

Research on the Enhancement of Vocational Career Planning Ability among Higher Vocational College Students from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

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Abstract: Higher vocational students often exhibit characteristics such as poor self-discipline and low academic motivation. The construction of vocational career planning courses from the perspective of positive psychology can enhance students' educational enthusiasm and motivation, help them understand themselves from a more open and appreciative perspective, actively explore their potential, shape positive behaviors, and develop self-motivation. By combining the construction of vocational career planning curriculum system and exploration of teaching models with the application of positive psychology, the aim is to guide students to actively participate, enhance their vocational career planning abilities, and improve their sense of well-being.

1. Introduction

Most higher vocational students are around 16 years old, typically graduates from junior high school, and they are often in a sensitive period of adolescence. They generally have average academic performance and are considered a "vulnerable group" that is easily overlooked in their class. Compared to their peers, they have a lower starting point, weaker foundation of knowledge, less positive learning attitudes, and poor self-discipline. When they enter higher vocational education, they may feel confused and uncertain about their future development. If colleges cannot provide them with clear and correct guidance on vocational career planning, these students are likely to relax their self-discipline due to inertia, lack motivation for progress and active learning, and simply go through their five years of higher vocational education. When they face graduation and job hunting in the job market, they undoubtedly become a disadvantaged group of job seekers. Therefore, it is important to improve the educational enthusiasm and motivation of higher vocational students, help them fully understand the competition and pressure in society, and establish a positive and upward career consciousness to shape a positive personality. This is an important aspect of increasing their employment rate and job satisfaction.

2. Overview of Positive Psychology

Positive psychology utilizes effective experimental methods and measurement techniques in

psychology to study positive aspects such as human strengths and virtues. It advocates studying positive qualities of individuals, fully exploring their inherent, potential, and constructive strengths, promoting personal and social development, and leading individuals towards happiness. Positive emotions are a major aspect of positive psychology research, focusing on individuals' positive experiences in dealing with the past, present, and future. In terms of the past, it mainly studies satisfaction and contentment; in terms of the present, it focuses on happiness and joy; and in terms of the future, it primarily explores optimism and hope [1].

By guiding individuals to identify positive emotions, uncover their potential or actual constructive strengths, and cultivate a predominantly positive mindset, using positive psychology in daily work, relationships, sports, and child-rearing can lead to positive and favorable emotions and evaluations in daily work and life, resulting in a sense of well-being for individuals. From a social perspective, a positive mindset contributes to creating a healthy and upward social environment, raising the overall happiness index of society.

3. Current Status of Vocational Career Planning Curriculum Teaching for Higher Vocational Students in China

From the perspective of psychological development, higher vocational students have characteristics of both secondary school students and college students. They have limited understanding of their profession and career prospects, and they easily experience confusion in their thoughts and emotions. Their goals are often unclear, and they lack consideration for their future careers. Therefore, their career ideals and career planning often exhibit blind and short-sighted characteristics. Currently, although vocational colleges in China have generally established vocational planning courses, due to cognitive deficiencies regarding students and the mismatch between the profession and the major studied in school, resources for learning are often wasted. These situations indicate that higher vocational students lack a reasonable and scientific career planning for their own vocational careers.

Designing vocational career planning courses for higher vocational students based on positive psychology can cultivate students' learning enthusiasm. It helps students transform their previous feelings of inferiority and passive attitudes as a vulnerable group, understand themselves from a relatively open and appreciative perspective, proactively explore their potential, shape positive behaviors, maintain a positive and upward mindset, establish a positive career consciousness, determine their own career development direction, set career planning goals, and steadfastly pursue these goals during their five years of education. This conversion of a positive mindset into the ability for autonomous learning and continuous innovation will enhance higher vocational students' awareness of vocational career planning and their ability to take the lead in career planning, laying a solid foundation for their future job search with professional literacy and skills. [2]

4. Deficiencies and Insufficiencies in Student Career Planning Education

Career planning, as a core component of vocational education, mainly refers to the comprehensive analysis and consideration of one's interests, hobbies, and characteristics, taking into account the characteristics of the era. It involves choosing different career paths, clarifying realistic career positioning and goals, breaking down goals, designing scientific career planning schemes, and taking practical actions. It also requires timely adjustments based on changes and strives to realize self-worth. Specifically, it includes self-awareness, understanding of the external environment, decision-making, goal setting, action, and evaluation. Since 2005, universities across the country have gradually started offering career planning education courses, especially since 2008 when the Ministry of Education explicitly required universities to establish such courses. Student

career planning education has found its place in higher education institutions. However, career planning education in China has a relatively short development time and lacks experience, resulting in certain problems in its implementation.

4.1 Lack of Awareness in Student Career Planning

Surveys on student career planning indicate that contemporary students often lack career planning. More than half of the students have not planned their future development and employment. About one-third of students have unclear career goals, and only 5% of students have relatively clear career planning. This indicates that students lack a comprehensive understanding of themselves in the campus environment, and their career goals are not clear. As graduation approaches, they are still in a state of confusion, not knowing what they can do and unable to find the career path they want to pursue. The efforts of schools in career planning education are still weak. Surveys show that most students feel that the employment guidance courses offered by schools are impractical, cannot provide abundant information, and lack timely updates [2]. Additionally, students are not aware of the importance and value of career planning. Many students believe that career planning is worthless because the times change too fast, rendering planning ineffective. In reality, planning needs to be flexible and adaptable, based on factor analysis, to clarify directions and effectively plan each stage of life.

4.2 Utilitarian Shift in Student Career Values

Contemporary students' judgment of career values has become more realistic. Regarding career choices, most students tend to favor big cities and large companies. When selecting a career, they overly prioritize personal salary and have unrealistic expectations. Instead of fully considering their own circumstances, students blindly pursue high salaries, leading to a utilitarian approach. The difficulties students face in finding employment contribute to job vacancies, particularly in underdeveloped regions, where there are often significant employment gaps. [3]

4.3 One-sidedness in Student Career Planning Education

Many universities usually start providing employment guidance only before graduation. Even if courses are offered, the content is often limited, primarily focusing on policy lectures and employment situation analysis. This lack of comprehensive content hampers students' long-term development. Additionally, the education model for career planning remains teacher-centered, with students being passive listeners. It does not specifically address students' everyday behaviors. The separation of career planning education from teaching management, without the support of platforms and channels, wastes time and lacks effectiveness.

5. Research on the Construction of Vocational Career Planning Curriculum System for Higher Vocational Students from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

5.1 Teacher Team Building

In the education of vocational career planning courses for higher vocational students, teacher team building can be divided into two levels. The first level is the management team of higher vocational colleges, which should strengthen their understanding of the importance of vocational career planning and actively invest in the funds, personnel, hardware facilities, and institutional policies required for curriculum teaching. The second level is the course instructors who play the

role of guiding and enlightening students. They have the most frequent and close contact with higher vocational students and have established a sufficient level of trust and dependency. In the actual teaching process, teachers should make full use of this trust and their deep understanding of students' strengths and situations to help students gain better vocational career planning education [4].

5.2 Curriculum Content Design

Vocational career planning curriculum teaching is an introductory course for higher vocational students to gain initial understanding of careers, becoming "social individuals," and job searching. Most higher vocational students are around 16 years old and are in the stage of exploration and experimentation when they initially encounter career development planning. Therefore, the curriculum content of vocational career planning courses for higher vocational students can include modules such as "course introduction," "self-awareness," "understanding careers," "perceiving society," and "career planning." In the course introduction stage, teachers should educate students on the social significance and importance of higher vocational education, help students overcome feelings of inferiority due to long-term vulnerability, and guide students to understand the advantages and development prospects of five-year higher vocational education, thus building their confidence and pride in higher vocational education and establishing preliminary career awareness.

5.3 Teaching Methods

During the course content teaching, various methods such as group discussions, personal experience sharing, group surveys, psychological assessments, case studies, and interviews with graduates can be used to increase the interest and interactivity of teaching and learning. Additionally, the five-year higher vocational education can provide rich and high-quality professional internship opportunities, allowing students to experience the real world and fully utilize their subjective initiative, thereby gaining work achievements and job satisfaction through practical experience.[5]

5.4 Assessment Methods

Assessment of vocational career planning courses can be conducted in the form of personal career planning, resumes, business plans, etc., encouraging students to submit high-quality assessment portfolios that combine their strengths with societal demands. Furthermore, after the completion of the course, follow-up surveys can be conducted to track students' dynamic development.

5.5 Textbook Reform

Most higher vocational students are around 16 years old, with weak foundational knowledge and insufficient positive learning attitudes. Boring and tedious career planning course textbooks cannot genuinely capture students' interest and willingness to invest energy for in-depth exploration. In terms of textbook reform, higher vocational colleges can introduce books with excellent content, rich examples, beautiful illustrations, and witty language. Additionally, textbook reform can be tailored to the specific circumstances of the institution. By incorporating typical cases from students' employment or internships and integrating positive psychology, locally designed textbooks that are practical and effective can be created to provide students with practical guidance.

6. Research on the Teaching Model of Vocational Career Planning for Higher Vocational Students from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

6.1 Establishing a Continuous Five-Year Vocational Career

Planning Curriculum and Systematic Teaching Model The foundation of vocational career planning for higher vocational students lies in the development of corresponding courses. Vocational career planning courses and their teaching models serve as important carriers. In reality, vocational career planning and decision-making for higher vocational students are not only relevant near graduation. Therefore, vocational career planning courses should gradually develop from the moment students enter higher vocational colleges. In terms of teaching models, vocational career planning courses should include popularizing career planning knowledge and theories and guiding students to combine theory with their own practical situations for appropriate planning. Currently, there is a "gap" phenomenon in the teaching models of vocational career planning in some Chinese higher vocational colleges. Career planning often remains limited to textbooks without guidance or practice, leaving students confused about their own career paths. Therefore, the teaching model of vocational career planning courses can include more practical lessons, allowing students to collide their professional knowledge with real-world practices, promoting their career planning[6].

6.2 Integration of Vocational Career Planning and Positive Psychology Education

From a long-term perspective, vocational career planning and positive psychology are interconnected, mutually influencing, and inseparable. Positive psychology education is not only an important component of vocational career planning curriculum teaching, but also a concrete manifestation of higher vocational students' understanding of career planning. It can greatly promote students' thinking abilities, personal development, and the current and future trends of societal talent needs. From the perspective of positive psychology, integrating it with vocational career planning curriculum teaching can guide students to experience the happiness that a career can bring through practices and other methods, eliminate their negative emotions, and face their career paths with a positive attitude.

6.3 Innovative Teaching Models for Vocational Career Planning Based on Positive Psychology

Firstly, strengthening curriculum development is essential. Currently, vocational career planning courses in Chinese higher vocational colleges are mainly theoretical, lacking practical significance throughout the teaching process. Therefore, the reform of teaching models should primarily focus on enhancing curriculum development, with project-based teaching as the main teaching model for vocational career planning courses. This involves creating an integrated teaching model that combines teaching, learning, and doing. Secondly, adopting problem-driven teaching methods is crucial. Problem-driven teaching methods depart from the traditional approach of theory transmission and encourage students to actively think and engage in problem analysis and solving. This approach can enhance students' motivation and participation, assess their analytical and problem-solving abilities, and guide them through independent exploration and innovation, personalized instruction, and purposeful guidance. Thirdly, a combined assessment model that integrates in-class and out-of-class components is recommended. Vocational career planning accompanies each higher vocational student throughout their lifelong employment journey. Therefore, educational institutions should not only focus on imparting in-class knowledge but also cultivate students' comprehensive abilities. Combining theory and practice, as well as in-class and out-of-class assessments, can achieve this goal.

7. Conclusion

In summary, due to the unique characteristics of psychological and intellectual growth among higher vocational college students, there are some notable deficiencies in the current vocational career planning courses offered by Chinese higher vocational institutions. These deficiencies primarily lie in the lack of career planning concepts and unclear career goals among students. In the construction of vocational career planning curriculum systems and exploration of teaching models for higher vocational students, teachers can leverage positive psychology to foster a positive, healthy, and upward learning mentality and life perspective among students. This approach can help students gain a deeper understanding of themselves, explore their potential, and establish clear goals and directions for their future learning, laying a solid foundation for their subsequent educational endeavors.

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