

# Exploring Employment Counseling Pathways for Vocational College Counselors in the Post-Pandemic Era: Based on Positive Psychological Capital

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**Abstract:** *In the post-pandemic era, profound changes have occurred in the global economy and social structure, affecting the employment environment and psychological state of vocational college students. This paper, based on the perspective of positive psychological capital, studies the current employment psychology of vocational college graduates and proposes practical counseling strategies in conjunction with the actual work of counselors. Specifically, it analyzes the changes in the employment market, the employment difficulties of vocational college graduates, and the promotion of employment policies by the pandemic. It then explores in detail the employment psychology of vocational college students during the internship period, the hesitation period, and the formal job search period. Finally, it constructs a theoretical model of employment psychological counseling based on positive psychological capital, and proposes specific implementation paths, as well as reflections and prospects for the work of counselors. The research shows that positive psychological capital plays an important role in enhancing students' employment psychology and coping with employment pressure, providing new counseling ideas and methods for vocational college counselors.*

**Keywords:** *Post-pandemic era, vocational college, counselor, employment psychological counseling, positive psychological capital*

## 1. Introduction

In the post-pandemic era, the significant changes in the global economic and social landscape have had a profound impact on the employment environment and psychological state of vocational college students. The outbreak and persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to profound changes in the supply-demand relationship in the job market, a decrease in corporate recruitment demand, and an intensification of job competition, presenting vocational college graduates with a more severe employment situation. At the same time, the pandemic has driven adjustments and innovations in employment policies, with governments and educational institutions at all levels introducing measures to alleviate employment pressure and enhance graduates' employability.

Against this backdrop, vocational college students not only face external environmental pressure in the job search process but also need to cope with internal psychological challenges. Research has found that positive psychological capital plays an important role in enhancing individual psychological qualities, strengthening the ability to cope with pressure and challenges. However, there is a lack of systematic research and practical guidance on how to apply positive psychological capital to employment psychological counseling for vocational college students. Therefore, this study aims to explore employment psychological counseling paths for vocational college counselors in the post-pandemic era based on the theory of positive psychological capital.

## 2. The Impact of Post-Pandemic Era on Employment of Vocational College Students

### 2.1 Analysis of Changes in the Job Market

The post-pandemic era has brought profound changes to the job market, directly affecting the employment prospects of vocational college graduates. Firstly, the outbreak of the pandemic has led to a global economic downturn, forcing many companies to reduce recruitment plans or even implement large-scale layoffs, resulting in a significant reduction in job opportunities. Small and medium-sized enterprises and the service industry have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, leading to a

significant decrease in their capacity to absorb vocational college graduates. <sup>[1]</sup>

Secondly, the pandemic has spurred the rapid development of emerging industries such as e-commerce, online education, and remote work. These industries have seen a surge in demand for talents with new skills, while the demand for traditional skills has relatively decreased, exacerbating the problem of skills mismatch. For example, the widespread adoption of remote work technology requires graduates to possess strong information technology and self-management abilities, which may not have been adequately emphasized and cultivated in traditional vocational education.

Furthermore, companies are placing greater emphasis on the overall quality and innovation ability of job applicants, raising the requirements for positions. In the post-pandemic era, companies are paying more attention to graduates' adaptability, stress resistance, and innovative thinking, expecting them to perform well in complex and changing work environments. Vocational college graduates may be at a disadvantage in these areas due to the limitations of their education background and qualifications, increasing their difficulty in finding employment.

Additionally, the acceleration of globalization and digitization processes has led to new work patterns and job requirements. Cross-border e-commerce, digital marketing, data analysis, and other emerging professions have become market hotspots, but these positions often require high levels of expertise and technical skills. The competitiveness of vocational college graduates in these emerging fields needs to be improved. Faced with an increasingly complex job market, vocational colleges need to make profound adjustments to their curriculum and talent development models to better match market demands and enhance the employability of graduates.

In this context, vocational college graduates not only need solid professional skills but also strong soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and innovation to cope with the increasingly complex and changing employment environment. Deep cooperation between schools and enterprises and the promotion of school-enterprise joint training models have become important means to enhance the employability of graduates. Additionally, governments and educational departments should introduce more supportive policies to encourage and guide vocational colleges to strengthen employment guidance and psychological counseling, helping students transition smoothly into the workplace.

## ***2.2 Employment Difficulties Faced by Vocational College Graduates***

In the post-pandemic era, vocational college graduates face multiple employment difficulties. Firstly, market competition has intensified, with vocational college graduates competing for limited positions with graduates with higher education qualifications such as undergraduates and postgraduates. Vocational college graduates are at a disadvantage in terms of education background and professional skills. Secondly, the pandemic has increased employment uncertainty, making it difficult for graduates to secure stable employment. The recruitment demand in some industries fluctuates greatly, increasing the risk of employment. Moreover, vocational college graduates also face the problem of skills mismatch in employment. Traditional skills cannot meet the demands of emerging industries, and the curriculum and training content of schools cannot keep pace with market changes, leading to insufficient competitiveness of graduates in the job market. Lastly, graduates face increased psychological pressure in employment. They are prone to anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems when facing employment problems, further affecting their employment performance and career development. <sup>[2]</sup>

## ***2.3 The Promoting Effect of the Pandemic on Employment Policies***

In the context of the pandemic, governments at all levels and educational institutions have actively introduced a series of employment support policies to promote the employment of vocational college graduates. Firstly, the government has increased employment support, implementing a series of policies to stabilize employment, such as tax reduction, fee reduction, and social security subsidies, encouraging companies to employ graduates. Secondly, the government is promoting school-enterprise cooperation to enhance the integration of vocational colleges with enterprises, establishing targeted training classes and order-based classes to enhance the employment competitiveness of graduates. In addition, the government is promoting the construction of online recruitment platforms and advancing "Internet + employment services" to provide convenient job search channels and precise employment information services for graduates. Meanwhile, the education sector encourages vocational colleges to innovate talent training models, adjust curriculum settings, strengthen practical teaching, and enhance students' comprehensive qualities and employability. Various forms of employment and entrepreneurship guidance activities have also been carried out, providing support in areas such as psychological counseling, career

planning, and skills training to help graduates better adapt to changes in the job market.

In conclusion, the employment environment for vocational college graduates in the post-pandemic era is complex and changing, with many challenges. Counselors should actively use the theory of positive psychological capital in employment counseling to help students enhance their self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, thereby improving their ability to cope with employment challenges and assisting them in achieving smooth employment and career development in the post-pandemic era.

### **3. Employment Psychological Status of Vocational College Students in the Post-Pandemic Era**

#### ***3.1 Employment Psychology during Internship***

During the internship period, vocational college students undergo a transition from school to the workplace, which has a profound impact on their employment psychology. Firstly, students usually experience psychological fluctuations during the adaptation period. For most students, the internship is their first exposure to a real work environment, and the changes in job content, work pace, and interpersonal relationships can bring about certain pressures and difficulties in adaptation. This adaptation challenge may manifest as anxiety, nervousness, and lack of confidence.

Secondly, the sense of achievement and belongingness during the internship period has an important influence on their employment psychology. If students can receive guidance and recognition during the internship, complete tasks, and receive positive feedback, their self-efficacy and professional identity will significantly improve. However, if students encounter setbacks or feel neglected during the internship, they may develop a sense of frustration and self-doubt, affecting their confidence in future employment.

Lastly, the practical experience during the internship period also has an important impact on students' career expectations and choices. Some students may find that there is a gap between the major they have chosen and the actual work content, leading to career confusion and perplexity. Counselors should provide timely psychological support and career guidance during this stage to help students adjust their mindset and clarify their career goals.

#### ***3.2 Employment Psychology During the Hesitation Period***

The hesitation period usually occurs between the end of the internship and the formal job search, during which students often exhibit hesitation and uncertainty in the face of employment choices. Firstly, students in the hesitation period generally experience job anxiety and pressure. The increased uncertainty in the economic environment and job market in the post-pandemic era has made students more worried about their future employment. They may doubt their abilities, professional prospects, and competitiveness, leading to strong feelings of anxiety.<sup>[3]</sup>

Secondly, students in the hesitation period are prone to indecision and decision-making dilemmas when facing multiple choices in employment. Some students may waver between different job opportunities and be unsure of how to make the best choice. This indecision not only affects students' efficiency in making employment decisions but also increases their psychological burden, leading to procrastination and avoidance.

Additionally, the uncertainty about future career development during the hesitation period can also trigger psychological fluctuations. Many students consider not only current job opportunities but also the long-term prospects of their careers when choosing a profession. For students whose career development path is unclear, they may feel lost and confused, making it difficult for them to determine their career direction.

#### ***3.3 Employment Psychology During the Formal Job Search Period***

The formal job search period is the stage where students experience the most dramatic changes in employment psychology. During this period, students begin actively seeking employment, participating in job fairs, submitting resumes, attending interviews, and other specific job search activities. Firstly, students in the formal job search period generally face significant psychological pressure. The intense competition, diversity of recruitment requirements, and uncertainty of job search outcomes can make students feel nervous and anxious. Especially after multiple job search failures, students' self-esteem and self-confidence may be undermined, leading to feelings of loss and helplessness.<sup>[4]</sup>

Secondly, the performance pressure in interviews and recruitment processes during the job search period also affects their psychology. Students need to demonstrate themselves in interviews and communicate effectively with recruiters, which places high demands on their social skills and psychological qualities. Some students may feel nervous due to lack of interview experience, perform poorly, and affect the job search results.

Additionally, students in the job search period may also face insufficient social support. Although family, friends, and counselors provide some support and assistance, some students may feel lonely and helpless during the job search process, especially when they encounter setbacks. Lack of effective emotional support and psychological counseling may lead to negative emotions and affect their employment psychology.

In summary, vocational college students in the post-pandemic era exhibit different characteristics in their employment psychology during the internship, hesitation, and formal job search periods. Counselors need to provide targeted employment psychological counseling according to the psychological needs of students at different stages, helping them successfully navigate through each stage of employment and enhance their employability and psychological qualities.

#### **4. Employment Psychological Counseling Path Based on Positive Psychological Capital**

##### ***4.1 Construction of a Theoretical Model of Employment Psychological Counseling Based on Positive Psychological Capital***

In constructing a theoretical model of employment psychological counseling based on Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap), it is necessary to first understand the core elements of PsyCap: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. These elements play an important role in helping students cope with employment pressure and enhance their employability.

Firstly, self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in completing tasks. In employment psychological counseling, counselors should enhance students' self-efficacy by providing specific skills training and simulated interviews, making them more confident in the job search process.

Secondly, hope represents an individual's motivation and ability to set and achieve goals. Counselors can help students clarify their employment goals and provide strategies and paths to achieve these goals through personalized career planning, enhancing their sense of hope.

Resilience refers to an individual's ability to recover from difficulties and setbacks. In employment psychological counseling, counselors should encourage students to face the challenges of the job market, cultivate their problem-solving skills and resilience, and enhance their resilience.

Optimism refers to an individual's positive expectations for the future. Counselors can help students maintain a positive attitude by sharing success stories, providing positive feedback, and enhancing their confidence in future employment.

Based on these core elements, a systematic theoretical model of employment psychological counseling can be constructed, which includes: assessing students' positive psychological capital levels, developing personalized counseling plans, implementing diverse counseling strategies, and continuous monitoring and feedback. Through this model, counselors can comprehensively enhance students' psychological capital, helping them gain better psychological support and guidance in the job search process.

##### ***4.2 Implementation Path of Employment Psychological Counseling Based on Positive Psychological Capital***

Implementing employment psychological counseling based on positive psychological capital requires progress through assessment, intervention, and feedback.

Firstly, assess students' levels of positive psychological capital. Counselors can use scales, questionnaires, and individual interviews to comprehensively understand students' current situations in terms of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. Through assessment, counselors can develop targeted counseling plans.

Secondly, implement intervention strategies. In terms of self-efficacy, counselors can organize employment skills training, simulated interviews, and workshops to enhance students' confidence. In

terms of hope, personalized career planning counseling, goal-setting workshops, and other methods can help students clarify their career goals and develop specific paths to achieve them. In terms of resilience, counselors can provide stress management and emotional regulation training, organize team-building and challenging activities to enhance students' ability to cope with pressure and adaptability. In terms of optimism, counselors can use positive psychology intervention methods, such as mindfulness training and positive self-dialogue, to help students maintain a positive mindset. [5]

Lastly, feedback and continuous improvement. Counselors should regularly track and assess students' levels of psychological capital and adjust counseling strategies based on the assessment results. Establishing a good feedback mechanism, collecting students' opinions and suggestions, and ensuring the effectiveness and pertinence of counseling activities.

#### ***4.3 Reflection and Prospects for Counselors' Employment Counseling Work***

In the process of conducting employment psychological counseling based on positive psychological capital, counselors need to constantly reflect on their shortcomings and explore future development directions.

Firstly, counselors should recognize the importance of their own professional competence. Only by possessing solid knowledge of psychology and counseling skills can counselors effectively help students enhance their positive psychological capital. Therefore, counselors should continuously learn and improve their professional abilities, participate in relevant training and seminars, and understand the latest research results and practical experiences.

Secondly, counselors should focus on communication and interaction with students. During the counseling process, counselors need to listen to students' needs and confusion, establish trust relationships, and ensure the pertinence and effectiveness of counseling. Through regular interaction and communication, counselors can timely understand students' psychological status and counseling effects, and make corresponding adjustments.

Looking ahead, counselors' employment psychological counseling work should pay more attention to personalized and diversified development. With the continuous changes in society and the job market, students' needs and challenges are also changing. Therefore, counselors need to flexibly adjust counseling strategies, provide more personalized and diversified counseling services. At the same time, counselors can leverage technology, such as online counseling platforms and big data analysis tools, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of counseling work. [6]

In conclusion, the employment psychological counseling path based on positive psychological capital, through the construction of a theoretical model, implementation of effective intervention strategies, and continuous reflection and improvement, can effectively enhance students' employability and psychological qualities. In the post-pandemic era, vocational college counselors should continuously explore and innovate, providing students with higher-quality employment psychological counseling services to help them succeed in the job market.

## **5. Conclusion**

This article systematically analyzes the challenges and psychological status of vocational college students in the post-pandemic era and proposes an employment psychological counseling path based on positive psychological capital. The research shows that by enhancing students' self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, positive psychological capital can effectively alleviate their employment pressure and enhance their psychological resilience and adaptability. Specific counseling strategies and implementation paths include individual counseling, group counseling, and online counseling, providing comprehensive practical guidance for counselors.

Future directions: Future research can further explore the applicability and effects of positive psychological capital in different types of colleges and student groups. Additionally, research on counselor training and curriculum design should be strengthened to promote the widespread application of positive psychological capital in employment psychological counseling. Furthermore, combining the latest technological means, such as artificial intelligence and big data analysis, to develop intelligent psychological counseling platforms can improve the accuracy and effectiveness of counseling.

Through these research and practices, more effective support can be provided for the employment psychological health of vocational college students, helping them achieve better career development in

the post-pandemic era.

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