

The role of career planning education in college students' employment

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ABSTRACT

In the face of the rapid change in the workplace environment and the continuous renewal of talent demand, college students need to realize the smooth transition from the campus to society. With the blurring of industry boundaries and the emergence of new occupations, many students face problems such as unclear directions and mismatched abilities when applying for jobs, and career planning education can help students to know themselves, understand the career world, and cultivate their ability to cope with changes. Therefore, this paper discusses the key role of career planning education in providing practical suggestions for colleges and universities to optimize the training mode and help students better achieve career development.

KEYWORDS

Career Planning; Planning Education; College students' employment

In modern society, the workplace environment is undergoing profound changes, technological development accelerates industry iteration, and the complexity of career choice is increasing day by day. Upon graduation, many college students find that there is a gap between classroom knowledge and job requirements, and they even lack a clear understanding of their interests and potential, which reflects the connection between career planning education and students' actual needs. It will not only affect the quality of students' employment but also cause a hidden waste of social human resources. Therefore, this paper will discuss the value of career planning education in solving the employment problem of college students and provide new ideas.

1 The basic theory of career planning education

1.1 The definition and connotation of career planning education

Career planning education is an educational activity that helps students to understand themselves, explore career directions and formulate development paths through systematic guidance; the key is to effectively combine the individual's interest and ability with the external occupational environment and guide students to achieve sustainable matching of individuals and occupations in a dynamic changing society. Different from simple career choice counselling, career planning emphasizes the whole process of cognitive upgrading, which includes not only an in-depth reflection on self-characterization and values but also an objective analysis of industry trends and job needs ^[1]. This kind of education is not meant to set standard answers for students but to cultivate their awareness of active planning and the ability to make independent decisions. For example, after students learn about the advantages of logical thinking through career assessment tools, they will move from mindlessly following the trend of public examinations to the development of scientific and technological positions. Its connotation is also reflected in the continuity of "Education", covering career preparation at the university stage and extending to workplace adaptation and the establishment of lifelong learning concepts. In essence, it is to transform career development from result-oriented choice to process-oriented growth, help students build a complete framework from self-cognition to external adaptation, and ultimately achieve a two-way balance between personal value and social needs.

1.2 The historical development of career planning education

The origin of career planning education can be traced back to the wave of industrialization in the early 20th century. At first, vocational guidance only solves the problem of rapid matching between the labour force and the post. The focus at that time was "Person-job fit", such as Parsons' trait factor theory, which proposed that person-job fit was the focus of career choice. After World War II, with the acceleration of economic structural change and the increase of occupational mobility, vocational guidance began to pay attention to the law of individual development. Schubert's career development theory breaks the static matching logic. It proposes that the roles played by individuals at different stages (such as students, workers, parents, etc.) will affect their career development. Career growth needs to go through the stages of exploration, establishment and maintenance, and the focus of education turns to the cultivation of lifelong development ability. In the 21st century, globalization and technological revolution are superimposed, the cycle of occupational replacement is shortened, and educational goals are upgraded. It is necessary to not only deal with the

choice of the first job but also to cultivate "Occupational resilience" to deal with uncertainty. Taking the German dual system education as an example, its school-enterprise cooperation model can teach skills, integrate career cognition into the curriculum system, and promote students to understand the industry ecology in advance.

1.3 The Main Theoretical Basis of Career Planning Education

The practice of career planning education relies on three theoretical pillars: person-job matching theory, emphasizing the fit between personal traits and occupational characteristics. For example, Holland's vocational interest theory divides personality into six categories, such as realistic type and research type, corresponding to different career environments; in the theory of career development stages, Schubert puts forward that people's career development is divided into five stages, such as growth stage and exploration stage, and each stage needs to complete specific tasks; social cognitive theory, it focuses on the interaction of individual, behaviour and environment. For example, Klombolds' social learning theory believes that incidental events also affect career paths. These theories jointly construct the underlying logic of education, which not only respects individual differences but also recognizes the dynamics of development. For example, social cognitive theory explains why career experience activities can improve students' decision-making ability: adjusting self-perception through practice feedback to form a more pragmatic view of careers ^[2]. Modern education no longer uses a single theory in isolation but integrates a multi-dimensional perspective, such as analyzing the transferability of liberal arts students and designing phased skills upgrading plans when guiding their transformation into digital industries, and encouraging participation in industry training to accumulate adaptive experience, this theory fusion makes the education method more flexible and realistic pertinence.

2 The relationship between college students' employment situation and career planning education

2.1 Challenges and trends in the current job market for college students

The core challenge of college students' employment stems from the "Time gap" between social demand and education supply. Technological change is accelerating the pace of industry change as traditional jobs shrink and new ones emerge. Many students graduate with skills that do not match the demands of the marketplace, such as foreign language translation positions that were popular a decade ago; today, they are being partially replaced by smart tools, while new fields, such as data analytics, continue to be understaffed. At the same time, career boundaries are increasingly blurred, and companies are more inclined to recruit people with complex capabilities, both to master professional skills and to have cross-border thinking. This change has led to a shift in employment competition from "Single skill competition" to "Comprehensive quality competition". The change in population structure has aggravated the contradiction between supply and demand. The expansion of college enrollment has made the number of graduates continue to be high. However, the absorption capacity of some industries is limited, and the problem of structural unemployment is prominent. In the future, the proportion of non-traditional paths, such as flexible employment and self-employment, will increase, and career stability will decline. Young people need to learn to create opportunities for change actively. These challenges are not short-term fluctuations but the inevitable outcome of a period of social transformation, forcing the education system to shift from producing graduates to producing adaptees ^[3].

2.2 The impact of career planning education on college students' employment

Career planning education plays the role of "Navigator" in employment, which helps students transform scattered information into a clear action framework. Through systematic guidance, students can realize that the difficulty in employment is not simply the imbalance between supply and demand but the mismatch between personal positioning and market rules. For example, a literature major can discover the suitability of his new media operation through career exploration so that he can complement his design, communication and other skills instead of blindly flocking to the saturated teaching and training industry. This kind of education has improved the efficiency of job hunting and changed the cognitive mode from passive waiting for recruitment information to active shaping of career ecology. When students learn to understand career development from a dynamic perspective, they can quickly adjust their strategies in the face of job changes, such as actively participating in corporate internships to accumulate industry knowledge or learning cutting-edge technologies through online courses. This change in thinking is directly reflected in the quality of employment. Students who have undergone systematic planning tend to find suitable positions more quickly and show more substantial resistance to pressure and adaptability at the early stage of their careers. The intervention of education essentially breaks the dilemma chain of "Graduation is unemployment" and gives students the underlying logic to deal with uncertainty.

2.3 The cultivation of college students' professional quality by career planning education

The cultivation of professional quality is the hidden value of career planning education. In the context of traditional classrooms that focus on imparting knowledge, such education fills a gap in the training of soft skills in the workplace. For example, in mock interviews, students can practice presentation skills and understand the employer's perspective through role-playing to instil empathy and communication skills, and planning education emphasizes the end-first mindset. Students need to break down their long-term career goals into concrete actions, which directly train their management ability through objectives and resource integration ^[4]. At the level of professional values, education guides students to reflect on the meaning of work, avoid mindlessly pursuing high-paying jobs, and pay attention to the balance between personal growth and social value. This improvement has a long-term effect: when students enter the workforce, they can make the transition from "Doer" to "Self-driven" more quickly, such as actively seeking learning opportunities rather than waiting for corporate training. In the modern workplace that emphasizes teamwork, the sense of cooperation developed through group career exploration projects has become a core advantage that distinguishes them from others. The accumulation of professional quality will enable students to cross the divide between employment and development and become sustainable, competitive professionals.

3 The role of career planning in college students' employment

3.1 Improving the employment competitiveness of college students

The principal value of career planning education lies in the separation of students from the dilemma of "Homogeneous competition" and the transformation of students into differentiated "Personal brands". Through systematic self-cognition and industry analysis, students can accurately locate the overlapping area between their own advantages and market demand and then design a matching ability improvement path. For example, suppose science and engineering students find the intersection of programming skills and project management interests in career exploration. In that case, they can learn cross-team collaboration and agile development tools instead of simply piling up technical certificates. This kind of directional accumulation no longer makes job search material cookie-cutter and can show unique value in mass resumes. At the same time, planning education emphasizes "Advanced layout" and guides students to pay attention to the changing laws of the target industry in the early grades. While most students rush towards graduation, the planned students have built networks and tested career hypotheses through internships and industry events ^[5]. This kind of initiative brings not only the depth of the skills pool but also sensitivity to industry trends, knowing when to move into emerging areas and how to avoid dying industries so as to have the bargaining power and choice initiative in the job market.

3.2 Helping college students to clarify their career goals and development path

In the career environment of information explosion, students who lack direction are easy to fall into choice overload. They yearn for the high-paying technology industry, but they worry about the intensity of work; they desire stable positions within the system, but they are unwilling to give up creativity. By building a cognitive framework and combing the chaotic options into operational ladders, career planning education first breaks the misunderstanding of "One-time choice" and guides students to understand the characteristics of career goals that need to be dynamically adjusted, start by becoming an executive in a niche within three years, rather than an empty label of success, and then break down your vision into milestones. Focus first on making up for technical shortcomings and then accumulate project management experience, if necessary, supplemented by education or certification. For example, a psychology major identifying a user experience research area needs to design a step-by-step plan from learning basic programming to participating in real product testing. This path-based thinking not only avoids action delay caused by vague goals but also reserves flexible space for steering in uncertain environments, which reduces the trial-and-error cost of career exploration.

3.3 Promoting college students' mental health and Vocational Adaptability

The cumulative effect of career planning education on psychological capital is often underestimated. In the face of the social anxiety of unemployment, the planning process itself constitutes a cognitive buffer. When students understand the real ecology of different types of jobs through career exploration and form rational expectations for factors such as pay and pressure, blind comparison and frustration will be reduced. For example, through interviews with working people, students will realize that some seemingly glamorous jobs are accompanied by high-pressure late nights. In contrast, jobs that match their rhythms have continued growth despite low starting salaries. This kind of real cognition helps to establish the view that "Matching is better than the best" and alleviates the group anxiety. At the same time, planning

education previews future challenges by simulating occupational scenarios (such as stress interview training and job role-playing) so that students' adaptation threshold from psychology to behaviour is gradually raised. When real workplace conflicts come up, students are more likely to view them as growth opportunities rather than disasters. This mental resilience will enable individuals with a sense of planning in times of industry turmoil to avoid the self-denial that comes with corporate downsizing and quickly start stockpiling programs. It supports individuals to achieve a smooth transition and continuous evolution in a rapidly changing environment.

4 Conclusion

This paper clarifies the key role of career planning education in solving the employment dilemma of college students. It reveals its deep construction of individual competitiveness, career determination and psychological resilience. In the face of the dual pressure of the acceleration of technological change and the complexity of occupational ecology, the traditional post-employment guidance model is challenging in dealing with systemic problems, which are rooted in the structural dislocation of educational supply and social demand. Therefore, colleges and universities should accelerate the concept transformation from "Employment service" to "Career empowerment" and run career education through the whole cycle of talent training, focusing on strengthening the cultivation of students' subjectivity in the dimensions of professional cognition, decision-making iteration and resilience recovery, so that college students can anchor not only short-term employment but also control long-term growth in the tide of uncertain times, finally, it will realize the essential leap from passive job hunting to active job creation.

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