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# Predicament of College Students with Economic Difficulties in Career Development and Assistance Strategies

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**Abstract** College students with economic difficulties are the vulnerable groups who are easy to fall into the predicament of career development. They are mainly characterized as weak career awareness, unclear self-awareness, lack of social resources, and poor comprehensive quality. This paper comprehensively analyzed the predicament of college students and causes. On the basis of causes, it came up with strategies including establishing a perfect whole-process education mechanism, strengthening psychological health and ideological and political education, actively expanding social practice internship platform, and vigorously cultivating employment competitiveness, so as to help students with economic difficulties to get out of their predicament and realize sustainable and comprehensive career development.

**Key words** College students with economic difficulties, Career development, Assistance strategies

## 1 Introduction

According to the annual report on the employment quality of college students in Shaanxi Province, the proportion of college students with economic difficulties in 2016 in Shaanxi Province was 24.42%. In 2016, the students with economic difficulties in Northwest A&F University reached 32.44%, and their employment rate was 97.41%. After a related survey on 2 429 students with economic difficulties, we found that the employment rate of those students was higher than the overall employment rate of the current graduates, but their career planning was not optimistic. As to the question "whether career planning has been done during the university", 56.85% of the graduates said they have once made career planning, and 43.15% said they have not made; as to the question "whether knowing proper career", 42.77% of the graduates said they knew, and 57.23% said they did not know.

College students with economic difficulties were many and the proportion was high. Due to family poverty, they often remain in a weak position and fall into the predicament of career development. It is of great realistic significance to study how to implement effective assistance in serious employment situation, help them to find jobs, obtain sustainable and comprehensive development of career, reflect deep care of the party and state about students with economic difficulties for promoting long-term development, help them get out of poverty, and maintain social stability and development.

## 2 Predicament of college students with economic difficulties in career development

### 2.1 Weak career awareness and lack of planning ability

Students with economic difficulties often shoulder the heavy bur-

den of their families and take going to college as their only goal in life. After going to the college, they cherish high expectations for employment. However, due to poor family conditions, limited resources and lack of career experience and career guidance on the path of growth, they seldom consider the long-term development, lack of autonomous planning awareness and active exploration of personal traits and social reality, they just replace the rational decision with family expectation or stereotype career impression. At the same time, career development needs to master a large number of knowledge and skills, college students with economic difficulties lack relevant knowledge and ability training, thus they can not make effective career planning and management.

### 2.2 Unclear self-awareness and prominent psychological problems

Objective and comprehensive self-understanding is the foundation of career development. College students with economic difficulties often lack the experience and willingness to explore themselves. They seldom participate in campus cultural and sports activities, and social practice, so they are unclear about their personality, abilities, interests and values. Some students with economic difficulties internalized their parents' expectation for "iron rice bowl" (a secure job) and high salary into their own professional values, and neglected the demands for self-realization. Compared with other students, their psychological problems are more prominent, manifested as: self-esteem and inferiority complex, worry about future career selection, blind obedience and sloppy decision making in career selection, fear of failure and improper to treat failure in job hunting. Some students have huge pressure and can not adjust themselves, and accordingly show serious psychological problems.

### 2.3 Insufficient social resources and limited access to information

Professor Wen Dongmao from Peking University stated that social resources are the number and quality of social relationships and interpersonal networks; the more the family relationships, the higher the ability of providing employment services for

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children, the faster and more accurate obtaining information in employment selection, or even they can find jobs directly through relationships<sup>[1]</sup>. Parents of students with economic difficulties are mostly vulnerable groups, lack social resources, thus they are unable to provide guidance and help in their children's career selection and development. Students with economic difficulties have difficulties in obtaining support from social relationship network. At the college stage, their communication scope is narrow, lack communication with teachers and classmates, they are not good at searching and treating information related to career development. They seldom make active exploration of external world and the access to information is limited. Especially in the training exchange and the establishment of important relationships in campus, they are negative, leading to loss of enormous resources<sup>[2]</sup>.

**2.4 Poor comprehensive quality and inadequate employment preparation** According to the survey, in recent years, the unemployment rate of college students with economic difficulties is increasing, while the employment rate and quality of those students are declining. Enterprises reflected that college students with economic difficulties have low communication and interpersonal skills, and low organization and coordination ability, and low ability of solving problems<sup>[3]</sup>. Due to the family background and limited educational resources, college students with economic difficulties lack interpersonal communication, expression, and other cultural qualities and literacy training. After entering the university, their psychological factors make it likely for them to be self-enclosed and inactive in participating in all kinds of social activities, competitions and practical activities, the comprehensive quality is difficult to upgrade. Combined with the lack of planning awareness and ability, no incentive and development goal, they are often unable to actively store the knowledge, skills and concepts needed to enter the professional world until the end of the graduation season, they still have no time to prepare for their psychology and ability, as a result, they were forced to face the harsh employment situation.

### 3 Analysis on causes for predicament of college students with economic difficulties in career development

#### 3.1 Economic difficulties of family and obsolete concept of their parents

Families with economic difficulties generally have low social and economic status and their parents have low educational level. The research shows that social and economic status of family has a unique positive predictive effect on individual career exploration, and college students with high family socio-economic status show a higher career exploration level and vice versa. When parents have high educational level and can provide more information, resources and support for their children's development, their children will show more active career exploration behaviors and intentions, and *vice versa*<sup>[4]</sup>. In addition, parents of students with economic difficulties often have outdated ideas and concepts, have limited understanding of social development, lack a sense of security, are afraid of facing risks, expect their children to take the

lead and change their destiny through knowledge to obtain bright and decent jobs. Affected by the economic status of the family and parents, students with economic difficulties have high expectations for the future. They are anxious to seek a stable career and get out of poverty. However, the big gap between high expectation and weak psychology and their lack of ability, in addition to serious employment situation and fierce social competition make them greatly upset.

**3.2 Lack of effectiveness in college career education** In China, the career education of young students has been launched for a short period. At present, colleges and universities are the main forces of career education. The effect of career education oriented towards college students with economic difficulties is not significant. On the one hand, the career education is mixed up with employment assistance such as providing economic assistance and job recommendation, or guidance about resume and job interview. It takes the employment of students with economic difficulties as objectives to replace the career education. As a matter of fact, it just puts off the solution of career pollution. Even these college students are employed successfully, there are still problems of self and career awareness and difficult decision making, and there is hidden danger of long-term career development. On the other hand, the career education activities oriented towards college students have not considered special characteristics of students with economic difficulties. Courses and lectures are mainly based on knowledge and teaching, and their effectiveness is mainly limited by factors such as students' cognitive level, practical ability, decision-making ability and motivation. The effects vary from person to person; career planning and education activities based on the competition platform often make them become not good at career planning and education activities, and college students hang back, so the effect was minimal.

#### 3.3 Various personal factors leading to difficult career development of college students with economic difficulties

College students with economic difficulties need to bear the negative influence brought by the economic and resource constraints. These influences are miscellaneous and profound, include objective environmental conditions, and act in emotion, cognition and behavior in latent form<sup>[5]</sup>. If the capability of self-control is not strong, they are unable to make self-adjustment and innovation, then the inflexible psychological orientation, thinking patterns, behavior and other factors will push them to the dilemma. It is true that some college students with economic difficulties have suffered harsh living environment and growth experience, and have positive and optimistic will. However, other students with economic difficulties are hard to get rid of the negative impact of family and growth experience. Compared with students who have good economic conditions and well-informed people, they often fall into ashamed and closed, self-deprecating and negative behavior and thinking patterns. Low self-efficiency often makes them ashamed to speak in front of others or show themselves, can not take the initiative to participate in various activities, lose the exercise and

promotion opportunities, fail to raise their ability, which widens the gap with other students and increases the individual negative evaluation, accordingly falling into a vicious cycle. In addition to the pressure of unreasonable professional values, they often feel great difficulties in career development.

#### **4 Strategies for assistance of college students with economic difficulties in career development**

##### **4.1 Establishing a perfect whole-process career education mechanism**

Career education is an essential part of personnel training in universities and colleges and employment of graduates, and should be implemented throughout the entire university stage. It is recommended to establish the files for college students with economic difficulties, make arrangement of learning tasks at each stage, integrate all kinds of education resources, and provide education and guidance. For students in lower grades, it is recommended to awaken their career awareness, grasp related knowledge and skills, and make preliminary exploration; for students in higher grades, it is recommended to determine goals and draft and implement the behavior plans. Due to the differences in difficulty reasons, levels, psychological characteristics and the career development problems between every college students with economic difficulties, the education activities should not only consider the group characteristics but also pay attention to the demands of individual and career classes, and give prominence to the class design, homework check, and effective link between class and after-class. Thematic lectures and seminars should be oriented towards questions to meet the actual demands of students and meet the development goals of all stages. In particular, it is recommended to establish one-to-one career guidance and counseling organizations, set up accurate platform for assisting students in grasping the development of students and pushing information and services precisely with big data technology so as to enhance the effectiveness of career education.

##### **4.2 Practically strengthening psychological health education and ideological and political education**

College students with economic difficulties often lack a good psychological self-assistance system and perfect personality education. All colleges and universities should strengthen the psychological health education and ideological and political education through special lectures, psychological counseling, workshops and exchange of typical experience. (i) Publicizing and popularizing psychological health knowledge. It is recommended to help them learn to divert bad emotions, exclude irrational ideas, set up a good ability to adapt to psychological, rational and objective understanding of themselves and social reality. (ii) It is recommended to carry out propaganda and education events about model people with strong determination. Through education, it is expected to stimulate students to strive for self-reliance, and encourage them to work hard, treat their predicament as an experience and be optimistic about their situation. They must constantly improve their comprehensive qualities and strive for growth. (iii) It is recommended to

guide them to establish scientific values and outlook on life. It is recommended to educate college students with economic difficulties to get rid of the idea of putting individuals and families as the center and build correct value concept and life goals, guide them to closely integrate their development with the national demands, make contributions and start their career in the industry badly needing social development, to realize the unity between self value and social value.

##### **4.3 Actively expanding social practice internship platform**

Social practice is an effective way for college students to enhance their self-awareness, understand social reality, establish a correct employment outlook, develop their talents and improve their comprehensive quality. College students with economic difficulties are generally very difficult to rely on their own strength to obtain adequate and quality practical resources. Colleges and universities should actively expand, strive to seek the support of all parties to create and provide more social practice internship platform for college students in need. On the one hand, it is recommended to strengthen the integration of resources in campus and give full play to the synergies among various departments to explore and set up more work-study education positions in management, scientific research, technology and service in universities and colleges to meet different demands. On the other hand, it is recommended to actively seek external support. Combined with the national and local projects, it is recommended to organize college students with economic difficulties to go out of colleges, go deep into grassroots and carry out social survey and services, and get educated in social growth. Besides, it is recommended to seek the support of local government, enterprises and institutions, strive for more job placement, internships, and practice opportunities to help them walk into the real world of work, to achieve a smooth transition from campus to real society.

##### **4.4 Vigorously developing employment competitiveness and implementing capacity-building activities**

Employment competitiveness is the ability of college students to obtain work, keep their jobs and promote their development, and it is the comprehensive manifestation of personal qualities, abilities and specialties that can be sustained and competitive through education and training, as demonstrated by the employment process, which is manifested particularly as the sustainability of personal career development and irreplaceability in a particular field<sup>[6]</sup>. The employment competitiveness of college students with economic difficulties should be started from following aspects. (i) Strengthening professional knowledge learning and introducing various types of vocational qualification training and certificate examination training. Professional knowledge is the basis of employment competitiveness, related to the personal career development potential. College students with economic difficulties should not only learn textbook knowledge, but also actively participate in professional practice internship, carry out social survey, to improve practical ability and problem solving skills. Besides, it is recommended to provide free vocational qualification training and certificate examination

training for college students with economic difficulties, improve their professional level, and meet the social actual demands. (ii) Organizing all kinds of short-term skills upgrading classes and quality development activities. College students with economic difficulties are incompetent in communication, image management, computer use and English use, lack of self-management ability. Thus, these activities are helpful for improving the comprehensive quality of college students with economic difficulties, and promoting them to realize successful employment and sustainable and comprehensive career development.

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