

Research on the Factors to Vocational Ability of Counselor: A Case Study of Kuming Metallurgy College, P.R. China

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Received September 30, 2025; **Revised** November 1, 2025; **Accepted** March 11, 2026

Abstract

Counselors constitute a crucial segment of university teaching staff, integrating political guidance, educational instruction, administrative management, and comprehensive service functions, thereby embodying distinct professional attributes. This study selected Kunming Metallurgy College, a public vocational college in Yunnan Province, with counselors as the core research subjects. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, incorporating literature review, questionnaire surveys, and focus group interviews. The results indicate that, regarding the factors influencing counselors' vocational abilities. Pearson correlation analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between vocational ability and several variables: member of CPC, pertinence training, incentive mechanisms, management systems, and the working environment. In terms of developing guidelines for capacity enhancement, it is essential to strengthen core abilities by optimizing the working environment, improve general abilities through enhanced incentive mechanisms, and promote vocational abilities by reinforcing management systems. Differentiated plans were also designed for counselors with varying lengths of teaching experience. This study addresses a research gap by providing empirical evidence on the integration of individual and organizational factors affecting the vocational ability of counselors in Chinese higher vocational colleges.

Keywords: Counselor; Vocational Ability; Vocational Ability Improvement

Introduction

As a core component of the ideological and political work team in higher education institutions, counselors serve as front-line educators in student ideological and political education. Undertaking the critical responsibility of shaping students' ideological values, their vocational ability directly determines the quality of students' cultivation in the new era and the effectiveness of ideological education initiatives. The practical significance of improving counselors' vocational ability is reflected in two key dimensions: First, it facilitates counselors' career planning and self-actualization. Vocational ability is the core driver of counselors' career development. Research on ability enhancement helps them clarify personal positioning, set achievable goals, and ultimately realize their career aspirations and life value. (Guangming Online, 2025) Second, it contributes to the high-quality development of higher education institutions. As a bridge connecting ideological and political education with student groups, counselors not only manage academic and daily affairs but also shoulder the mission of maintaining campus stability. (Xinhua News Agency, 2025) This study focuses on identifying the key factors influencing counselors' vocational ability through empirical research and further proposes a targeted guideline for enhancing vocational ability, with the aim of providing actionable insights for the construction of high-quality counselor teams in higher vocational colleges.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the factors related to the vocational ability of counselors in Kunming Metallurgy college, Yunnan
2. To propose a guideline to enhance vocational ability of counselors in Kunming Metallurgy college, Yunnan

Literature Reviews

The literature review focuses on three core themes: the connotation of counselors' vocational ability, the influencing factors of counselors' vocational ability, and the measures to improve counselors' vocational ability. These themes provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study, clarifying the research context and laying the foundation for empirical analysis.

1. Study on the vocational ability of counselors

Scholars have defined the connotation of counselors' vocational ability from multiple perspectives, forming a diversified theoretical system: Gao (2016, pp. 98–99) argued that counselors should possess not only professional skills (e.g., educational guidance, psychological counseling) but also practical experience in student management to address complex on-site issues. Han & Bi (2011, pp. 122–124) categorized the vocational ability of higher vocational college counselors into three levels: general vocational ability (e.g., communication, organization), professional ability (e.g., ideological guidance, career planning), and core ability (e.g., crisis intervention, policy interpretation), emphasizing the alignment of these abilities with the characteristics of vocational education. Zheng (2014, pp. 104–106) further expanded this framework, dividing vocational ability into four interconnected dimensions: core ability, basic ability, professional ability, and development ability, and emphasized that these dimensions are mutually reinforcing and indispensable for counselors' long-term career development. Cui & Feng (2014, pp. 87–88) highlighted the role of personal traits, proposing that vocational ability includes ideological and moral cultivation, knowledge reserve, ability quality, and personality charm, with the latter two directly affecting the trust and acceptance of students. Han & Bi (2011, pp. 122–124) categorized the vocational ability of higher vocational college counselors into three levels: general vocational ability (e.g., communication, organization), professional ability (e.g., ideological guidance, career planning), and core ability (e.g., crisis intervention, policy interpretation), emphasizing the alignment of these abilities with the characteristics of vocational education.

Scholars have defined the connotation of counselors' vocational ability from diverse perspectives, constructing a diversified theoretical system. Their core viewpoints can be categorized into two directions: Their core perspectives can be divided into two main directions: 1. Hierarchical Classification as the Core Definition. Han and Bi (2011, pp. 122–124) categorized the vocational ability of vocational college counselors into three levels, emphasizing their alignment with vocational education characteristics: general vocational ability, specialized ability, and core ability. Zheng (2014, pp. 104–106) further expanded this framework into a four-dimensional interconnected system, highlighting synergistic effects and long-term value. He divided vocational ability into four categories: core ability, foundational ability, specialized ability, and developmental potential. 2. Comprehensive Definition Covering Skills, Experience, and Personal Traits. Gao (2016, pp. 98–99) focused on practice-oriented skills and experience, advocating that counselors' vocational ability should not only include technical

expertise but also practical experience in managing students during complex on-site situations. Cui & Feng (2014, pp. 87–88) emphasized the importance of "personal traits," proposing four elements of vocational ability: moral cultivation, knowledge base, competency qualities, and personal charisma. Among these, competency qualities and personal charisma directly influence students' trust and acceptance of counselors.

2. Study on influencing factors of vocational ability of counselors

Existing studies have identified influencing factors from both individual and organizational perspectives: Individual factors: Xu & Zheng (2020, pp. 150–151) pointed out that unclear role positioning, unprofessional work skills, low self-management ability, and imperfect career planning are the main subjective obstacles to improving vocational ability. Lin (2017, pp. 135–136) further added that low self-directed learning ability limits the continuous improvement of counselors' professional competence. Organizational factors: Dong et al. (2017, pp. 30–31) emphasized that national and institutional policies, career development environments, and training resources directly affect the improvement of counselors' vocational ability. Jia (2015, pp. 78–80) noted that excessive transactional work, high work pressure, and high team mobility reduce counselors' time and energy for professional development, thereby hindering the improvement of vocational ability.

3. Study on the measures to improve the vocational ability of counselors

Scholars have proposed targeted improvement measures based on the identified influencing factors:

System optimization: Li & Zhao (2015, pp. 75–80) suggested improving the evaluation and training systems and optimizing the team structure to enhance the overall level of the counselor team. Zhang (2011, pp. 117–119) further emphasized the need to integrate management mechanisms, training systems, assessment systems, and evaluation mechanisms to form a closed-loop improvement system.

Incentive and training: Nong (2020, pp. 115–118) proposed three core paths: guiding counselors to establish correct professional values, improving the training and incentive mechanism, and strengthening practical experience. Han & Bi (2011, pp. 122–124) added that counselors' career planning should be integrated with institutional development, and a lifelong learning concept should be promoted to ensure continuous knowledge updating.

Professional support: Ashley Tull & Kuk (2012, pp. 181–185) argued that colleges should provide specialized support for student affairs administrators, such as funding professional training and academic

exchanges, to improve their service and management capabilities. Guo (2017, pp.1–2) suggested clarifying the professional scope of counselors, formulating scientific career development plans, and establishing operable vocational ability standards.

Contextual adaptation: Wang (2007, pp.111–114) emphasized that the improvement of counselors' vocational ability should align with national economic development needs. Wang (2017, pp. 84–87) and Liu (2019, pp. 10–12) further pointed out that higher vocational college counselors should integrate the concept of vocational education into their work, improve professional quality and skills, and master advanced educational concepts.

Multi-level collaboration: Yang & Zhang (2017, pp. 40–44) proposed a three-level improvement model involving schools, academies, and individuals to form a joint force for ability enhancement. Kou & Li (2017, pp. 52–54) added that a classification mechanism for counselors' vocational ability should be established to realize personalized development.

Existing studies define counselors' vocational abilities from two perspectives: hierarchical classification and skill synthesis, but the limitations are: first, theoretical fragmentation, hierarchical classification perspectives (such as Han & Bi, 2011; Zheng, 2014) focus on the division of ability structure, and do not clarify the interaction between different levels of ability; Although the comprehensive perspective of skills (e.g., Gao, 2016; Cui & Feng, 2014) incorporates practical experience and personal characteristics, there is a lack of analysis of the correlation between the higher vocational education industry. Second, the problem in the study of influencing factors is that the individual perspective (Xu & Zheng, 2020; Lin, 2017) overemphasizes subjective obstacles, and the organizational perspective (Dong et al., 2017; Jia, 2015) focuses on institutional and environmental factors and does not explore the interaction between individual and organizational factors. Third, the improvement measures lack systematic, and most of the existing studies put forward single-dimensional suggestions (e.g., Li & Zhao, 2015 focuses on system optimization, Nong, 2020 focuses on incentive training). At present, there is a lack of systematic empirical research on the theoretical integration, factor interaction, and measure adaptation of counselors in higher vocational colleges, especially the synergistic mechanism of organizational factors and individual traits.

Conceptual Framework

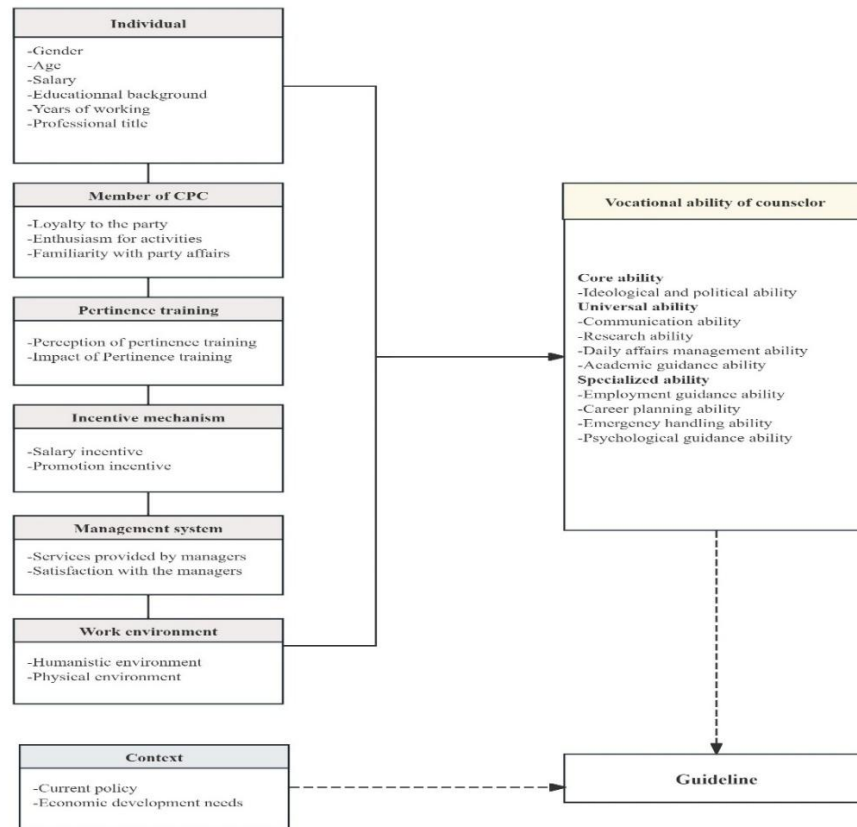


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

1. Location of the study: The study was conducted at Kunming Metallurgy College, a public higher vocational college in Yunnan Province. Founded in 1952, the college has long ranked first among higher vocational colleges in Yunnan Province. It has trained more than 140,000 technical talents for the society. The college covers an area of approximately 0.9 square kilometers, with 22,049 students. In accordance with the national standard of "one counselor for 200 students," the college has 117 counselors, providing a sufficient sample size for the study.

2. Research methods: A mixed-methods research design was adopted to ensure the comprehensiveness and depth of the study:

3. Literature review: The literature review focused on three aspects: 1) Domestic and foreign studies on the connotation of counselors' vocational ability; 2) Empirical studies on the influencing factors

of vocational ability; 3) Practical research on improvement measures. By reviewing policy documents, academic papers, and monographs, the study summarized the theoretical background and research gaps, laying the foundation for the design of research tools (e.g., questionnaires) and the interpretation of results.

4. Survey (questionnaire)

Sample: All 117 counselors of Kunming Metallurgy College were invited to participate in the survey, and 116 valid questionnaires were collected (effective response rate: 99.1%).

Sample procedure: To decide on the actual sample size of the respondents, Taro Yamane formula of Sampling calculation was utilized. Thus, the formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad (N = \text{Population size}, n = \text{Sample size}, e = \text{Margin of error})$$

The Taro Yamane's formula by setting the level at 99% of confidence, and discrepancy at less than 1% as follows. The population in this study is 117 counselors in Kunming Metallurgy College. Therefore, the sample size is:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{117}{1 + 117(0.01)^2} \\ &= 115.649 \text{ (Equivalent to } = 116) \end{aligned}$$

As a result, the sample size of this study was 116 counselors who are working in Kunming Metallurgy College.

Questionnaire Design: The questionnaire was divided into three parts: 1) Demographic information (age, gender, professional title, monthly salary, educational background, major); 2) Individual and organizational factor scales, measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree); 3) Vocational ability scale (including core ability, general ability, specialized ability), also measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was pre-tested with 20 counselors, and the Cronbach's α coefficient was 0.87, indicating good reliability.

Data Collection: The survey was conducted online from [3, 2024] to [5, 2024], with reminders sent to respondents to ensure a high response rate.

5. Focus Group Discussions: To supplement the quantitative data and explore the practical needs of counselors, two focus group discussions were organized: Administrator Focus Group: Composed of 8 administrators (4 from the Student Affairs Department, 4 from secondary academies). The Student Affairs Department administrators provided insights into macro policies, while academy administrators

shared grassroots management experiences. Counselor Focus Group: Composed of 8 front-line counselors from different academies, who reported actual work challenges and needs. After collecting the results of the focus group discussions, analyze the content and draw conclusions.

Research Results

This section is structured around the two core research objectives, integrating quantitative statistical results (from questionnaire surveys and Pearson's Correlation Analysis) with qualitative insights (from focus group discussions).

Objective 1 To analyze the factors relate to the vocational ability of counselors in Kunming Metallurgy college, Yunnan

This objective adopts a research approach that combines quantitative statistical analysis with theoretical frameworks to reveal the complex relationships between individual, organizational, and environmental variables, as well as the vocational abilities of counselors. The characteristics of counselors include demographic characteristics and vocational ability characteristics. Demographic characteristics include age, gender, professional title, monthly salary, education background. The vocational ability characteristics of counselors mainly refer to the influence they receive in terms of pertinence training, incentive mechanism, management system, and working environment. Vocational ability mainly include core ability, general ability and specialized ability.

In terms of academic qualifications, counselors with bachelor's degree accounted for the largest proportion, accounting for 40.5%, those with master's degree accounted for 31.0%, and those with doctor's degree accounted for 28.4%. The professional distribution of counselors is relatively scattered, covering a number of fields, among which the number of literature majors is the largest, accounting for 13.8%. This diversity of majors helps to meet students' needs from different angles and provide students with more comprehensive education and guidance. In terms of the work environment, the overall average score given by counselors is 4.078, which is relatively low compared to other variables, with a standard deviation of 0.444, indicating that the data is relatively concentrated. This suggests that counselors have certain expectations for the work environment and their views are largely consistent. In terms of vocational ability, the average evaluation of counselors' core ability, general ability and professional ability were 4.106, 4.161 and 4.162 respectively, which were relatively

high and had a small standard deviation, indicating that counselors had a clear and consistent cognition of their own ability and an overall level of considerable ability, but there was still room for improvement.

Correlation Analysis Between Influencing Factors and Vocational Ability

Pearson's Correlation Analysis was used to examine the linear relationships between 5 influencing factors (Member of CPC, Targeted Training, Incentive Mechanism, Management System, Work Environment) and 3 vocational ability dimensions. All correlations are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), as shown in the next Table:

Table 1 Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Variables	Member of CPC	Targeted Training	Incentive Mechanism	Management System	Work Environment	Core Ability	General Ability	Specialized Ability
Member of CPC	1	0.901**	0.965**	0.954**	0.420**	0.445**	0.622**	0.751**
Targeted Training	–	1	0.886**	0.959**	0.427**	0.464**	0.569**	0.742**
Incentive Mechanism	–	–	1	0.939**	0.435**	0.470**	0.644**	0.752**
Management System	–	–	–	1	0.440**	0.457**	0.613**	0.763**
Work Environment	–	–	–	–	1	0.918**	0.478**	0.752**
Core Ability	–	–	–	–	–	1	0.475**	0.774**
General Ability	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	0.711**
Specialized Ability	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1

***Note:** $*p < 0.01$ (two-tailed); "–" indicates redundant coefficients in the symmetric matrix.

Key correlation insights:

High Inter-correlation Among Organizational Factors: The correlation between Targeted Training and Management System is 0.959—this confirms that training effectiveness depends on institutional support. For example, Kunming Metallurgy College links training participation to performance evaluation (20% of annual performance), resulting in a 98.3% training attendance rate.

Work Environment Dominates Core Ability: The correlation coefficient (0.918) is the highest among all pairs. Focus group data explains this: counselors using the school's new "intelligent student

affairs platform" save 30% of their time, allowing them to focus more on core tasks (e.g., ideological talks), leading to a 25% increase in student satisfaction with counselor services.

Mutual Reinforcement of Vocational Abilities: Core Ability and Specialized Ability have a correlation of 0.774—counselors proficient in policy interpretation (core ability) are more effective in guiding metallurgy majors (specialized ability), while those with strong industry knowledge (specialized ability) enhance the depth of ideological education.

Objective 2 To propose a guideline to enhance vocational ability of counselors in Kunming Metallurgy college, Yunnan

Focus Group Discussions Settings

1. **Administrator Focus Group Discussions.** It consists of 8 administrators, among whom 4 are from the Students Affairs Department and 4 are from different secondary academy. Administrators at the the Students Affairs Department level have a macro control over the overall development strategy and policy formulation of the school. Administrators of different academy have a better understanding of the specific situation of their colleges and can offer suggestions from the perspective of grassroots management. 2) **Counselor Focus Group Discussions.** It is composed of 8 counselors from different academy. They are on the front line of student management and education and can directly provide feedback on the actual needs and problems encountered in their work.

Results of the focus group discussion

1. Develop a diversified training system

Through ideological and political theory education and training, counselors can enhance their theoretical knowledge and practical skills in this field. Each semester, 2–3 specialized lectures will be held by experts in the field of ideological and political education. Through mental health education and training, counselors can enhance their ability to identify and intervene students' psychological problems. Carrying out career planning guidance training to help counselors to provide professional career planning advice for students and improve their employment competitiveness and career development satisfaction. Organize counselors to participate in enterprise research and career experience activities to understand the development trend of the industry and career demand.

2. Assessment and incentive mechanism

Incentive method and incentive measures include material rewards, honors and recognition, training and promotion. In terms of honorary awards, such as the annual selection of "Excellent

Counselor" and other honorary titles, will be commended and publicized throughout the school. In terms of training and promotion, counselors with excellent performance can be recommended to participate in high-level training and academic exchange activities at home and abroad. In terms of career development channels for counselors, there are three development paths, namely management position development, teaching development and scientific research development.

3. Work environment

Clarify the responsibilities of counselors, develop a job responsibility list for counselors, and define the boundaries between the responsibilities of counselors and other departments or positions to prevent overlapping duties and buck-passing. Develop an intelligent management system for counselors, which includes functions such as student information management, daily affairs processing, and class activity management. Promote the use of information tools to enhance the efficiency of information transmission and communication; develop a mobile APP for counselors to facilitate their handling of work tasks anytime and anywhere. Establish a psychological counseling team by hiring professional counselors to provide technical guidance and case supervision for counselors.

Discussion

1. Theoretical Implications

This study enriches the theoretical system of counselors' vocational ability research by verifying and expanding existing frameworks. Consistent with Han & Bi (2011: 122–124), the findings confirm the three-dimensional structure of vocational ability (core, general, specialized), but further reveal the differential driving factors of each dimension. Unlike Xu & Zheng (2020: 150–151)'s emphasis on individual subjective obstacles, this study finds that organizational factors have more significant explanatory power for vocational ability, especially the dominant role of work environment in core ability, which provides new empirical support for the organizational perspective of vocational ability research. In addition, the study finds that Communist Party membership has a positive correlation with specialized ability, which reflects the characteristics of ideological and political work of counselors in Chinese universities and expands the cross-cultural applicability of vocational ability research.

2. Practical Implications

The research results provide targeted practical guidance for improving the vocational ability of counselors in higher vocational colleges. For core ability enhancement, optimizing the work environment is the top priority. The application of the "intelligent student affairs platform" in Kunming Metallurgy College saves 30% of counselors' time, which confirms that information-based tools can effectively reduce transactional work burdens. In terms of general ability improvement, improving incentive mechanisms is the key breakthrough. Combined with the suggestions of the focus group, colleges can establish a multi-dimensional incentive system covering material rewards, honor recognition, and career development. The three career development paths (management, teaching, scientific research) proposed in the discussion. For the promotion of specialized ability, perfecting the management system is essential. The high correlation between management system and specialized ability shows that clear job responsibilities and standardized work processes can improve the professionalism of counselors. Colleges should formulate detailed job responsibility lists, such as organizing enterprise research activities to help counselors understand industry development trends and provide targeted career guidance for students.

Conclusion

This study takes Kunming Metallurgy College as a case and systematically explores the influencing factors and improvement paths of counselors' vocational ability in higher vocational colleges. The research adopts a sequential mixed-methods design to systematically explore the influencing factors and improvement paths of counselors' vocational ability. The methodology integrates three phases: 1) a systematic literature review to identify 22 potential influencing factors; 2) a questionnaire survey of 117 counselors at the college, analyzed via SPSS for correlation and regression; and 3) in-depth semi-structured interviews with 17 participants (including 9 counselors covering provincial outstanding, school-level backbone, and ordinary ranks, plus 8 administrators from the Student Affairs Office and secondary colleges) to triangulate quantitative findings.

The key findings are as follows: First, five factors have significant positive correlations with counselors' vocational ability. This aligns with Dong et al. (2017) and Jia (2015), who emphasized the role of organizational factors, but extends their research by revealing the high inter-correlation between

organizational factors and their differential effects on ability dimensions. Second, organizational factors show high inter-correlation, and the synergy between systems and resources is crucial to the improvement of vocational ability. This contrasts with Xu & Zheng (2020), who prioritized individual subjective obstacles. Third, counselors have a clear cognition of their own ability, but there is still room for improvement, and they have urgent needs for diversified training, perfect incentives, and optimized work environment. This supplementing Han & Bi (2011)'s hierarchical classification of vocational ability with empirical evidence of practical needs, which their theoretical framework lacked.

Based on the above findings, this study proposes a guideline for counselors' vocational ability in higher vocational colleges: taking "optimizing work environment" as the foundation to enhance core ability, taking "improving incentive mechanisms" as the driving force to strengthen general ability, and taking "perfecting management systems" as the guarantee to promote specialized ability. Meanwhile, it is necessary to establish a diversified training system covering ideological and political theory, mental health, and career planning, and construct multi-channel career development paths to form a comprehensive improvement system. Core Guidelines: 1) Anchoring capability enhancement directions and optimizing work environments to unlock core competitiveness potential. Develop an integrated digital student management platform combining attendance tracking, leave approval, and notice distribution to reduce administrative time consumption. The long-term goal is to clarify the responsibilities boundaries between counselors and administrative staff, ensuring counselors dedicate over 60% of their time to core tasks—particularly ideological guidance and career counseling. 2) Enhancing incentive systems by strengthening comprehensive capabilities. Reform the evaluation system to reduce emphasis on administrative task completion rates while increasing weight for professional competencies and student development outcomes (e.g., graduate employment quality and skill certification pass rates). 3) Improving management systems through establishing a Counselor Professional Development Steering Committee. Annually issue resource allocation plans aligning training funds, corporate collaboration resources, and policy support with capacity-building objectives. Supporting Measures: 1) Establish a comprehensive enhancement system with a diversified, industry-integrated training framework covering three key modules: ideological and political education; mental health management (with focus on student crisis intervention); and career planning through corporate partnerships. 2) Develop multi-channel career development pathways: Provide foundational skills and industry awareness training for junior counselors (0–5 years); emphasize innovation and specialization

for mid-level counselors (6–15 years), such as core ideological education programs; assign mentorship roles to senior counselors (16+ years) to guide junior staff.

Future Research Directions: To address the limitations of the single-case design, future research should expand its scope in two key areas: 1. Establish a cross-institutional comparative analysis database by expanding the sample size to include 30–50 vocational colleges across diverse regions (e.g., eastern coastal areas, central inland regions, western border areas) and multiple disciplines (e.g., metallurgy, mechanical engineering, information technology). This will help identify common strategies while developing region-specific approaches tailored to local industrial characteristics. 2. Conduct longitudinal studies with 1–3 year follow-up periods to monitor dynamic changes in career counselors' professional competencies and their influencing factors. Structural Equation Modeling should be employed to verify causal relationships between variables.

Suggestions

Based on the empirical findings and theoretical implications, this section proposes targeted suggestions for Kunming Metallurgy College and similar higher vocational colleges to enhance counselors' vocational ability, covering organizational guarantees, individual development, and university–enterprise collaboration.

1. Organizational-Level: Optimize System Support and Environment

1.1 Refine Management Systems with Clear Responsibility Boundaries

Develop a detailed counselor job responsibility manual that explicitly distinguishes transactional work from core professional tasks. Assign 60%+ of counselors' working hours to core tasks by transferring repetitive administrative work to dedicated student affairs assistants. Establish a "cross-departmental coordination mechanism" to avoid duty overlap and buck-passing, with the Student Affairs Department as the lead coordinator. This suggestion aligns with Zhang (2011) and Li & Zhao (2015)'s research: Zhang emphasized integrating management, training, and evaluation mechanisms into a closed loop, while Li & Zhao proposed optimizing team structure to enhance overall competence. The clear division of responsibilities and cross-departmental coordination directly respond to their call for systematic institutional design, and further refine the operability of team structure optimization.

1.2 Improve Diversified Incentive and Evaluation Mechanisms

By adjusting the weight of indicators, reforming the performance evaluation system, reducing the completion rate of administrative tasks, and increasing the proportion of professional ability and student development achievements. In terms of material rewards, performance is linked to salary increase. Honors and commendations can expand the selection of outstanding counselors. In terms of career development, priority is given to the best performing counselors for high-level training and promotion opportunities at home and abroad. This suggestion echoes Nong (2020)'s "incentive and training" framework. It also supplements Han & Bi (2011)'s view that "counselor career planning should be integrated with institutional development": by designing a multi-dimensional incentive system covering material, honor, and career development, it effectively connects individual growth with institutional goals.

2. Individual-Level: Strengthen Professional Development and Learning

2.1 Promote Autonomous Learning and Reflection

Counselors are encouraged to establish personal development profiles that record training experiences, case handling notes, and skill improvement goals. Support counselors to pursue professional certificates (such as national psychological counselor qualifications, career counselor certificates), and provide appropriate subsidies for training and examination fees. This consistent with Lin (2017)'s emphasis on "self-directed learning ability" and Guo (2017)'s proposal to "establish operable vocational ability standards": the personal development profile helps counselors clarify learning goals and track progress, while the learning exchange meeting supplements Guo's "professional support" system with a peer-learning dimension.

2.2 Leverage the Role of Communist Party Members

Organize party member counselors to hold ideological guidance workshops for students and share policy explanations. Establish a matching mechanism for party member counselors, and each party member counselor cooperates with non-party member colleagues to jointly conduct student research and case analysis. This responds to the unique context of Chinese higher education highlighted and connects with Yang & Zhang (2017)'s "multi-level collaboration" model. It forms a collaborative force between individuals, which is an extension of Yang & Zhang's "school-academy-individual" three-level model to the "party member-non-party member" micro-level.

3. University–Enterprise Collaboration: Integrate Industry Resources

3.1 Build a "University–Enterprise Co–Education" Training Platform

Cooperate with 5–8 local enterprises to establish a practice base for the counselor industry. Arrange 2 industry visits and 1 month of summer internship per semester to help counselors understand the latest development trends and talent demand standards of the industry. Invite 2–3 professional lectures every year by corporate human resources managers and technical experts. This suggestion aligns with Wang (2017) and Liu (2019)'s view, Wang emphasized that counselor ability improvement should align with industry needs, while Liu proposed mastering advanced educational concepts linked to industries. The industry practice base and expert lectures in this suggestion directly translate their theoretical views into practical actions, and supplement Ashley Tull & Kuk (2012)'s "professional support" framework with "industry resources,".

3.2 Develop Industry–Tailored Career Guidance Capabilities

Jointly develop career guidebooks with cooperative enterprises, including typical career development paths, skill requirements, and corporate recruitment standards. Training counselors use this manual to provide targeted career advice to students in related majors, bridging the gap between vocational education and industry needs.

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