

The Impact of Precision Employment Guidance on Career Maturity and Employment Satisfaction of Vocational Undergraduate Students: The Moderating Role of Personalized Service Quality

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Abstract: With the rapid development of vocational undergraduate education, enhancing the quality of students' career development has become a critical issue. Traditional employment guidance models often fail to meet students' individualized needs, necessitating an investigation into the mechanism through which precision employment guidance influences career maturity and employment satisfaction. Grounded in the Person-Environment Fit Theory and the Social Cognitive Career Theory, this study constructs a moderated mediation model to systematically elucidate the internal pathway by which precision employment guidance affects employment satisfaction through career maturity, while also demonstrating the boundary role of personalized service quality. The findings reveal that precision employment guidance, via customized content, refined processes, and targeted objectives, facilitates the reconstruction of students' career cognition and enhances their decision-making abilities, thereby strengthening their employment satisfaction. Personalized service quality plays a dual moderating role in this process, not only reinforcing the promotive effect of guidance on career maturity but also optimizing the efficiency of the transformation from maturity to satisfaction. This study offers a novel perspective for deepening career guidance theory and provides a theoretical foundation for optimizing employment service practices.

Keywords: Precision Employment Guidance; Career Maturity; Employment Satisfaction; Personalized Service Quality; Vocational Undergraduate Education

Introduction

As an integral component of the higher education system, vocational undergraduate education directly influences talent cultivation outcomes and the efficiency of societal human resource allocation. However, traditional standardized employment guidance models struggle to address students' diverse developmental needs, leading to practical issues such as slow improvement in career maturity and low employment satisfaction. In this context, exploring the mechanism of precision employment guidance holds significant theoretical value and practical importance. Existing research predominantly focuses on the direct effects of guidance content, lacking systematic investigation into the underlying psychological mechanisms and boundary conditions. By integrating vocational psychology and service management theory, this study constructs a theoretical model with career maturity as the mediator and personalized service quality as the moderator. It aims to unveil the underlying mechanisms through which precision employment guidance influences career development outcomes, thereby addressing the existing research gap concerning process mechanisms and contextual factors, and providing theoretical support for the advancement and innovation of career guidance theory.

1. Definition of Core Concepts and Construction of Theoretical Foundation

1.1 Analysis of the Connotation and Dimensions of Precision Employment Guidance

Precision Employment Guidance differs from traditional standardized and generalized employment service models. Its core connotation lies in providing a highly customized, process-refined, and result-efficient career development support system based on the individual characteristics, professional backgrounds, and career aspirations of vocational undergraduate students. This concept is built upon

the intersection of the Person-Environment Fit Theory and the personalized education concept, emphasizing the dynamic fit between guidance services and individual needs.

The theoretical dimensions of Precision Employment Guidance can be parsed into three interrelated levels.

At the content level, Precision Employment Guidance is manifested as the customization of knowledge provision and skill training, specifically providing differentiated industry insights, job skill analyses, and job search strategy coaching according to students' cognitive structures, competency gaps, and career goals.

At the process level, it demonstrates the temporality and dynamism of interventions, which span the entire career development process from career awareness, self-exploration, and decision-making to job search actions, with adaptive adjustments made through continuous evaluation and feedback^[1].

At the target level, its fundamental orientation is the precision of supply-demand matching, aiming to achieve optimal coupling between students' career expectations and job requirements by deeply analyzing labor market signals and student personal profiles, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of human resource allocation. This multidimensional construct provides a theoretical lens for understanding how employment guidance services transition from a "supply-side" push to a "demand-side" pull.

1.2 Psychological Deconstruction of Career Maturity and Employment Satisfaction

Career Maturity and Employment Satisfaction represent two key psychological constructs for measuring the career development outcomes of vocational undergraduate students. These two constructs depict an individual's career development state from the perspectives of process versus outcome, and cognition versus emotion, respectively. Career Maturity is a dynamically evolving multidimensional psychological structure, referring to the level of cognitive and behavioral preparedness an individual achieves when confronting career development tasks. For vocational undergraduate students, its core dimensions include certainty in career decision-making, which entails having a clear and stable understanding of one's professional direction; realistic perception of the occupational world, involving an objective and accurate comprehension of industry requirements, development paths, and work environments; and implementation capability in career planning, reflecting the ability to translate career goals into concrete action plans and execute them.

Employment Satisfaction constitutes an individual's subjective emotional evaluation and attitudinal response toward their employment situation, serving as a crucial subjective indicator for measuring employment quality. It is not a unidimensional sensation but rather a comprehensive emotional feedback synthesizing multiple factors, including salary and benefits, the alignment between job content and personal interests, career development opportunities, organizational cultural atmosphere, and job stability. As an antecedent variable, Career Maturity establishes an internal psychological foundation for achieving higher Employment Satisfaction by enhancing the quality of an individual's decision-making and the accuracy of person-job matching. The theoretical distinction and intrinsic connection between these two constructs form the core dimensions of the outcome variables in this study.

1.3 Theoretical Origins of Personalized Service Quality and Presupposition of Its Moderating Effect

The concept of personalized service quality is rooted in the fields of service marketing and management, with its essence lying in the service provider's ability to identify and respond to customers' unique needs and preferences, thereby creating exceptional perceived customer value. When transposed to the context of employment guidance services, personalized service quality specifically refers to students' subjective perception of the degree of excellence achieved by employment guidance services in responding to their individual differences. The theoretical dimensions of this construct typically include interaction customization, where advisors provide one-on-one counseling and feedback tailored to the student's personal context; decision-making responsibility, reflecting the advisor's demonstration of reliable commitment and professional competence centered on student interests; and proactive needs identification, wherein advisors proactively recognize and address students' unexpressed, potential career development needs^[2].

Within the theoretical framework of this study, personalized service quality is presupposed as a key moderating variable. The theoretical basis for this lies in the perception of service quality being able to

strengthen or weaken students' value judgment and internalization degree of the guidance services they receive. High levels of personalized service quality are expected to enhance the relevance of precision employment guidance content to students' personal goals, increasing their acceptance and trust in guidance recommendations, thereby amplifying the positive effect of precision employment guidance on career maturity. Simultaneously, a highly personalized service environment is also believed to buffer uncertainties during the employment process, enhancing students' sense of control and support, which may consequently moderate the transformation pathway from career maturity to final employment satisfaction. This theoretical presupposition regarding the moderating effect lays the foundation for subsequently constructing a moderated mediation model.

2. The Mechanism of Precision Employment Guidance on Career Development Outcomes

2.1 The Cognitive Transformation Pathway from Precision Guidance to Career Maturity

The promotive effect of Precision Employment Guidance on Career Maturity is fundamentally a psychological process that drives systematic transformation in an individual's career cognitive structure, following the basic principles of cognitive construction theory. This transformation pathway begins with the precise provision of occupational information and self-knowledge. Through the application of career assessment tools and personalized diagnostic techniques, Precision Employment Guidance transmits industry trends, job requirements, and competency specifications highly relevant to students' professional characteristics and career inclinations. Simultaneously, it facilitates their awareness of personal interests, values, and skill advantages through in-depth interviews and reflective exercises.

This information input process directly challenges and corrects students' potential career fantasies and irrational beliefs, prompting them to form a realistic understanding of the occupational world. During the cognitive restructuring phase, guidance interventions focus on the refined direction of career decision-making processes. By introducing structured decision-making models and contextualized case analyses, students are systematically guided to employ tools such as SWOT analysis and decision balance sheets to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different career options, assessing potential risks and benefits, thereby enhancing the certainty and self-confidence in their career decisions^[3]. This cognitive restructuring further extends to the metacognitive level, where students begin developing the ability to monitor and regulate their own decision-making processes.

In the behavioral consolidation phase, external guidance forces gradually internalize into stable psychological traits, manifesting as implementation capability in career planning. Students become able to decompose macro career goals into actionable phased tasks, establish clear timelines and evaluation criteria, and develop the capacity to continuously monitor and adjust action plans according to environmental changes. This complete cognitive transformation chain reflects a progressive process from the acquisition of declarative knowledge to the construction of procedural knowledge, and ultimately to the application of conditional knowledge, substantially promoting the phased development of Career Maturity from lower to higher levels.

2.2 The Intervention Logic of Guidance in the Formation of Employment Satisfaction

The formation of Employment Satisfaction follows a complex psychological mechanism. Precision Employment Guidance acts upon this subjective evaluation process through a multi-path intervention logic, the mechanism of which can be fully elucidated using Expectation Confirmation Theory and Social Cognitive Theory. On the matching enhancement path, the primary role of guidance intervention lies in optimizing the accuracy of person-job matching. Through personalized competency development programs and precise job recommendation strategies, it significantly improves the alignment between students' professional skills, general competencies, and specific job requirements. This sense of competence based on capability matching forms the cognitive foundation of job satisfaction. On the expectation management path, guidance intervention effectively manages students' psychological expectations by establishing reasonable career expectations and conducting realistic job previews, utilizing techniques such as role-playing and scenario simulation. When students make employment choices based on sufficient information and rational judgment, their post-employment reality shock is reduced, thereby significantly diminishing satisfaction loss caused by the gap between expectations and reality.

On the self-efficacy reinforcement path, successful job search experiences and precise guidance feedback significantly enhance students' job search self-efficacy. This confidence in their own

job-seeking abilities not only promotes more proactive job search behaviors but also transforms into adaptability and a sense of control when facing workplace challenges after employment. Notably, Precision Employment Guidance also cultivates students' career resilience and coping strategies, strengthening their resistance to inevitable stressors in the work environment, thereby generating a sustained positive impact on Employment Satisfaction. This multi-path intervention logic collectively shapes a more controllable, predictable, and well-matched employment process, establishing a solid foundation for positive employment emotional evaluations.

2.3 The Bridging Role of Career Maturity Between Guidance and Satisfaction

Career Maturity plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship network between Precision Employment Guidance and Employment Satisfaction. This bridging function can be thoroughly elucidated through Self-Determination Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory. As an external intervention, Precision Employment Guidance does not directly or instantaneously transform its effectiveness into Employment Satisfaction; rather, it requires the evolution of students' intrinsic career psychological qualities as a transmission medium, with Career Maturity being the concentrated embodiment of these intrinsic qualities. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, when students receive precision guidance that fulfills their three basic psychological needs — autonomy, competence, and relatedness—the enhancement of their Career Maturity manifests as higher levels of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation, which becomes the core driving force for sustained career development^[4].

Analyzed through the lens of Conservation of Resources Theory, the improvement in Career Maturity equips students with richer cognitive and strategic resources to cope with career development challenges. The effective preservation and appreciation of these resources directly promotes higher levels of Employment Satisfaction. Specifically, career-mature individuals demonstrate stronger career decision-making capabilities and environmental adaptability. They can more accurately identify and obtain positions that match their personal characteristics, are more adept at positioning their value within professional environments and planning development paths, and consequently have a higher probability of achieving high levels of Employment Satisfaction. This mediating mechanism reveals that Career Maturity is not merely a simple transmitter from guidance to satisfaction but rather a catalytic converter that transforms external guidance resources into lasting intrinsic career advantages. It signifies students' fundamental transition from passive service recipients to active career self-managers, a transformation process that reflects the qualitative shift in career development from external dependence to internal drive.

Therefore, the pathway from Precision Employment Guidance to Employment Satisfaction can theoretically be clearly described as a sequential process: Precision Employment Guidance first significantly enhances students' Career Maturity by satisfying basic psychological needs and resource accumulation; subsequently, this enhanced level of Career Maturity, through strengthening self-determination and resource conservation capabilities, becomes the direct intrinsic driver of higher Employment Satisfaction. The establishment of this bridging role not only reveals the intrinsic psychological mechanism for improving career development outcomes but also provides an important theoretical basis for evaluating the effectiveness of career guidance services.

3. Theoretical Model of the Moderating Effect of Personalized Service Quality

3.1 Theoretical Enhancement of Personalized Service on Guidance Effectiveness

The level of personalized service quality theoretically constitutes a key boundary condition for how precision employment guidance influences career maturity. Its enhancement mechanism primarily manifests in the profound optimization of the guidance information transmission and internalization processes, which can be explained through the Conservation of Resources Theory. When the level of personalized service is high, instructors can provide highly customized interactive feedback and strategic suggestions based on an accurate understanding of students' cognitive characteristics and emotional needs. Such guidance interactions, deeply aligned with individual student contexts, significantly reduce students' psychological resource consumption during information processing and career decision-making, enabling them to concentrate their limited cognitive resources on core tasks such as career identity construction and decision-making reflection.

The perceived exclusive attention and deep empathy strengthen students' professional trust and

emotional identification with their instructors, leading them to more proactively accept and deeply internalize career information and decision-making advice. This optimization process effectively accelerates the reconstruction of career cognitive structures and the development of career metacognitive abilities, efficiently transforming abstract guidance principles into concrete personal action plans. Conversely, in contexts with low personalized service, the disconnection between guidance content and students' individual situations results in weakened cognitive resonance and enhanced information filtering, thereby diminishing the promotive effectiveness of guidance interventions on career maturity.

3.2 The Boundary Role of Personalized Service in the Formation of Satisfaction

In the subsequent stage where career maturity transforms into employment satisfaction, personalized service quality further exerts a critical boundary function as a contextual factor. This mechanism can be interpreted through the lens of Social Cognitive Career Theory. High levels of personalized service create a continuous supportive atmosphere and a profound sense of engagement during the guidance process. This positive psychological experience cultivates career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectations, thereby providing students with psychological resource reserves to cope with future workplace challenges^[5].

When students enter the workplace and face real challenges, the coping strategies and positive psychological capital accumulated through previous highly personalized services can effectively buffer the adaptation pressure caused by reality shock, enhancing their psychological resilience in translating career maturity into employment satisfaction. Specifically, the precise career positioning and clear self-awareness formed through highly personalized service experiences make students more likely to find work environments and organizational cultures that closely align with their core values, thereby strengthening the positive transformation from maturity to satisfaction. If personalized service is lacking, even when students possess a certain degree of career maturity, they may lack deeply customized psychological preparation and strategic support when confronting workplace complexities. This deficiency prevents the positive effects of career maturity from fully translating into positive employment emotional evaluations.

3.3 Proposition and Elucidation of the Integrated Theoretical Model

Based on the preceding theoretical reasoning, this study proposes an integrated moderated mediation theoretical model that systematically depicts the complex causal relationship network among Precision Employment Guidance, Career Maturity, Employment Satisfaction, and Personalized Service Quality. The core pathway of the model manifests as a complete mediation chain: Precision Employment Guidance, as the antecedent variable, exerts a significant indirect influence on Employment Satisfaction by enhancing Career Maturity, the key mediating variable.

The moderating effect of Personalized Service Quality operates simultaneously at two critical nodes of this transmission mechanism, forming a dual moderation pattern. First, it positively moderates the relationship strength between Precision Employment Guidance and Career Maturity, meaning that higher levels of personalized service lead to more significant promotive effects of Precision Employment Guidance on Career Maturity. Second, it concurrently moderates the transformation efficiency between Career Maturity and Employment Satisfaction, indicating that higher levels of personalized service strengthen the predictive power of Career Maturity on Employment Satisfaction.

This dual moderating effect collectively defines the central position of Personalized Service Quality within the entire influence mechanism, revealing the indispensability of high-quality service interactions for unleashing the full effectiveness of guidance content and ensuring its successful transformation into positive subjective experiences. The theoretical innovation of this integrated model lies in transcending the unidimensional analytical framework of traditional research, providing a more refined theoretical explanation for understanding the effect variations in employment guidance services by introducing a dual moderation mechanism^[6].

Conclusion

This study constructs an integrated moderated mediation model through theoretical derivation, systematically elucidating the mechanism through which Precision Employment Guidance influences Employment Satisfaction via Career Maturity, and confirms the dual moderating effect of Personalized

Service Quality within this process. The research findings indicate that Precision Employment Guidance significantly enhances students' Career Maturity by promoting the transformation of career cognition and the development of decision-making abilities, thereby indirectly optimizing Employment Satisfaction. Furthermore, high levels of Personalized Service Quality can strengthen guidance effectiveness and optimize the transformation pathway from maturity to satisfaction. These conclusions not only deepen the understanding of the operational mechanism of employment guidance but also reveal the critical value of service interaction quality in the career development process. Future research may conduct empirical testing based on these findings, further explore mechanistic variations across different institutional contexts and student populations, and incorporate more contextual variables to refine the theoretical model, thereby providing sustained theoretical support for the precision and personalization of career guidance services.

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