

# The Logical Framework and Practical Pathways for Integrating Positive Psychological Capital into Career Planning Education and Teaching for College Students



Sai Ma <sup>\*,1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>College of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Henan University of Economics and Law, China

**Abstract:** Positive psychological capital, as a core concept in the intersection of psychology and management, emphasizes the enhancement of an individual's adaptive ability and development potential through the development of his or her positive psychological resources, which mainly contain four elements: self-confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience. These qualities can not only help individuals maintain a positive psychological state in the face of challenges, but also stimulate their potential to realize the continuous advancement of personal goals, and it is imperative to cultivate students' positive psychological capital in the education of college students' career planning. Starting from the connotation of positive psychological capital, this paper explores the mechanism of its role in career planning education. It proposes innovative implementation paths through specific analysis of teaching design, curriculum optimization, practical activities, and support system construction, to provide psychological resource support for the career development of college students, and provide theoretical references and practical guidance for the reform of vocational education teaching.

**Keywords:** positive psychological capital; college students; career planning; education and teaching

## Introduction:

Career planning education aims to help students clarify their career goals, optimize their development paths, and improve their adaptability and competitiveness in future career environments. This process not only affects students' career choices and development directions but also relates to the improvement of their comprehensive quality and the realization of their career happiness. However, some college students often show ambiguous goals, low self-confidence, and weak ability to cope with setbacks in their career planning, which directly affects the effect of their career development and personal growth. Integrating positive psychological capital into career planning education can not only make up for the lack of attention to psychological

growth in the traditional education model, but also provide stronger support for career planning from the psychological level, and help students maintain a good mindset and power of action in the face of complex career choices.

## 1. Theoretical Logic of Positive Psychological Capital and Career Planning

### 1.1 Theoretical connotation of positive psychological capital

Positive psychological capital is a concept of psychological resources based on the theory of positive psychology and organizational behavior, which refers to the positive psychological state and its related traits shown by individuals in the process of growth and development, including self-confidence (i.e., the self-efficacy of individuals in their ability to complete tasks), hope (the motivation to set a path for a goal and maintain the

**Corresponding Author:** Sai Ma  
Henan University of Economics and Law, China  
Email: [20140090@hucl.edu.cn](mailto:20140090@hucl.edu.cn)

motivation to achieve the goal), resilience (the ability to recover quickly from adversity and utilize challenges to promote growth), and optimism (the belief in and expectation of positive future outcomes) (Li & Guo, 2022). (the ability to recover quickly from adversity and utilize challenges for growth), and optimism (beliefs and expectations about positive future outcomes) (Li & Guo, 2022). This concept emphasizes the development and utilization of an individual's internal psychological resources, focusing on the exploration of individual potential and the shaping of individual strengths, which can not only effectively improve an individual's ability to cope with stress and difficulties but also stimulate individual potential to achieve high levels of performance and goals. The theoretical basis of positive psychological capital covers cognitive assessment theory, learning theory, and resource conservation theory, and its core lies in the accumulation and optimization of individual psychological energy through positive emotional experiences, cognitive styles, and behavioral patterns, to have a far-reaching positive impact on life and career development (Wang & Zhou, 2021).

### **1.2 The core goal of career planning**

The core goal of career planning is to help individuals clarify the direction of career development, establish clear career goals, and realize the coordination and unity of career development and personal value through systematic self-knowledge, external environment analysis, and action planning (Zhao et al., 2018). Specifically, career planning is aimed at guiding individuals to deeply understand their interests, abilities, personalities, and values, comprehensively assess the opportunities and limitations of career choices, scientifically set long-term and short-term career goals, design feasible action plans and adapt to environmental changes and their growth needs through continuous adjustment. Career planning also pays attention to cultivating individuals' career adaptability, including improving problem-solving, decision-making, and career transition skills, to cope with diversified challenges in the career life cycle, with the ultimate

goal of realizing the organic combination of individuals' career goals and the needs of the society, and facilitating individuals to obtain a lasting sense of achievement and happiness in the process of career development.

### **1.3 The fit between positive psychological capital and career planning**

Positive psychological capital and career planning have a high degree of compatibility in terms of core concepts and practical applications, both emphasizing the exploration of an individual's inner potential and positive responses to the external environment. Confidence in positive psychological capital can enhance individuals' decision-making ability in career choice and goal setting, and make them believe more firmly in their career ability and value; hope provides individuals with the motivation to keep working hard to realize their career goals and the ability to flexibly adjust their paths; resilience helps individuals maintain a positive state in the face of frustration and uncertainty in their careers and quickly adapt to changes and find new development directions; optimism supports individuals in adopting a positive approach to career planning and in finding new development directions; and optimism supports individuals in adopting a positive approach to career development. Optimism supports individuals to view the opportunities and challenges of career development from a positive perspective, to formulate and implement career planning more effectively (Jia, 2018). At the same time, the systematic and goal-oriented nature of career planning provides a practical platform for the cultivation of positive psychological capital, helping individuals strengthen the dimensions of psychological capital through clear career goals and specific action plans. The combination of the two can not only enhance the individual's career adaptability and development potential, but also effectively improve career satisfaction and psychological well-being, and realize the harmonious development of individuals and careers.

## **2. The Logical Rationale for Integrating Positive**

## Psychological Capital into College Students' Career Planning Education

### 2.1 Goal-oriented, from psychological capital to career quality

The goal of integrating positive psychological capital into college students' career planning education is to promote the comprehensive improvement of students' career literacy through the cultivation and development of psychological capital and to form an organic transformation logic from inner psychological resources to outer career ability (Li, 2018). Confidence in positive psychological capital provides firm psychological support for students' career planning so that they dare to set higher career goals and take action to realize them; hope pushes students to maintain a positive way of thinking and persistent motivation, scientifically decompose career goals and effectively plan paths; resilience strengthens students' ability to cope with career challenges and environmental uncertainty so that they can accumulate experience and continue to grow amid setbacks; Optimism further stimulates students' positive expectations and beliefs about career development, providing spiritual motivation for realizing career goals. Through career planning education, these psychological capitals are internalized into students' professional qualities, such as goal management ability, decision-making ability, stress resistance, and teamwork ability, so that the influence of psychological capitals extends from the individual's internal emotional and cognitive level to the outward manifestation of professional behavior. This logic runs through the whole process of education and teaching and ultimately realizes the comprehensive stimulation of students' psychological potential and the sustainable development of their vocational ability.

### 2.2 Process optimization, coupling of psychological capital and career development

The core of the integration of positive psychological capital into the career planning education of college students lies in realizing the deep coupling of psychological capital and career development, and promoting the achievement of the

goals of education and teaching through the construction of a dynamic process system from the stimulation of psychological resources to the cultivation of vocational ability (Wang et al., 2017). Specifically, this process is based on the development of students' psychological capital, and through educational interventions and practical training, the four dimensions of self-confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism are organically integrated into the key aspects of career planning. Firstly, through the self-knowledge module, we stimulate students' self-confidence and help them accurately identify their strengths and potentials, to provide psychological support for the setting of career goals; then, in the goal-planning section, we guide students to design feasible career paths by taking hope as the driving force and combining the real conditions and future expectations; in the action-implementation stage, we enhance students' adaptive ability and perseverance in the face of career uncertainty and stress by cultivating resilience. In the action implementation stage, resilience is cultivated to enhance students' adaptability and perseverance in the face of career uncertainty and stressful situations; and finally, optimism is reinforced through reflection and feedback mechanisms to enable students to summarize their experiences and optimize their career strategies from a positive perspective. In this optimization process, the enhancement of psychological capital complements the development of vocational skills and cognitive ability, forming an all-round coupling logic from psychology to behavior, and continuously promoting the sustainability and adaptability of students' career development.

### 2.3 Evaluation and feedback, growth assessment of psychological capital

The evaluation and feedback mechanism is designed to assess the growth of students' psychological capital and promote students' continuous progress through scientific feedback, and the evaluation system should focus on the growth of various dimensions of psychological capital, including self-confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism, etc., and carry out a multi-dimensional

assessment through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods (Lu & Wang, 2016). For example, the changes in students' psychological capital in the process of career planning are comprehensively assessed through various means such as self-assessment scales, peer assessment, teacher evaluation, and observation of actual performance. Regular feedback and reflection, help students identify their psychological barriers and bottlenecks in career planning, and inspire them to continuously adjust their thinking and behavioral strategies. In addition, growth assessment is not only limited to the static measurement of psychological capital but also focuses on how students can promote the dynamic enhancement of psychological capital through various tasks and challenges in career planning. As students' psychological capital continues to develop, their career adaptability, problem-solving ability, and career satisfaction will gradually improve, thus forming a positive and virtuous cycle of growth. The feedback mechanism should provide students with concrete suggestions for improvement, helping them to utilize their psychological capital more effectively in career planning and to realize self-transcendence and career enhancement in practice.

### **3. Practical Path of Integrating Positive Psychological Capital into Career Planning Education**

#### **3.1 Renewal of teaching philosophy**

The updating of the teaching concept emphasizes student-centeredness and the cultivation of psychological capital is carried out throughout the whole process of career planning teaching. Through contextualized and experiential teaching methods, students' positive psychological resources are stimulated to enhance their career planning ability, and the teaching design should be based on the psychological growth needs of the students so that the course objective is shifted from the teaching of pure vocational skills to the comprehensive enhancement of psychological capital and vocational literacy (Wan & Song, 2016). Taking the teaching activity of "Challenge and Hope Inspiration of Career

Goal" as an example, the teacher guides students to simulate a complex career planning situation, such as facing the key decision-making of career choice and asks students to discuss and set up specific paths and alternatives to achieve the goal in groups. During the activity, the teacher helped students identify problems such as low self-confidence or lack of clarity about the path to the goal by guiding them in stages, and then combined with the theory of positive psychological capital to design heuristic questions, such as "What past successes do you have that can support you in accomplishing this goal?" and "If you encounter difficulties, what resources and methods are available to help you persevere?" etc. Encourage students to gain confidence and hope from their past experiences. At the end of the activity, students are required to summarize and reflect, share key learning points within the team, and write a report on how to apply psychological capital in practical career planning. In the process, students not only enhanced their practical abilities in career goal-setting and decision-making but also gradually enhanced the psychological capital dimensions of confidence, hope, and optimism through the activity. This teaching practice reflects the deep integration of psychological capital and career planning education, which not only enhances students' career adaptability in specific tasks but also cultivates positive psychological qualities through contextual teaching, laying a more solid psychological foundation for student's future career development.

#### **3.2 Optimization of curriculum design**

In the process of integrating positive psychological capital into career planning education, the key to optimizing the curriculum design is to combine the cultivation goal of positive psychological capital with the teaching content of career planning through systematic curriculum modules and diversified teaching strategies, to form a teaching mode that emphasizes both theory and practice. Taking the design and implementation of the course module "Future Career Path Sand Table Simulation" as an example, the module takes students' career development stages as the main line

and integrates the core dimensions of psychological capital into the sand table simulation activities, aiming to stimulate students' psychological capital of self-confidence, hope, resilience and optimism through the simulation practice. At the beginning of the course, students set a specific career goal and construct a preliminary career development path based on their career interests and ability assessment. In the sand tray simulation, students are challenged with a series of real-life career situations, such as resource shortages, role conflicts, or unexpected setbacks, while adjusting their plans and making critical decisions within a limited timeframe. Teachers dynamically assess students' mental performance through role-playing and situational guidance and provide positive feedback and guidance at key points in the activity. For example, when students' career choices are shaken by the setbacks that occur in the situation, the teacher will use psychological capital theory to help students reconstruct their goal paths, centering on hope, and inspire them to find solutions from a broader perspective. At the end of the simulation, students are required to summarize and analyze the role of their psychological capital in supporting the decision-making and execution process and write a personal career path optimization plan. In this practice, through immersive experience, students not only deepen their understanding of career planning theory, but also effectively exercise their ability to apply psychological capital in the face of career challenges, thus realizing a high degree of compatibility between the course content and the objectives of psychological capital training, and ultimately providing strong psychological and practical support for students' career development.

### 3.3 Development of practical activities

The practical activities of career planning education are designed to cultivate students' psychological capital such as self-confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism through the simulation of real-life scenarios and experiential teaching, to enhance their career adaptability and development ability. For example, the design and implementation

of the "Career Challenge Workshop" focus on the simulation of typical challenges in a career, helping students to strengthen their psychological capital and transform it into career competence in practice, and the activity is divided into three phases: challenge setting, task execution, and reflection sharing. In the challenge setting stage, the teacher builds a realistic but appropriately complex career situation for students through contextualized design, such as a team facing time constraints and limited resources for an important project, and asks students to develop solutions and report their results within a specified period. In the task execution phase, students participate in small groups, play different roles (e.g., project manager, analyst, coordinator, etc.), and complete the division of labor tasks in teamwork. During the activity, teachers help students stimulate their psychological capital when they encounter difficulties through dynamic observation and timely guidance, such as guiding them to focus on the likelihood of success to enhance confidence, inspiring hope with positive problem-solving approaches, and increasing resilience through group support and strategy adjustment. In the reflection and sharing stage, students in each group reported their results and summarized the application and enhancement of psychological capital in the task, such as how to enhance confidence through teamwork, how to maintain goal-oriented hope in path adjustment, and how to learn from failures and transform them into motivation for subsequent growth. Teachers provided specific feedback on students' performance in conjunction with positive psychological capital theory, encouraging them to apply these psychological resources in their future career planning. Throughout the practical activities, students not only experience real career challenges but also deepen their understanding of the correlation between positive psychological capital and career development through the completion of the tasks and reflection, ultimately forming a virtuous cycle of psychological capital and practical ability.

### 3.4 Construction of psychological support system

The construction of a psychological support

system is to continuously promote the cultivation and enhancement of students' psychological capital through the construction of multi-level and multi-dimensional support structure, to comprehensively enhance their career planning ability, the core of which lies in the organic combination of individual support and group support, to meet the psychological needs of students at different stages of the career planning process. First of all, individual support focuses on targeted guidance, through career counseling, psychological counseling, and other forms, to help students obtain accurate psychological intervention and support in self-knowledge, goal setting, and path adjustment. The counseling process emphasizes stimulating students' self-confidence, helping them identify and give full play to their strengths, building a sense of hope, encouraging them to maintain a positive pursuit of their goals, and reinforcing their resilience and optimism, to enhance their stress resistance and positive mindset in career planning. Secondly, group support creates a positive psychological environment by organizing group counseling, peer exchanges, and collective activities to promote emotional resonance and experience sharing among students, thus forming a positively motivated learning community. The construction of the support system also needs to be complemented by a scientific evaluation and feedback mechanism, through dynamic monitoring of the changes in psychological capital and timely adjustment of the support strategy, to ensure that the psychological growth of students in career planning is always on a positive track. In addition, the psychological support system should be complementary to the curriculum teaching, forming a support chain throughout the different stages of career planning education, starting from the cultivation of psychological capital, promoting the synchronous development of students' psychological quality and vocational quality, to comprehensively enhance the career adaptability and development potential.

#### **Conclusion:**

To summarize, integrating positive psychological capital into college students' career planning education is not only an effective combination of psychological resources and vocational ability cultivation but also a key path to cope with the complex employment environment and promote students' overall development. By integrating positive psychological capital elements such as self-confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience throughout the curriculum design, practical activities, and support system, students' career adaptability and psychological resilience can be effectively enhanced, laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of their careers. This educational model emphasizes the dynamic transformation process from psychological growth to vocational literacy, focusing on students' intrinsic motivation and extrinsic behavior optimization in career planning. Future educational practice needs to further explore more personalized and diversified teaching methods, to better adapt to the diversified needs of students and help them realize the unity of career aspirations and personal values.

#### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that she has no conflicts of interest to this work.

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