

Role Orientation and Competency Improvement of University Counselors in the New Era

Zheng Yang, Linxi Zhou

Chongqing Vocational Institute of Engineering, Jiangjin, 402260, China

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Abstract: This article systematically analyzes the characteristics and challenges of tertiary education in the new era, as well as the tradition and changes of counselors' roles, and then constructs the competency model of university counselors. It is found that counselors play an irreplaceable role in ideological and political education, academic guidance and mental health counseling, but there are still shortcomings in interdisciplinary knowledge, innovation ability and crisis intervention ability. In view of these problems, a series of promotion strategies and practical paths are put forward. These include strengthening education, training and professional development, paying attention to practical training and experience sharing, perfecting incentive mechanism and career promotion system, and encouraging counselors to reflect and grow themselves. The implementation of these strategies aims to comprehensively enhance the competence of counselors, make them better adapt to the educational environment of the new era, and meet the diverse growth needs of students. The research conclusion shows that the role orientation of university counselors will be more diversified and the competency requirements will be more comprehensive.

1. Introduction

With the arrival of the new era, China's tertiary education system is experiencing unprecedented changes and development [1]. The rapid development of information technology, the deepening of internationalization and the increasing demand for high-quality talents in society all pose new challenges and opportunities for tertiary education [2]. In this context, university counselors, as an important bridge connecting students with schools and society, their roles and functions are also quietly changing [3]. Counselors are no longer just student managers in the traditional sense, but also students' ideological leaders, academic guides, mental health guardians and career planning guides [4]. Their work is directly related to the comprehensive development of students and the stability and harmony of universities. Therefore, the importance of counselors in the university education system is increasingly prominent [5].

However, in the face of the new requirements of the new era, the team of counselors has also exposed some shortcomings in terms of role orientation, ability and quality [6]. How to accurately define the role of counselors in the new era and how to effectively enhance their competence has become an urgent problem in the field of tertiary education [7]. This is related to the personal career development of counselors, but also to the quality of talent training and the fulfillment of social responsibilities in universities. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the role orientation and competence enhancement of counselors in order to promote the connotative development of tertiary education, improve students' comprehensive quality and promote social harmony and stability. The purpose of this study is to clarify the competency factors that counselors should have by systematically analyzing the reform trend of tertiary education in the new era and the new orientation of counselors' roles, and then put forward effective promotion strategies.

2. The role orientation of university counselors in the new era

2.1. Tradition and change of counselor's role

With the renewal of educational ideas and the progress of technology, tertiary education is no longer limited to traditional classroom teaching, but is expanding in the direction of online and offline integration, interdisciplinary crossing and international cooperation [8]. This provides students with a broader learning space and richer educational resources, and also poses new challenges to the educational management and personnel training in universities. Figure 1 shows the characteristics of tertiary education in the new era:

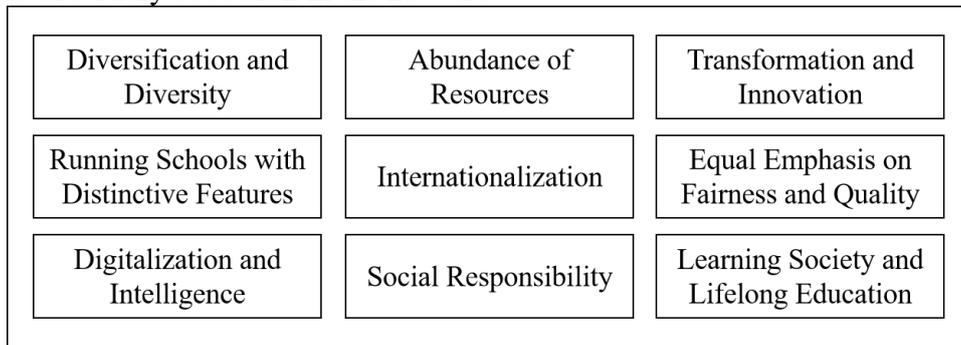


Figure 1 Characteristics of tertiary education in the new era

As an indispensable part of the tertiary education system, the role orientation of counselors is constantly changing with the development of the times. Traditionally, counselors are regarded as "managers" and "educators" of students, who are mainly responsible for students' daily management, ideological and political education and psychological health counseling [9]. However, in the new era, the role of counselors has gradually changed to multiple identities such as "server", "mentor" and "partner". They should pay attention to students' academic progress and comprehensive development. The change of this role puts forward higher requirements for the comprehensive quality and ability of counselors.

2.2. Multiple roles of counselors in the new era

In the new era, university counselors play multiple roles, which are intertwined and constitute the rich connotation of counselors' work. Counselors are the leaders of ideological and political education and should guide students to establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values. Counselors are tutors of academic and career planning, and should provide students with personalized academic guidance and career planning suggestions. At the same time, counselors are guardians of mental health, so they should pay attention to students' mental health and provide necessary psychological support and intervention. Counselors are also the promoters of class management and cultural construction. They should create a good class atmosphere and promote the comprehensive development of students.

2.3. Role conflict and coordination strategy

In the multiple roles of counselors in the new era, there will inevitably be some role conflicts. There may be a conflict between ideological and political education and mental health counseling between values guidance and personal emotional respect. There may be a contradiction between short-term goals and long-term development between academic guidance and career planning. In order to coordinate these role conflicts, counselors need to master certain strategies. Counselors should clarify the core responsibilities and boundaries of each role to avoid role confusion and conflict escalation; Strengthen self-awareness and emotional management, and maintain a positive attitude and a stable emotional state. Counselors should also pay attention to communication and cooperation, establish good cooperative relations with other educators and students, and jointly promote the healthy growth of students.

3. Construction of competency model for university counselors

3.1. Identification of competency elements for counselors

In the field of tertiary education, the competency of counselors is related to the improvement of their personal professional quality, which is the key factor affecting the quality of students' training and the overall education level of universities. To construct the competency model of counselors, it is necessary to analyze the essential characteristics of counselors' work based on the theoretical basis of competency, and make clear the core competence and quality requirements they should have.

Identifying the elements of counselors' competency is the basic step to build a competency model. This article extracts the key elements of counselors' competence from multiple dimensions, such as Table 1:

Table 1 Key Competency Elements for Student Counselors

Competency Element	Description
Profound Political Theoretical Knowledge and Firm Ideals and Beliefs	Possess solid political theoretical foundations and steadfast beliefs, capable of effectively guiding students to establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, providing the right direction for student growth.
Solid Professional Knowledge and Broad Cultural Horizons	Have a strong grasp of professional knowledge and extensive cultural understanding, able to provide precise academic guidance and career planning advice, helping students clarify their learning objectives and future development paths.
Excellent Communication and Coordination Skills and Teamwork Spirit	Demonstrate excellent communication skills and teamwork abilities, capable of facilitating effective communication between teachers and students, fostering a positive class atmosphere, and enhancing team cohesion and collaboration efficiency.
Keen Psychological Insight and Crisis Intervention Ability	Possess sharp psychological insight and crisis intervention capabilities, able to promptly identify students' psychological issues and potential crises, take effective intervention measures, and safeguard students' mental health and safety.
Awareness of Continuous Learning and Innovation Capability	Have an awareness of continuous learning and a capacity for innovation, able to constantly adapt to changes in the educational environment and evolving student needs, actively explore new educational methods and tools, and improve educational effectiveness and quality.

3.2. Construction of counselor competency model

After identifying the elements of counselors' competency, the next step is to build a competency model. This model should be a clear-cut and structured framework, which can fully reflect the composition and internal logical relationship of counselors' competence. Competency model includes three levels: core competency, professional competency and post-specific competency. For counselors, core competence may involve common qualities such as moral quality, responsibility and empathy. Professional competence covers professional skills such as ideological and political education, psychological consultation and career planning. Job-specific competencies are customized according to the specific job responsibilities and job requirements of counselors. By organically integrating these elements, a competency model of counselors is formed, which is of universal guiding significance and conforms to the actual situation.

3.3. Competency assessment and current situation analysis

After constructing the competency model, the next task is to evaluate the competency and analyze the current situation. It involves two levels: one is to evaluate the competency level of the existing counselor team and understand its performance in various competency elements; The second is to compare the competency model with the assessment results, and analyze the gaps and deficiencies in the competency of counselors. The assessment methods are diversified, as shown in

Figure 2:

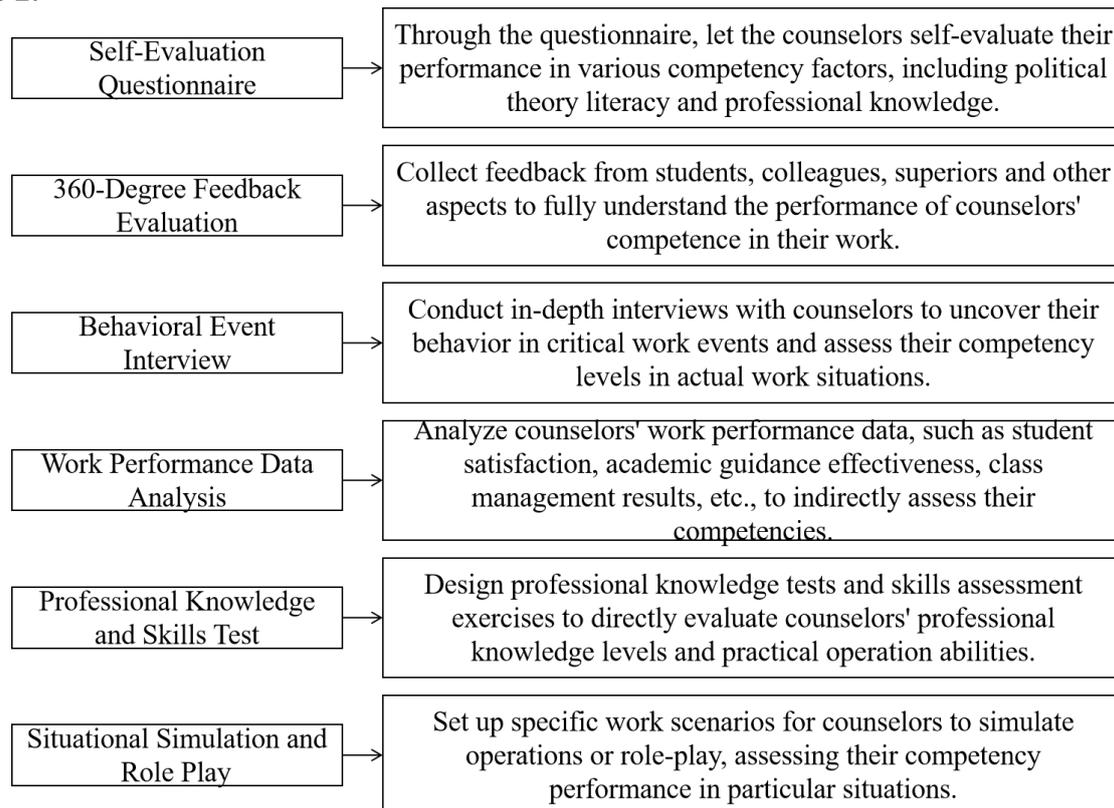


Figure 2 Competency assessment methods and contents of counselors

With the help of assessment, we can find the strengths and weaknesses of individual counselors, reveal the common problems of the whole team of counselors in competency construction, and provide targeted guidance for subsequent training and development. The analysis of the present situation also provides the decision-making basis for the management of universities, which is helpful to formulate more scientific and reasonable planning and policy measures for the construction of counselors.

4. Strategies for improving the competency of university counselors

(1) Education, training and professional development

The promotion of university counselors' competence is inseparable from systematic and continuous education and training. Universities should establish and improve the training system for counselors, and combine the competency model to design hierarchical and classified training courses. These courses should cover political theory, psychology, pedagogy, career planning and other fields, aiming at comprehensively improving the professional knowledge and practical skills of counselors. Universities should encourage counselors to participate in academic research and exchanges, broaden their horizons and improve their theoretical literacy by writing papers and attending seminars.

(2) Practice and experience sharing

Practice is the only criterion to test the truth, and it is also an important way to improve the competence of counselors. Universities should actively create practical opportunities for counselors, so that counselors can constantly temper themselves and accumulate experience in practice. Universities need to establish a communication mechanism between counselors, hold regular experience sharing meetings and case analysis meetings, and encourage counselors to share their successful cases and experiences, learn from each other and make progress together. With the help of practice and experience sharing, counselors can understand students' needs more deeply, improve their ability to solve practical problems and form more mature working methods.

(3) Incentive mechanism and career promotion

Reasonable incentive mechanism and clear career promotion path are the keys to stimulate counselors' enthusiasm and enhance their competence. Universities should establish a scientific performance assessment system, and link counselors' work performance with salary, reward and promotion, so as to ensure that excellent counselors can get due recognition and reward. With the help of the dual drive of incentive mechanism and career promotion, counselors can be more actively involved in their work and constantly improve their competence.

(4) Self-reflection and growth

The promotion of counselors' competence ultimately depends on their own efforts and growth. Universities should encourage counselors to reflect on themselves, summarize and evaluate their work regularly, find out the existing problems and deficiencies, and make improvement plans. Counselors should also pay attention to emotional management and stress adjustment, maintain a good attitude and positive emotional state, and devote themselves to their work with more enthusiasm. With the help of self-reflection and growth, counselors can constantly improve their competence and become mentors and friends on the road of students' growth.

5. Conclusions

With the help of in-depth discussion on the role orientation and competence promotion of university counselors in the new era, this article makes clear the important role of counselors in the university education system and the key competence elements needed to face the challenges of the new era. With the help of constructing the competency model of counselors, and evaluating the competency of the existing counselors and analyzing the current situation, this article finds that although the counselors have shown high professional quality and working ability on the whole, there is still room for improvement in some specific competencies. Aiming at these problems, this article puts forward a series of promotion strategies and practical paths. These promotion strategies and practical paths include strengthening education, training and professional development, paying attention to practical training and experience sharing, perfecting incentive mechanism and career promotion system, and encouraging counselors to reflect and grow themselves. The implementation of these strategies will help counselors better adapt to the educational environment of the new era and improve the quality of students' training.

With the deepening reform of tertiary education and the sustainable development of society, the role orientation of university counselors will be more diversified, and the competency requirements will be more comprehensive and in-depth. Counselors need to constantly improve their comprehensive quality and enhance interdisciplinary knowledge and practical ability to adapt to the new requirements of the new era for counselors' work. Universities should also further optimize the structure of counselors, improve the career development system of counselors, and provide more growth opportunities and development space for counselors.

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