

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

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Abstract: Students of higher vocational logistics schools often face all kinds of problems in their cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects during and after employment and job hunting, such as a lack of career direction, low employment confidence, a gap between job expectations and reality, and a weak sense of professional values. As front-line counselors, in our work, we have seen that the root of this problem is the result of many factors, such as the complex tensions in the characteristics of the logistics industry and the higher vocational education sector, as well as students' own cognition. Now there are vague career goals and low self-confidence; with changes in job positions, students' expectations for employment have shifted, and the lack of alignment between the curriculum and industry demands has worsened their crisis of values. In response to the problems mentioned above, this paper proposes the following strategies for counselors' work from the perspective of counselors' work: reshaping the career anchor in conjunction with ideological and political education, providing guidance on career choice values based on value clarification, and stepwise construction of career identity; the goal is to offer practical and effective ways to reduce the employment anxiety of higher vocational logistics students and improve their career competence and quality of employment.

Keywords: Higher vocational logistics major, Career confusion, Career orientation, Counselor, Value identification, Ideological and political education

Introduction

At the critical stage of moving from students to career professionals, most higher vocational logistics students are very confused about employment and job selection; difficulties in choosing positions and other problems at the cognitive and value levels can also be observed, such as a lack of self-efficacy and doubt in professional values. Most of the previous studies have focused on the macro level of employment guidance or skills training, and very little research has been done to systematically study the internal factors of dilemmas and integrate ideological and political considerations at the micro level in counseling practice. Based on the work experience of front-line counselors, this paper will present the typical expressions and generation logic of students' employment and job-selection dilemmas, and then try to build a set of practical guidance strategies with ideological and political education connotations to help stabilize students' professional thinking, clarify their career paths, and foster a rational career identity.

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

1.1 Dimensional Division and Stage Characteristics of Career Confusion

According to the counsellors, the problems students have with employment and job selection can be divided into three types: cognition, emotion and behaviour. Cognitively, there is a general awareness of the responsibilities, required competencies and development paths of all areas in logistics (such as warehousing, transportation, dispatching, supply chain and express delivery), but there is no connection between what has been learned and actual work. Emotionally, there is anxiety about future employment, a lack of confidence in one's own competitiveness for jobs, doubts about the value of a career in logistics, and accompanying feelings of anxiety, confusion and even avoidance. Delayed job-seeking behaviour is the delay in applying for a job, a large number of applications without much effort, frequent changes in internship locations, or switching to a different industry immediately after

graduation. In terms of the period of time, the confusion at the beginning of enrollment is due to a lack of knowledge about the majors; in the middle years of sophomore and junior high school, a "generation gap" has appeared between the content of courses and actual industry demands, causing students to doubt their own abilities; and during the internship and graduation season, the asymmetry of job information and the gap between expectations and the harsh reality of grassroots positions have created a strong sense of employment gap and path disruption for students.

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

Logistics has a multi-node network, is labour-intensive and frequently changes in terms of technology, and has thus attracted the attention of students' careers in recent years. Given that there are many job openings in the industry and no continuous promotion path from grassroots operations to supply chain management, it is difficult for students to plan a linear career path. The division of working modes in transportation, warehousing and distribution has made students doubt the stability of careers. The industry has been changing and developing all the time, and at the same time, the speed of development has increased; thus, the adjustment of students has been slow. The main reason is that the channels for disseminating information are too narrow; as a result, students' perception of the industry is based on a small number of internship experiences or online reviews, leading to biased career views that are then spread through other sources of career information.

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

One of the reasons for the employment difficulties of students is the structural tension in the curriculum system, practical conditions and career guidance at the level of school education. We have found that the update speed of some professional course content has fallen behind the pace of development in intelligentisation and platformisation of the industry, and there is a "last-mile" gap between the skills students have learned and the actual needs of enterprises. Most of the actual training only covers the repetition of one operating skill and does not cover all aspects of vocational life, such as cross-position coordination and handling abnormal situations. At the same time, the main focus of the traditional model of career guidance is on the "last push" before graduation (such as revising one's resume and improving interview skills), and it does not cover the early discovery of students' career interests, continuous cultivation of professional identity, and long-term guidance on their attitude towards work after graduation. Therefore, it is difficult for students to establish all-round links between their growing abilities and the demands of their future jobs during their study years, and thus confusion can become an internal problem in the learning process^[1].

2. Characteristics and Attribution Model of Career Confusion Among Higher Vocational Logistics Students at Present Times

2.1 The Dual Dilemma of Vague Career Goals and Low Job Confidence

2.1.1 Vague Job-Seeking Goals and Delayed Decision-Making

In our work as counsellors, we have found that a large number of students from the logistics major are still unable to specify the particular roles they hope to take on by their junior year. They do not know about all the responsibilities, entry requirements, salaries and career prospects of the jobs in warehousing, transportation, distribution, freight forwarding and supply chain coordination. As there is no clear way, young people have been unable to make choices during their job-hunting period; with many logistics companies and positions available, they have not been able to decide whether to apply for jobs in a group with classmates or have avoided employment by choosing to continue their studies or remaining unemployed for a long time.

2.1.2 Symptoms of Employment Confidence Depletion

Loss of employment confidence among students can be observed in their daily behaviour: First, they are "afraid" to participate in enterprise recruitment presentations, mock interviews and skill competitions, believing that they "will definitely fail"; Second, they "avoid" making career choices by postponing them until the last moment before graduation and then acting in a hurry; Third, they "change" their stated career goals frequently (e.g., "I want to work in operations" -> "Dispatching has night shifts; I can't do that" -> "I will obtain a teaching qualification certificate") without doing the necessary preparation. After being rejected by all sorts of places for jobs, these people have fallen into

a rut and cannot be corrected or improved.

2.1.3 The Cyclical Effect of the Dual Dilemma

Vague career orientation and low employment confidence are in a vicious cycle: The more vague the goal, the more difficult it is for students to plan; thus, when they are less prepared, the chances of failing in interviews and internships are higher; the more failures they experience, the lower their self-confidence becomes, and consequently, the less likely they are to proactively collect information and clarify their career path. Therefore, the two types of anchors that need to be addressed are the "cognitive anchor" and the "source of efficacy"^[2].

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

2.2.1 The Disconnect Between Technological Upgrading and Changes in Job Competencies

Logistics is changing rapidly today, and many parts of it have begun to be automatised, intelligentised and digitised. The demands on employees at enterprises have changed; they no longer need to be good at goods management and invoice issuance, but are now required to be able to conduct data analysis and process optimisation, so various competency standards for different positions have been established. However, the students' career aspirations have not changed accordingly; many still believe that logistics jobs are only about being a "warehouse clerk" or a "courier" and are unaware of the existence and value of new positions such as supply chain data analysts, logistics operation and maintenance engineers, and transportation coordination managers. The reason for this cognitive lag is that most of the channels students use to learn about the industry are second-hand knowledge (such as relatives' experiences and dispersed online materials), and they do not actively read official job descriptions and industry reports.

2.2.2 The Psychological Gap Caused by Unmet Expectations

Due to the limited channels for obtaining information, students have developed two extreme expectations for the salary, working conditions and promotion speed of logistics positions: on the one hand, excessive optimism; they believe they will "become supervisors right after graduation" but are unwilling to start from the bottom after internships; on the other hand, excessive pessimism; they equate logistics careers with "exposure to harsh weather and no future" and thus give up job hunting in their major. Both types of misalignment will result in a large psychological gap during the job-hunting season and may even cause anxiety and depression. Psychological resilience is the emotional distress caused by the gap between expectations and reality, and the extent of harm to students depends on how well they are aware of the actual standards in the industry.

2.2.3 Path Disruption and Frequent Job Changes

The first is that the desired career path will not be realised. Some students find that the intensity of warehouse work and the shift system are too demanding after about a week or two of the internship, so they choose to leave; thus, they fall into a vicious circle of frequently changing jobs, repeated failures and increased confusion. It will not help the students learn better, and it will also harm the cooperative relationship between the school and the company. The root of the problem is that resignation is a way to avoid thinking; students believe that their difficulties in adjustment are due to "choosing the wrong place" rather than "needing to adjust expectations and persisting for a certain time", and thus miss the opportunity to develop a sense of self-efficacy in an actual workplace.

2.3 The Value-Identity Dilemma Arising from Lagging Curriculum Content

2.3.1 The Disconnection Between Learning Content and Job Requirements

The content of the courses provided to students in school is traditional modules on the operation process of warehousing and transportation document processing, and there is a generation gap with the actual application of WMS (Warehouse Management System), TMS (Transportation Management System) and data analysis tools by enterprises. When students find out that some operations they have frequently practiced in class are now handled automatically by the system, they feel helpless and believe that "what we have learned is useless".

2.3.2 Dissolution of Sense of Meaning and Weakening of Professional Identity

There will be no connection, and the students will lose interest in learning. The less students believe that what they have learned will directly lead to better returns in their future jobs, the more likely they

are to doubt the value of their major; as a result, this can be observed in the form of perfunctory answers in tests, a refusal to participate in advanced projects or practical training activities, etc. Students often say that it does not matter; they will not need it in the future, so why bother learning it?

2.3.3 Erosion of Employment Commitment Due to Value Identity Crisis

Problems in the assessment of work will reduce students' continuous interest in logistics (i.e., emotional attachment). Although many students are majoring in logistics, they are reluctant to admit internally that they will be involved in logistics work in the future, and even avoid mentioning their major in front of relatives and friends. "Identity shame" makes people reduce their demand for a job proactively, and even after obtaining a job, they are more likely to leave due to minor problems in a short time, thus forming a negative feedback loop of "trying - disappointment - leaving".

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

3.1 Career Anchor Reshaping and Employment Cognitive Intervention with Ideological and Political Content

3.1.1 Have students talk in small groups about their values in life

Counselors can make full use of the opportunities provided by class meetings, individual counselling and dormitory visits to talk with the students in more detail, and use tools such as "career values card sorting" and "a day of ideal work" to help the students make their hidden career interests explicit. At the same time, they can actively integrate the logistics industry into the main national strategies of the times, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, rural revitalization and the domestic and international dual circulation, help students realize that logistics is a fundamental and strategic industry of the national economy, and thus enhance their macro-level awareness of professional value. The first purpose of this speech is to help students think about the direction of national development, give them a sense of "meaning empowerment", reduce their feeling of value deficiency, and thus boost their confidence in the rightness of choosing a particular career.

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

Counselors invite outstanding alumni, role model workers in the industry and corporate HR staff, etc., to give themed classes on topics such as "A Day in the Life of a Logistics Professional" and "My Career Growth Path", and share real-life and various career stories to help students break stereotypes about logistics work. In the sharing session, they will tell stories about the professional ethics of frontline logistics workers, such as their dedication to their work, perseverance, honesty and trustworthiness, etc., to pass on the spirit of craftsmanship and labour to the students. Another trait of this is that the "exemplar narratives" have been turned into "cognitive scaffolding", and students can correct their biased career schemas spontaneously through emotional resonance without external direction^[3].

3.1.3 Cultivating Individualised Employment Cognition

Files with a "One Student, One Policy" Approach. Work with professional teachers to develop flexible employment cognition files for the students and continuously observe any changes in their career goals and attitudes towards work. For students who have made a very wrong career choice or lack self-confidence in employment, counsellors will provide personalised one-on-one assistance, offer customised information and psychological counselling, and, in cooperation with other resources, help them change careers. Therefore, it will be changed from "group-based guidance" to "precise intervention", and at the core is to identify the nodes of confusion for students with different career anchor types and apply differentiated cognitive repair strategies.

3.2 Career Choice Value Education and Decision-Making Training in Light of Core Socialist Values

3.2.1 Resolving the Conflict Between Career Values and Education in "Integrity and Dedication"

Logistics is a service industry that has many conflicts of interest among its parties, such as efficiency and norms, cost and safety, customer privacy and corporate interests. Counselors can organise "Logistics Professional Ethics Debate Competitions" or scenario-based class discussions with

the students on such cases. At this time, we can have the students use the core socialist values of "dedication, integrity and friendliness" as the criteria for assessment and thus internalise the norms of professional behaviour. As shown in the above way, abstract core values can be turned into specific rules for career selection, help students apply their own hierarchy of values in daily life, and thus achieve self-discipline rather than conformity to external norms.

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

Counselors organise "career choice sharing sessions" for the class or grade to have students share which professional factors they value most (e.g., salary, development, stability, interest, family, social contribution) and why they ranked them in that order. At suitable times, counselors can give some advice to help students expand their horizons in terms of the integration of personal growth and national development, motivate them to take positions in rural areas, the northwest and other places that need to build national logistics hubs. Therefore, we can reduce the cognitive ambiguity of students in choosing a career by "making value rankings explicit", and at the same time, we can trigger the social comparison effect of group discussion to have students reconsider and adjust their own weightings of values.

3.2.3 Application of New Media Platforms for Role Model Publicity and Education

Counselors make full use of the educational functions of new media, such as WeChat official accounts and short videos, to regularly post columns titled "Logistics Pioneers" and "Alumni Highlights", sharing the stories of logistics workers who have achieved excellent results in their daily work. Good role models can inspire students to have a sense of honour and social responsibility. A new type of role model education can be introduced with low resistance and high penetration; when students receive positive career information about the logistics industry via new media, they will be less defensive and find it easier to form an ideal image of the logistics profession in their minds.

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

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

A "professional identity preview" session will be organised in the freshman and sophomore years of the introductory courses or cognitive internships. Based on the above simulations, the counsellors will organise a small-group discussion to have the students reflect on their roles and responsibilities in society. At the same time, the courses "Introduction to Logistics" and "Ideology and Politics" will also cover the "Achievements of China's Logistics Development" to inspire students with professional pride. Young children should be given low-risk, high-fidelity professional role-playing to reduce the psychological distance they feel from the logistics industry and develop a sense of professional pride through direct experience rather than words.

3.3.2 Middle Schoolers: Cultivating Self-Awareness through "Labor Education" in Professional Practice

In the second and third years, during professional practical training and on-the-job training, counselors should cooperate with professional teachers to integrate "labor education" at all times. When the students are busy doing physical labour in the warehouse, such as inventory counting and goods packing, counsellors can organise timely, short mini-class meetings at the workplace to help the students grasp the concept of "grassroots frontline is a necessary way for development". Counselors can have students keep an "internship log" to record their thoughts and changes in behaviour during the work, offer feedback, and thus make difficult practice a rich learning experience. The first change to the Design is that "labor education" will no longer be task assignment; instead, we will help students move from viewing work as "physical labour" to seeing it as "possession of occupational identity" through organised reflective writing.

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

Counselors have also organised the signing of a "career commitment letter" or a "logistics professional oath-taking" ceremony to organise the mobilisation of after-school internship and career guidance courses in the graduation design. The content of the commitment letter should be the person's

career goals, plans for self-improvement, and responsibilities to the industry and society. The counsellor will organise a solemn ceremony and invite parents, teachers, representatives of enterprises, and other people to join in order to inspire the students' career aspirations through the gravity of the ceremony. The counsellors will organise a follow-up meeting after the ceremony to help the students develop a sense of professionalism in a real work environment and successfully transition from "students" to "career professionals". The way of ritual education is to "strengthen self-discipline through public commitment"; that is, by formalising one's career aspirations in official documents and having them witnessed, one is expected to behave more in line with these aspirations later on, and the probability of deviating from the chosen career path is reduced.

Conclusion

Based on their daily work experience counselling students in the field of higher vocational logistics, the counselors have encountered many problems with students' employment and job hunting, and this paper will systematically explore these actual issues and the internal generative mechanisms of such problems. We have found that vague career orientation, low employment confidence, unrealistic job expectations and a crisis of values are not separate problems but rather an interconnected system. Given the problems mentioned above, in light of the concept of ideological and political education, this paper proposes a set of guidance strategies for career anchor reshaping, value guidance for career anchor reshaping, integrity and dedication education, role model publicity, curriculum ideological and political embedding, and labour education. The above measures aim to solve the problem of students' employment anxiety and, at the same time, achieve the general goal of moral education; that is, to help students find a job and a sense of purpose in life. In the future, we will continue to strengthen and improve the above strategies in our work as school counselors, explore whether students from different schools or with various types of career interests have different needs for employment guidance, and thus provide more personalised support for their career development.

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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