchor reshaping, integrity and dedication education, role model publicity, curriculum ideological and political embedding, and labor education. These strategies aim to combine the resolution of students' employment confusion with the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, helping students not only find "a job" but also find "a career worth striving for." In the future, we will continue to practice and optimize these strategies in our work as counselors, and attempt to explore the differences in employment guidance needs among students with different enrollment backgrounds and different career anchor types, so as to provide more targeted solutions for the career development support system of higher vocational logistics students.

Fund Projects

"2026 Suining Municipal Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project: A Study on the Path of Embedding 'Community Principals' into Urban Social Governance: A Case Study of Xiniu Community in Suining (SN26YB014)"

The 2026 Suining Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project "Research on the Characteristics of Public Opinion Dissemination among Suining College Students and Collaborative Guidance Paths for City Image from the Perspective of New Media (SN26YB013)."

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