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Effects of Counselor Ideological Intervention on College Students' Academic Trajectory and Career Transition

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Abstract: Under the all-staff, all-process, and all-round education system, the ideological and political work of university counselors is an important vehicle for coordinating students' value formation, academic growth, and career development. To clarify the internal mechanism through which such work shapes students' career transitions, this study surveyed 686 undergraduates from regular universities, merging objective academic records kept by the institutions with standardized questionnaire data. The results show that counselor ideological-political intervention effectively promotes students' academic development; sustained academic improvement in turn enhances the quality of career transitions; and the academic development trajectory exerts a significant mediating effect between ideological-political education and career transition quality. Psychological resilience positively moderates the path from the intervention to academic development. The study confirms that counselors' ideological-political work improves students' employment outcomes not through a direct effect but indirectly by elevating their academic development during college, and that individual psychological resilience can effectively reinforce the practical benefits of ideological-political education. These findings offer a reference for universities seeking to integrate academic support with career-oriented ideological-political education and to improve the multi-dimensional education system.

Keywords: Ideological-political intervention; Academic development; Career transition; Psychological resilience

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1. Introduction

Building on the core goal of fostering virtue through education in higher education, the all-staff, all-process, and all-round education initiative requires counselors to carry out systematic and routine education work across the full cycle of student growth [1]. The ideological and political guidance counselors provide in daily work is not a matter of pure theoretical instruction; it is a sustained educational practice deeply embedded in academic tutoring, psychological companionship, and career enlightenment, and serves as an important bridge between students' overall development on campus and their adaptation to the workplace after

graduation. College students today still face a number of real problems in their growth, including fluctuating academic performance, unstable learning states, and difficulty in making the transition from campus to the workplace. Traditional classroom teaching is oriented toward knowledge transmission and can hardly cover the individualized needs of students across the whole growth process. Counselors, by contrast, enjoy the advantages of close, routine, and whole-process companionship, which makes their dynamic, process-oriented intervention particularly valuable.

Most existing studies treat ideological and political education, academic support, and career guidance as separate modules, and an integrated research framework has yet to take shape; the internal linkages among the three are largely overlooked. Much of the relevant literature also relies on qualitative approaches such as experience summaries and theoretical speculation, while quantitative empirical studies remain scarce, and systematic statistical tests of the pathways linking educational intervention, academic development, and career transition are lacking.

Against this background, this study addresses three questions: Can counselors' comprehensive ideological-political education intervention effectively optimize students' dynamic academic development and improve the overall quality of their career transitions? What is the underlying transmission mechanism? Does students' psychological resilience exert a boundary-modulating effect on the pathway of the educational intervention? By empirically testing the mediating role of the academic development trajectory and the moderating role of psychological resilience, this study seeks to clarify the internal logic through which counselors' ideological-political education moves from external intervention to student development outcomes, and to provide a reference for universities in building an education model that deeply integrates academic development with career education.

2. Theoretical basis and research hypotheses

2.1. Core concept definitions

(1) Counselor ideological-political intervention

In this paper, counselor ideological-political intervention is defined as the sustained and comprehensive educational practice carried out by university counselors in their daily educational settings. This practice is no longer confined to traditional ideological and theoretical education; it systematically encompasses three dimensions of education: value guidance, individualized academic support, and stage-based career enlightenment. The study takes the frequency of education students actually perceive and the quality of support they receive as its measurement criteria, focusing on the routine, immersive educational process rather than formalized, fragmented one-off ideological-political activities.

(2) Academic development trajectory

Unlike traditional studies that gauge students' academic level merely by static final grades, this study defines the academic development trajectory from a dynamic growth perspective. Combining objective academic data with subjective learning states, it uses year-to-year GPA fluctuation to reflect the objective course of students' academic development, and pairs this with learning engagement measures to capture students' learning attitudes, energy investment, and growth trends. This approach provides a comprehensive, continuous picture of the stability and change in students' academic development during their college years [2].

(3) Career transition quality

Career transition quality measures the overall fit of students' shift from the identity of campus learner to

that of workplace professional. The concept has two evaluation dimensions: objective employment outcomes, such as whether employment is secured and the degree of alignment between the position and the student's major, and subjective psychological experiences after entering the workforce, including role adaptation, perceived job fit, and felt competence at the post. It therefore captures both employment results and the process of career adaptation as a combined level of development.

(4) Psychological resilience

Psychological resilience is a stable psychological trait that students display when confronting negative situations such as academic pressure, growth bottlenecks, and job-seeking difficulties, characterized by stress resistance, self-adjustment, and positive recovery. In the campus education context, this trait directly affects the extent to which students accept and convert counselors' support and university education resources, and it is the core individual factor that accounts for differentiated developmental outcomes under the same educational intervention.

2.2. Theoretical logic and research hypotheses

Social support theory holds that institutionalized interpersonal support on campus can effectively alleviate students' developmental pressure and promote positive growth. As an important formal support resource in universities, counselors' routine ideological-political education can accompany and guide students over the long term, effectively relieving academic confusion and goal loss, correcting learning cognition, stimulating intrinsic learning motivation, and continuously regulating learning behavior, all of which push students' academic states steadily upward [3]. Accordingly, this study proposes:

H1: Counselor ideological-political intervention can significantly and positively enhance the level of college students' academic development trajectories.

The quality of students' dynamic academic development directly determines the growth of their professional knowledge reserves, overall competence, and learning confidence, and constitutes the core foundation on which they build job-seeking competitiveness and adapt to the workplace environment. Students with stable academic states and continuous progress tend to have clearer career planning, more adequate job preparation, and stronger job-matching and workplace-adaptation abilities. Accordingly, this study proposes:

H2: College students' academic development trajectory has a significant positive predictive effect on career transition quality.

Counselors' ideological-political education is a long-term, process-oriented educational undertaking that cannot directly determine students' final employment outcomes; its educational value is characterized by delay and indirectness. By continuously optimizing students' academic states and accumulating academic development capital, the intervention gradually builds students' overall competence and career literacy, and ultimately empowers their career transitions. Based on this, the study proposes:

H3: The academic development trajectory mediates the relationship between counselor ideological-political intervention and college students' career transition quality.

The same campus education support can produce differentiated educational effects in students with different psychological traits. Students with high resilience have stronger stress resistance and proactive adaptation capacity; they actively accept counselors' guidance and support, adjust their own learning states and development plans, and efficiently convert external education resources into their own academic growth

advantages. Students with low resilience, by contrast, are easily disturbed by emotions of frustration and struggle to fully absorb educational resources. Accordingly, this study proposes:

H4: Psychological resilience positively moderates the path from counselor ideological-political intervention to the academic development trajectory; the higher students' psychological resilience, the more pronounced the promoting effect of the intervention on academic development.

3. Research methods

3.1. Research subjects

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design for data collection, selecting full-time undergraduates from two regular public universities in the province as the research sample. The survey covered all four grade levels from freshman to senior and spanned mainstream disciplinary categories such as the humanities and social sciences and science and engineering, ensuring diversity of sample coverage. Data were collected through an anonymous online questionnaire. To safeguard data quality, questionnaires with excessively short completion times, monotonous response patterns, or large areas of missing responses were systematically excluded, yielding 686 valid responses. The sample has good representativeness and can genuinely reflect the current development status of students in regular universities.

3.2. Measurement instruments

All latent variables in this study were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), while demographic variables were handled with categorical statistics. The specific measurement of each variable is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Overview of measurement instruments for each variable

Variable	Measurement	Source
Counselor ideological-political intervention	Self-developed 7-item scale covering three dimensions: value guidance, academic support, and career planning	Adapted from the NSSE measurement approach and localized to the university ideological-political education context
Academic development trajectory	Objective indicator: year-to-year GPA change; subjective indicator: learning engagement measured with the short form of the UWES-S	Mature scale developed by Schaufeli et al.
Career transition quality	Combines objective employment outcomes with subjective adaptation experience, covering employment status and degree of major–job match	Self-developed based on domestic and international career transition literature
Psychological resilience	CD-RISC-10 short form	Developed by Connor et al.; widely validated in Chinese college student populations
Control variables	Gender, major category, family background type	Basic demographic indicators

Reliability and validity tests showed that the self-developed counselor ideological-political intervention scale had an overall Cronbach's α of 0.84, with all dimension α coefficients above 0.7, and confirmatory factor analysis supported its three-dimensional structure; the self-developed career adaptation items had a Cronbach's α of 0.78. UWES-S and CD-RISC-10 are mature scales [4], with α coefficients of 0.81 and 0.80, respectively, in this study; all scales met the reliability standards. The objective indicators (GPA change, employment status, and degree of major–job match) are independent observed variables and were not

subjected to scale reliability and validity tests.

3.3. Data analysis methods

Data analysis was performed with SPSS 26.0 and the accompanying PROCESS macro. The analysis proceeded in steps:

First, Harman's single-factor test was used to examine common method bias in the overall data, ruling out interference from same-source bias in the research results.

Second, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis were completed for all variables, providing an initial picture of the direction and significance of the associations among variables.

Third, hierarchical regression models were used to test the main effects and verify hypotheses H1 and H2. PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples was used to examine the mediating mechanism of the academic development trajectory and test H3; PROCESS Model 7 was used to test the boundary-moderation effect of psychological resilience and verify H4, with simple slope plots visually displaying the differences in effects between the high- and low-resilience groups [5].

Finally, subgroup comparison regression analyses were conducted to further test the robustness and fit of the overall model.

4. Research results

4.1. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

To avoid systematic errors arising from same-source data, Harman's single-factor test was used to screen the overall data for bias. The results showed that the first unrotated common factor accounted for 27.92% of the variance, below the 40% threshold commonly adopted in the field, indicating no obvious common method bias and good overall data reliability. The central tendency, dispersion, and intercorrelations of the core variables are reported in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient matrix (n = 686)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Counselor ideological-political intervention	3.62	0.71	1			
2 Academic development trajectory	3.47	0.68	0.41***	1		
3 Career transition quality	3.51	0.74	0.32***	0.46***	1	
4 Psychological resilience	3.55	0.66	0.35***	0.37***	0.39***	1

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; ***P < 0.001.

The correlation analysis showed that the four core variables—counselor ideological-political intervention, academic development trajectory, career transition quality, and psychological resilience—were all significantly positively associated, with every correlation significant at the 0.001 level. Specifically, the correlation between ideological-political intervention and students' dynamic academic development was 0.41. The correlation between academic development and career transition adaptation quality was 0.46. The correlation between the intervention and overall career transition outcomes was 0.32. The correlation between psychological resilience and the academic development trajectory was 0.37. The directions of

these correlations align closely with the theoretical reasoning, providing an initial data foundation for the subsequent path tests.

4.2. Tests of main, mediating, and moderating effects

With demographic variables such as gender, major, and family background controlled, the hierarchical regression results showed that counselors' ideological-political intervention significantly and positively predicted students' academic development trajectories ($\beta = 0.36$, $P < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.18$), supporting hypothesis H1. Students' academic development also had a significant positive predictive effect on career transition quality ($\beta = 0.40$, $P < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.22$), lending empirical support to H2.

A bootstrap procedure with 5,000 resamples was used to test the mediating path. The results showed that the indirect effect of the academic development trajectory between ideological-political intervention and career transition quality was 0.14, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.08, 0.21] that excluded zero, confirming a significant mediating path and supporting H3. Further analysis found that the direct effect of ideological-political intervention on career transition quality was not statistically significant, indicating that the academic development trajectory plays a fully mediating role between the intervention and career transition quality. In other words, the positive effect of counselors' ideological-political education on students' career development does not operate directly; it is achieved indirectly through the continuous improvement of students' academic development.

The moderation test showed that the interaction term between ideological-political intervention and psychological resilience significantly predicted the academic development trajectory ($\beta = 0.13$, $P < 0.01$), supporting H4. Simple slope analysis directly reflected the moderating difference: among students with high psychological resilience, the promoting effect of the intervention on academic development was stronger (simple slope = 0.48, $P < 0.001$), whereas among students with low resilience, the effect was markedly weaker (simple slope = 0.24, $P < 0.01$). Individual psychological resilience therefore effectively enhances and amplifies the positive role of counselors' ideological-political education in students' academic development, and constitutes an important protective and promotive psychological resource.

4.3. Supplementary heterogeneity analysis

To further explore group differences in educational effects, the sample was divided into students with academic difficulties and those without for subgroup comparison. The results showed that students with different academic foundations differ markedly in their capacity to absorb and convert ideological-political education resources. Students without academic difficulties were better able to take up counselors' ideological-political support, and the mediating transmission of the academic trajectory was more stable and significant in this group. Students with weaker academic foundations, affected by insufficient learning accumulation, heavier academic pressure, and negative emotional interference, had relatively limited acceptance and conversion efficiency of external education resources, so the educational effectiveness of the ideological-political intervention was weakened to some extent. The two groups displayed clear developmental heterogeneity.

5. Discussion and implications

5.1. Discussion

The mediation model test confirms that counselors' ideological-political intervention improves college

students' career transition quality not directly, but indirectly through the mediating role of the academic development trajectory. Ideological-political lectures or career guidance in isolation can hardly improve students' employment competitiveness directly. The truly effective educational logic is that routine ideological-political support regulates students' learning states and stabilizes their academic development; the academic advantages accumulated over time further strengthen students' job-seeking confidence and job-adaptation ability, and ultimately facilitate a smooth transition from campus to workplace. This also implies that university education must attach importance to cultivating the academic process, rather than focusing only on terminal employment outcomes.

The moderation results show that the effects of ideological-political education carry clear individual differences. As an important protective psychological resource, psychological resilience positively amplifies the educational value of counselors' intervention. Students with higher resilience are better at accepting external guidance and quickly repairing academic setbacks, effectively converting ideological-political support into academic progress; students with low resilience are easily disturbed by negative emotions, and even with the same educational support, their academic gains remain relatively limited. This conclusion explains the sources of developmental heterogeneity among students under a homogenized education model, and highlights the need for precise education that attends to both external intervention and individual psychological traits.

5.2. Practical implications

Drawing on the findings, this study proposes three concise and feasible strategies for optimizing educational practice. First, seize key intervention windows and move educational work forward to the sophomore year. The sophomore year is a critical juncture marked by academic differentiation, declining motivation, and vague career perceptions. Counselors should shift the center of gravity of their work earlier, concentrating academic correction, value guidance, and career enlightenment in the second semester of the sophomore year, so as to prevent later dual difficulties in academics and employment at the source. Second, advance integrated education construction and break the fragmentation of current work [6]. Ideological-political education, academic support, and career guidance in universities need to move away from fragmented models and establish linkage mechanisms. Counselors should incorporate value leadership, academic supervision, and career planning into daily education scenarios, building a progressive education chain that runs from thought to academics to career and achieves whole-process empowerment. Third, implement tiered and targeted support with particular attention to vulnerable groups. For students with low psychological resilience and weak academic foundations, uniform support models should be abandoned. On the basis of routine academic guidance, emotional companionship and psychological counseling should be added to improve students' stress resistance and adjustment ability, enhance their efficiency in converting educational resources, and narrow the developmental gaps between groups.

6. Conclusion

This study empirically verified the progressive mechanism of counselors' ideological-political education in universities: the intervention first optimizes students' academic development and then drives the improvement of their career transition quality, with the academic development trajectory serving a key mediating function and psychological resilience constituting an important positive boundary condition that

strengthens this educational chain. The study shows that the value guidance, academic support, and career guidance counselors provide on a routine basis cannot directly change students' employment outcomes; they mainly help students complete a smooth transition from campus to the workplace by continuously improving their academic development during college. Students with sound psychological resilience can absorb and convert counselors' educational support more efficiently, giving full play to the academic empowerment value of the ideological-political intervention and significantly improving the overall educational effect. Future research could further verify and refine the stability and causal validity of this model through longitudinal tracking surveys and expanded, more diverse samples.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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