



Analysis of Mental Health Strategies for College Students Based on Career Planning Education

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Abstract: This article analyzes the relationship between career planning education and college students' mental health, and discusses the positive impact of career planning education on students' mental health, including enhancing self-awareness and improving psychological adjustment skills. It also points out the current problems faced by universities in utilizing career planning education to promote mental health, and proposes improvement strategies such as optimizing the curriculum system, strengthening faculty development, and deeply integrating career planning education with mental health education. The aim is to provide references for universities to carry out related work, contributing to a win-win situation for students' mental health and career development.

Keywords: College students; Career planning; Mental health; Academic advisors

1. Introduction

College students are at a crucial stage of life development, facing challenges in areas such as family, academics, interpersonal relationships, and future career choices, which can easily lead to psychological problems. In recent years, mental health issues among college students have become more frequent and have received increasing attention. Studies show that 10% to 30% of college students experience various mental health issues, with the incidence rate steadily rising, severely affecting their physical and mental well-being and future development. As a forward-looking and guiding educational approach, career planning education not only helps students clarify their career goals but also alleviates psychological stress caused by anxiety and confusion about the future, fostering positive psychological qualities. It plays a significant role in promoting college students' mental health.

2. Positive Impact of Career Planning Education on College Students' Mental Health

2.1 Enhancing Self-Awareness

Career planning education encourages college students to explore their interests, abilities, strengths, and values, which helps them gain a clearer understanding of themselves. This enhanced self-awareness helps students accept themselves, reduce anxiety and confusion caused by unclear self-perception, and boost their self-confidence and self-esteem. Through career interest tests and ability assessments, students can identify areas where they have potential and strengths, understand the direction they should focus on, and recognize the skills and abilities they need to develop in advance. Career planning also helps students set specific goals and plans, guiding them to develop self-management awareness, enabling them to steadily progress along their career path and enhancing their confidence and sense of control over the future. For example, a student who is clear about wanting to pursue a career in education will plan ahead by obtaining a teaching certification, participating in education-related internships, and so on. During this structured preparation process, the student will feel more confident and secure, and their anxiety will decrease accordingly.

2.2 Enhancing Psychological Adjustment Abilities

In the career planning process, students need to face various uncertainties and setbacks, such as adjusting career goals or experiencing failures in the job search process. By learning and practicing career planning, students gradually acquire methods and skills for coping with setbacks, enhancing their psychological resilience and stress tolerance. For instance, when a student encounters a situation where their career choice conflicts with their family's expectations, they can use the communication skills and decision-making techniques learned during career planning to rationally analyze the pros and cons and make a choice that aligns with both their own desires and family considerations. This helps reduce internal conflict and stress.

2.3 Stimulating Learning Motivation

A clear career goal provides strong motivation for college students' studies. When students understand how their major is related to their future career and what knowledge and skills they need to acquire to achieve their career goals, they become more actively engaged in their studies. This stimulation of learning motivation helps improve students' academic performance and overall quality, while also allowing them to experience a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in their learning process, further promoting mental health. For example, a student aspiring to work in computer programming will proactively study related programming languages, algorithms, and participate in related skill competitions and project practices. Through this process, the student continues to grow and progress, and their mental state becomes more positive and upward.

3. Current Problems in Career Planning Education in Promoting College Students' Mental Health

3.1 Insufficient Emphasis on Career Planning Education

Some universities do not fully recognize the importance of career planning education and view it as a marginal task, failing to integrate it into the overall educational system. There is a lack of attention in areas such as curriculum design, faculty allocation, and funding, resulting in the ineffective implementation of career planning education and its limited impact on promoting college students' mental health. For example, some universities only offer basic employment guidance courses in the final year, which lack systematic structure and targeted content, and fail to meet students' career planning needs at different stages of their college life.

3.2 Incomplete Curriculum System for Career Planning Education

3.2.1 Limited Course Content

Currently, many universities' career planning education courses focus primarily on interpreting employment policies, resume writing, and interview skills, while neglecting to delve into self-awareness, career interest exploration, and the development of career values. The course content is overly practical and short-term oriented, overlooking students' long-term career development and psychological health needs. This narrow course content fails to engage students' interest and participation, and cannot fundamentally help students address issues related to career choices and psychological adjustment.

3.2.2 Traditional Teaching Methods

In the teaching process, some instructors still employ traditional teaching methods such as lecture-based, one-way instruction with limited interaction between teachers and students, which prevents students' initiative and creativity from being fully realized. Career planning education is a highly practical course that requires active student participation and hands-on experience to achieve effective learning outcomes. However, traditional teaching methods place students in a passive position where they merely receive knowledge, which hinders their ability to apply theoretical knowledge to actual career planning. This also affects their understanding and acceptance of career planning and does not support their psychological health development.

3.3 Insufficient Faculty Development for Career Planning Education

3.3.1 Shortage of Professional Teachers

Career planning education involves knowledge from multiple disciplines such as psychology, education, and human resources management, which requires instructors with interdisciplinary backgrounds. However, career planning courses in many universities are often taught by counselors or other non-core faculty members. While these teachers may have some experience in student affairs, they often lack the necessary professional knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality career planning education and psychological counseling services.

3.3.2 Inadequate Teacher Training System

As career planning education in Chinese universities is relatively new, the teacher training system is not yet well-established. Teachers lack systematic professional training and opportunities for continuing education, making it difficult for them to update their knowledge and concepts or master the latest career planning theories and methods. This results in outdated content and teaching methods in the classroom, which fail to meet the diverse needs of students and negatively affect the quality and effectiveness of career planning education. Furthermore, it weakens the role of career planning education in promoting college students' mental health.

3.3.3 Low Integration between Career Planning Education and Mental Health Education

Although both career planning education and mental health education aim to promote students' overall development,

in practice, these two areas are often separate and lack effective integration and collaboration. Universities typically set up separate career planning courses and mental health education courses, each managed by different departments and instructors, leading to scattered resources and duplicated efforts, without forming a unified educational force. Additionally, there is little organic connection between the content and activities of the two, and career planning education's elements such as self-awareness and career exploration are not integrated with mental health education's focus on psychological adjustment and emotional management. As a result, students struggle to combine the two in their learning process, and the potential synergistic benefits of both in promoting mental health are not fully realized.

4. Strategies for Promoting College Students' Mental Health Based on Career Planning Education

4.1 Improving the Curriculum System of Career Planning Education

4.1.1 Enriching Course Content

Universities should establish a comprehensive and systematic curriculum for career planning education. In addition to traditional employment guidance content, the curriculum should include self-awareness analysis, career interest exploration, career value cultivation, psychological adjustment training, and self-management skills development. For example, courses such as "Self-Exploration and Career Positioning," "Self-Management and Career Achievement," and "Career Psychology and Development" can be designed. Various teaching methods like flipped classrooms, group discussions, and case analysis can be used to guide students in understanding their personality traits, interests, abilities, and career values. This will help students establish a correct career perspective and career decision-making process while also cultivating their psychological adjustment skills and ability to cope with setbacks.

4.1.2 Innovating Teaching Methods

Diversified teaching methods should be adopted to break away from traditional, one-dimensional teaching models and improve students' motivation and participation. For example, the use of group collaborative learning allows students to work in teams to explore careers and create career planning projects. Tasks such as career research, interviews, and career analysis reports can help develop communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. Role-playing can simulate job interviews and workplace social situations, providing students with practical opportunities to enhance their communication skills, adaptability, confidence, and stress management. The flipped classroom method can be applied by assigning students tasks such as studying biographies of professional figures, watching corporate promotional videos, and researching the current state of the job market and employer needs. This will help broaden students' career perspectives and stimulate their interest in and motivation for career exploration.

4.1.3 Strengthening the Systematic and Coherent Nature of the Curriculum

Career planning education should be integrated throughout students' entire academic journey, starting in the first year and progressing in stages. This education should be conducted with specific focus at each stage. For example, for vocational college students, the first year should primarily focus on self-awareness and career consciousness development. Activities such as career assessments and career seminars can help students understand their interests, abilities, and personality traits, and lay the foundation for initial career concepts. In the second year, students should be guided through career exploration and the initial formulation of career goals. Activities such as career experience programs and industry research should be organized, allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of different careers. Students can then set preliminary career goals based on their personal circumstances, with an emphasis on career skill development and refining their career plans. In the third year, the focus should be on further enhancing career skills and providing employment guidance, including resume writing, interview skills training, and mock recruitment events, helping students transition successfully into the workforce. This systematic and coherent curriculum design will provide students with targeted career planning education and guidance at each stage, promoting their psychological health development.

4.2 Strengthening the Faculty Team for Career Planning Education

4.2.1 Increasing the Number of Professional Teachers

Universities should invest more in building the faculty for career planning education by recruiting teachers with multidisciplinary backgrounds in fields such as psychology, education, and human resources management. This can be achieved by hiring recent graduates, selecting outstanding internal faculty members for cross-disciplinary training, and building a high-quality, specialized career planning education faculty. Furthermore, encouraging full-time faculty members to take on academic advising roles and participate in career planning education training and teaching will help raise awareness of career planning education among all faculty members and create a strong educational environment.

4.2.2 Improving the Teacher Training System

A comprehensive teacher training system for career planning education should be established, with regular training opportunities for teachers in areas such as updating career planning knowledge, improving psychological counseling skills, and innovating teaching methods. Universities can invite renowned experts from within and outside the country to conduct seminars, academic conferences, and teaching experience exchange sessions. Teachers should also be encouraged to participate in industry internships to stay updated on industry trends and employer needs. Sending teachers to domestic and international academic conferences and training courses on career planning education will broaden their perspectives and continually improve their professional and teaching abilities. Through a well-established training system, teachers will be able to master advanced career planning education concepts and methods, enabling them to provide high-quality services to students.

4.2.3 Establishing a Teacher Incentive Mechanism

To enhance teachers' motivation and initiative in participating in career planning education, universities should establish an incentive mechanism. For example, setting up teaching achievement awards to recognize and reward outstanding teachers in career planning education, and considering their work in career planning education teaching, research projects, and student guidance during title evaluations and performance assessments will encourage teachers to deepen their research and improve their teaching quality. Providing more opportunities for promotion and career development for academic advisors and other relevant faculty will further promote the advancement of career planning education.

4.3 Promoting the Deep Integration of Career Planning Education and Mental Health Education

4.3.1 Integrating Educational Resources

Universities should break down the barriers between career planning education and mental health education, integrating the resources of both. A specialized teaching team should be established, consisting of both career planning educators and mental health educators, who can plan and deliver lessons together. This will allow the psychological adjustment elements of career planning to be effectively integrated with the psychological counseling methods in mental health education. For instance, career planning courses could include case studies and practical activities from mental health education, helping students learn how to deal with psychological issues during the career decision-making process. Similarly, mental health education courses could introduce career planning concepts and methods, helping students better understand their career interests and abilities, while enhancing their career identity and self-confidence.

4.3.2 Organizing Joint Activities

A variety of joint activities should be organized to provide students with more practical opportunities and communication platforms. For example, career counseling workshops can be held with participation from both HR experts and psychological counselors, offering students career psychological counseling and career development guidance. Activities focused on career skills development can integrate elements of mental health education, such as team building, communication skills, and emotional management, through outdoor training and group counseling sessions. Career planning and mental health-themed class meetings, speech contests, and essay competitions can also be organized to create a positive atmosphere for career planning and mental health education, guiding students to develop a correct career and life perspective, thereby promoting their overall well-being.

4.3.3 Establishing a Collaborative Work Mechanism

A collaborative work mechanism between career planning education and mental health education should be established to strengthen communication and cooperation between different departments. A leadership team, composed of school leaders and heads of student affairs, admissions and employment offices, and mental health education centers, should be formed to oversee the coordination of both career planning and mental health education. Regular meetings should be held to address existing issues, formulate work plans, and implement them. A shared information platform should be created to exchange information on students' academic progress, living conditions, psychological status, and career planning needs, facilitating resource sharing and complementary advantages. Collaborative research on students' career development and mental health status should be conducted to understand students' actual needs and problems, providing a basis for developing targeted educational strategies. By establishing and improving this collaborative work mechanism, a comprehensive and multi-layered educational service system can be formed, ensuring the healthy growth and career development of college students.

5. Conclusion

Career planning education plays an important role in promoting college students' mental health. By improving the curriculum system of career planning education, strengthening faculty development, and promoting the deep integration of career planning and mental health education, universities can effectively enhance students' self-awareness, psychological

adjustment abilities, and career development skills. This will help students establish correct career perspectives, increase their confidence and courage in facing career challenges, and promote their overall mental and physical health development. Universities should fully recognize the close connection between career planning education and college students' mental health, and take concrete measures to strengthen career planning education, continually improve educational systems and mechanisms, and lay a solid foundation for cultivating high-quality talents with both moral integrity and mental well-being. In the future, as society continues to progress and educational reforms deepen, career planning education in universities will face more opportunities and challenges. Universities should actively explore and innovate educational models and methods, keep pace with the times, and continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of career planning education, providing high-quality educational services to support students' growth and success.

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