

Research on the Characteristics of Career Maturity and Improvement Path of Visually Impaired College Students

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i3/26333>

Published Online: 18 September 2025

Abstract

As a disadvantaged group, the employment of disabled college students has become one of the important problems that need to be solved by the society, and the level of vocational maturity, as an assessment indicator of the readiness of vocational choice, is of great significance to improve the employment level of disabled college students. In this study, the Career Maturity Scale for Chinese College Students was used as an assessment tool, and a detailed questionnaire survey was conducted and analysed on 127 visually impaired college students and 96 ordinary college students. The data were analysed through descriptive statistics and t-tests, and it was found that visually impaired college students had lower career maturity than ordinary college students, especially in the three dimensions of dependence on family and friends, career values and career goals. For this reason, the study proposes three strategies to enhance the career maturity of visually impaired college students, namely, exploring new paths for the cultivation of visually impaired college students, expanding career horizons and breaking cognitive limitations, strengthening home-school cooperation and raising parents' awareness of employment, and carrying out activities to explore career values and increasing practice opportunities.

Keywords: Visually Impaired College Students, Career Maturity, Professional Goal, Professional Value, Reliance on Friends and Family

Problem formulation

After completing higher education, visually impaired students often show relative weakness in career choice when facing employment. Inadequate career planning, inability to make clear career choices, and lack of preparation for careers in colleges and universities have led to a serious employment situation. At present, the promotion of equal employment for persons with disabilities has become an important issue of social equity and livelihood development. As a special group with higher education background, the employment quality of visually impaired university students is not only related to the realisation of personal values, but also affects the full use of social talent resources. In this regard, the term career maturity has been widely noticed. Career maturity is an important indicator to assess the ability of college students to have a clearer understanding of their own career development during the

study stage and their entry into the workplace and to be able to effectively use these understandings for career decision-making, solving the challenges encountered in the development of their careers, and having the ability to adapt to the workplace environment and requirements, which is of great significance for the choice of employment, not only to clarify career orientation and goals, but also to give full play to their strengths in the suitable career field for personal development. It is of great significance to the employment choice, not only can it clarify the career orientation and goal, improve the efficiency of job-seeking, but also give full play to the speciality in the career field suitable for oneself and promote the personal development. However, the existing research pays more attention to the career maturity of ordinary college students, but there is still a lack of research on the career maturity of this special group of visually impaired college students. There is a lack of systematic analyses on the core dimensions of career awareness, decision-making ability, and adaptive readiness of visually impaired college students, and there is no full revelation of the differences in career maturity between visually impaired college students and ordinary college students as well as the deeper reasons for the differences. As a result, it is impossible to provide effective theoretical support and practical basis for colleges and universities to formulate targeted career guidance programmes and improve the employment situation of visually impaired college students. Based on this, this study examines the career maturity of visually impaired college students and compares it with that of ordinary college students. Based on the results of the survey, the study proposes a series of strategies and suggestions to enhance the career maturity of visually impaired college students, with a view to providing references for solving the employment dilemma of visually impaired college students and facilitating their career development.

Background and Significance of the Study

Western Super (1955) first put forward the concept of career maturity, that “it is the individual from the exploration to the decline of the level of change in the stage, including career choice orientation and other basic dimensions” (Zheng, 2010); China's Long Lirong (2000) for the first time in the study of college students' ability to maturity in their career choices and to publicize the concept, and the concept of career maturity, Shen Zhifei (2000) discussed the related concepts and theories in detail in his work, and then the research activities on career maturity gradually increased in China. Numerous scholars, such as Zang Gangshun, Zhang Zhiyong, and Xiong Hongxing, have conducted in-depth discussions and research on the concept of career maturity and its influencing elements.

Against the backdrop of growing concern in all sectors of society about the employment of college students with disabilities, China is adopting diversified policy instruments to promote progress in the employment of college students with disabilities. As key venues for nurturing professionals with disabilities, institutions of higher education attach great importance to enhancing the vocational decision-making and preparation skills of students with disabilities. Research has shown that “the difficulty of college students' career decision-making is positively proportional to their career maturity, i.e., the lower the level of career maturity, the more difficult it is for students to make career choices” (Liu, 2025).

This study takes visually impaired college students as the research object, firstly, due to their visual problems, lack of self-confidence, self-reliance, self-improvement consciousness, and at the same time, the society still has prejudice for this group, and there are greater

difficulties in their employment (Wu, 2023); Secondly, there is insufficient research on the employment of visually impaired students in China, which fails to provide sufficient theoretical support and leads to insufficient social attention to this group. Therefore, research on the career maturity of visually impaired college students can help visually impaired college students clarify their self-knowledge and career planning in terms of their own development, so that they can fully grasp their own career interests, abilities, strengths and values, and reduce the blind spot of their career knowledge due to their visual impairment, and prevent them from blindly choosing unsuitable career directions. At the same time, in the process of career selection, it can also enhance their ability to make rational judgments and analyze their career choices, slow down the burnout and negative emotions of visually impaired college students in choosing careers and employment, and then effectively enhance their mental toughness to deal with difficulties encountered in the workplace more proactively. From the perspective of social integration, this helps to promote fairness in employment opportunities. By popularizing the concept of vocational maturity, showing the society the vocational development potential of visually impaired students, breaking the traditional vocational cognition, promoting the social reconstruction of the cognition of the ability of the disabled group, reducing the discrimination in employment, and enhancing the tolerance and support for the employment of visually impaired students in the society, so as to promote the high-quality choice of employment of visually impaired students in both directions and their better integration into the society.

Research Contributions

Theoretical Level

This study fills the gap in the research on career maturity of visually impaired college students. While most of the existing studies focus on ordinary college students, this study is the first to systematically compare the differences between visually impaired and ordinary college students in the six dimensions of career maturity, clarifying the significant differences between the two in terms of dependence on friends and relatives, career value, and career goals, as well as revealing the current situation of overall low career maturity among visually impaired college students, providing new data and theoretical additions to the research on the career development of special groups, and enriching the theoretical system in the field of higher education and vocational guidance for people with disabilities. It also enriches the theoretical system in the field of higher education and career guidance for people with disabilities.

Practical Level

This study provides a feasible path to enhance the career maturity of visually impaired college students. The strategies proposed in the study, such as "developing non-visual career assessment tools + school-enterprise co-operation to broaden majors", "home-school co-operation in career planning", "career value exploration activities + accessible internships", etc., can directly provide reference for universities to formulate career guidance programmes for visually impaired students and for enterprises to carry out accessible employment practices. The strategies proposed in the study, such as "developing non-visual career assessment tools + school-enterprise cooperation to broaden majors", "home-school collaboration in career planning", "career value exploration activities + accessible internships", etc., can directly provide reference for universities to formulate career guidance programmes for visually impaired students and enterprises to carry out accessible

employment practices, which can help solve the problems of ambiguous career goals and a single direction of employment for visually impaired students.

Social Dimension

This study promotes a change in society's perception of the employment of the visually impaired. By presenting the career development potential of visually impaired students, the study breaks the stereotype that visually impaired students can only work in the massage industry, provides a basis for advocating employment fairness and enhancing the social inclusion of visually impaired students in employment, and promotes the integration of visually impaired students into the society, so as to realise an efficient match between their personal values and social resources.

Research Ideas

This study takes ordinary college students and visually impaired college students as research objects, takes career reference, family and friends dependence, career autonomy, career value, career self-confidence, and career goal as reference dimensions, focuses on analyzing the differences and connections between the two in terms of career maturity characteristics, and puts forward targeted and practical enhancement strategies and paths to improve the career maturity and employment selection ability of visually impaired college students, aiming to help visually impaired college students to The aim is to help visually impaired college students to further improve their career maturity and employment competitiveness, realize high-level and high-level employment, and better integrate into social life.

Research Methodology

Subjects of the Study

This survey selected five grades of Binzhou Medical College from freshmen to seniors as the sample, covering 127 visually impaired college students and 96 ordinary college students, and implemented stratified sampling. A total of 223 questionnaires were distributed by means of Questionstar online questionnaire, and all questionnaires were valid, realizing a 100% effective recovery rate.

Research Instrument

Career Maturity Scale The Career Maturity Scale for College Students revised by Zhang Zhiyong and other scholars was used(Zhang,Z.Y.,Rong,Y.,&Guan,Y.J.2006). The scale takes into account the characteristics of typical oriental cultures, and the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was tested to be 0.8691, and the split-half reliability was 0.8961, which has good reliability and validity.The scale consists of 34 questions, including: career goals (8 questions), career self-confidence (6 questions), career values (6 questions), career autonomy (4 questions), dependence on family and friends (4 questions), and career reference (6 questions). Respondents were asked to rate their actual situation on a scale of 1-5 on a five-point scale ranging from "very unsuitable" to "very suitable", and the responses were tallied.

Survey Data Processing

The questionnaires were uniformly distributed, administered and collected on a grade level basis. The SPSS tool was used to input and process the data to show the scores of different dimensions by adding or subtracting the standard deviation from the mean.First,

descriptive statistics were used to test the overall situation of the group of visually impaired college students versus the group of regular college students, and then independent samples t-tests were used to compare the differences between the two groups on each dimension. The level of statistical significance was 0.05, and a statistically significant difference was considered to exist when $P < 0.05$.

Results and Analysis

(I) Differences in Career Maturity of Different Populations

Table 5-1 Overall Differences in Career Maturity of Visually Impaired and General College Students

Population	Career maturity (mean $\pm$ standard deviation)	t	p
Regular college students (n=96)	3.29 $\pm$ 0.51	2.315	0.022
Visually impaired college students (n=127)	3.15 $\pm$ 0.42		

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

In this study, the independent samples t-test was used to compare the career maturity of visually impaired college students with that of ordinary college students, and the results showed that there was a significant difference between the two ($t=2.315$, $p=0.022 < 0.05$). The mean value of career maturity of visually impaired college students was 3.15, compared to the mean value of career maturity of ordinary college students, which was 3.29, this data shows that the career maturity of visually impaired college students is generally lower than that of ordinary college students. This finding reveals the shortcomings of visually impaired college students in their preparation for career development, and there is an urgent need to analyze the causes of these shortcomings from multiple perspectives and to take corresponding targeted improvement measures.

At the individual level, the career development of visually impaired college students is obviously limited by their personal situation. The lack of visual function makes them face multiple obstacles in career exploration, such as access to information and practical experience, for example, it is difficult for them to understand the career environment and work process through visual observation. At the same time, some visually impaired students are prone to self-perception bias and under-assessment of their own abilities due to long-term social prejudice or frustrating experiences in their growth, and thus lack self-confidence and a sense of proactive competition.

The influence of the family cannot be ignored. Some families have an over-protective or low expectation of their visually impaired children, failing to encourage them to explore the world of work independently, and inadvertently reinforcing the negative perception that "visually impaired means disadvantaged". In addition, the lack of communication between parents and their children on the topic of career development makes visually impaired college students lack guidance on career values from their next of kin, which makes them prone to be confused in their career choices.

Schools, as the main training ground for talents, are obviously lacking in the training of vocational maturity of visually impaired students. At present, most colleges and universities have not yet established a personalised mental health education system for visually impaired

students, and have failed to effectively ease their career anxiety and self-doubt due to their physiological defects. In particular, there is a general lack of personalisation and relevance in career planning education for visually impaired university students, which exposes them to challenges in mastering career development planning skills, lack of adequate career preparation, and consequently, lack of maturity in terms of the degree of career growth (Wu, L.L. 2023).

Table 5-2

Differences between visually impaired college students and regular college students on each dimension

norm	General college students (n=96, mean $\pm$ standard deviation)	Visually impaired university students (n=127, mean $\pm$ standard deviation)	t	p
occupational reference	3.48 $\pm$ 0.67	3.39 $\pm$ 0.61	1.012	0.313
Reliance on friends and family	2.93 $\pm$ 0.80	2.71 $\pm$ 0.81	1.996	0.047*
Professional autonomy	3.63 $\pm$ 0.74	3.59 $\pm$ 0.67	0.414	0.679
professional value	3.10 $\pm$ 0.77	2.90 $\pm$ 0.73	1.985	0.048*
professional confidence	3.21 $\pm$ 0.76	3.07 $\pm$ 0.78	1.309	0.192
professional goal	3.31 $\pm$ 0.55	3.13 $\pm$ 0.52	2.490	0.014*

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

The t-test study showed the differences between visually impaired college students and ordinary college students for a total of six dimensions, namely, career reference, dependence on friends and family, career autonomy, career value, career self-confidence, and career goals, which can be derived from Table 5-2. Both of them will not show significance ($p>0.05$) for 3 items of career reference, career autonomy, and career self-confidence, which means that all of them show consistency and no difference for career reference, career autonomy, and career self-confidence. The three items of dependence on family and friends, career value, and career goal show significance ($p<0.05$), which means that there are differences in dependence on family and friends, career value, and career goal.

In terms of the dimensions, both ordinary college students and visually impaired college students scored the highest in career autonomy, which is consistent with the results of He Huanhao (2019) and Zhou Bin's study (2011), and scored the lowest in the aspect of reliance on friends and relatives, which can indicate that contemporary college students have a stronger sense of autonomy, have their own ideas about career choices, and have less reliance on the opinions of friends and relatives.

According to the comparison of the scores of visually impaired college students and ordinary college students in each dimension, there are significant differences between them in terms of dependence on family and friends, career value and career goal. In terms of dependence on friends and relatives, the mean value of visually impaired college students (2.71) is lower than that of ordinary college students (2.93), indicating that visually impaired college students are more independent in terms of dependence on friends and relatives than ordinary college students, and that they do not rely on their friends and relatives too much in their choice of career. This result is closely related to the targeted educational support of schools. Most colleges and universities provide career planning courses and independent life

training for visually impaired students, helping them to build up their independent decision-making ability, reduce the over-reliance on external opinions, and gradually form a "self-assessment - goal-setting - independent choice" career decision-making mode. They are gradually forming a career decision-making model of "self-assessment - goal-setting - independent choice".

In terms of career value, the mean value of visually impaired college students is lower (2.9) than that of ordinary college students (3.1), which reflects the difference in value judgement between the two groups: ordinary college students pay more attention to the external benefits such as monetary return and social status brought by their career, while visually impaired college students, due to the availability of social resources and their own conditions, pay more attention to the survival value and social meaning of their career itself, such as whether they can achieve economic independence, integrate into the society and contribute their personal value. This division of value orientation is closely related to the reality of the two groups.

In terms of career goals, the mean value of visually impaired college students (3.13) is lower than that of ordinary college students (3.31). The underlying reasons for this are threefold: firstly, the lack of targeted career guidance, and the existing courses do not adequately incorporate the characteristics of the career development of visually impaired students; secondly, the limitation of their own ability development, and the insufficient training of some vocational skills affects the goal-setting; and thirdly, the greater pressure of competition in the job market, which makes it easy to have a sense of confusion in the choice of career and difficult to form clear and stable career goals. Thirdly, the pressure of competition in the job market makes it easy for them to be confused in their career choices, making it difficult for them to form clear and stable career goals.

In conclusion, the difference in career maturity between visually impaired and ordinary college students is centred on the level of realistic adaptation, and the improvement of this situation needs to be strengthened with targeted support, especially the enhancement of visually impaired college students' ability to plan their career goals and guidance on the path of value realisation.

I. Countermeasures to improve the career maturity of visually impaired college students

Explore new paths for the training of visually impaired college students, broaden career horizons and break cognitive limitations.

Nowadays, as the education of persons with disabilities is receiving more and more attention, the proportion of the visually impaired group receiving higher education continues to climb. However, higher education for the visually impaired group is still at an early stage of development, and their employment is mainly confined to the massage industry. As a sample, Zhejiang Vocational College of Special Education (ZVCSE) offers professional education programmes in the fields of rehabilitation therapy technology (massage) as well as music performance for the visually restricted community (Huang, G.M. 2024). Meanwhile, Changchun University offers acupuncture and massage, rehabilitation therapy for low vision, and music performance, and Binzhou Medical College offers Chinese medicine (acupuncture and massage). Although the field of higher education for the visually impaired is gradually developing, there is still a big conflict between the homogeneity of the employment field and

the diversified employment needs of the visually impaired, which restricts the process of realising the diversified employment goals of visually impaired university students. As a result, visually impaired students are more confused about their career choices than ordinary students, and do not have clear goals, which is inextricably linked to the fact that their occupations are more homogeneous and their specialisations are more restrictive.

In order to enhance the career clarity of visually impaired students, senior secondary schools or post-secondary schools can join hands with career assessment agencies to develop non-visual career assessment tools suitable for visually impaired students according to the characteristics of visually impaired students, e.g. analysing the students' interest inclination (e.g. music, language, art, etc.), ability strengths (auditory acuity, memory, communication skills, etc.) and vocational values by means of audio-quizzes and haptic feedback. We also generate customised career advice reports. Based on this information, the higher education institutions will, according to the results of data analysis, dock with the corresponding enterprises, clarify the market demand, and appropriately broaden the professional choices of visually impaired college students. This will not only provide a clear direction for universities to cultivate students, but also help enterprises to cultivate and deliver talents on a regular basis, and also effectively solve the problem of visually impaired college students' confused career goals. By using the assessment results to adjust the setting of specialities, coupled with the mode of school-enterprise co-operation in training, the universities can make the specialities more in line with the needs of the market, and the enterprises can train suitable talents in a targeted manner; at the same time, there is career guidance throughout the whole process from schooling to employment, which can help visually-impaired students to be clear about their own abilities and to find a suitable career direction. In this way, schools, enterprises and individual students can all benefit, so that career choices can be more planned and orientated, instead of being groped blindly in the past.

Home-school co-operation to raise parents' awareness of employment and full participation in students' career planning

Relevant research shows that "parental career deficit is positively correlated with children's difficulties in choosing careers, i.e., parents' excessive involvement and indifference in their children's career choices can cause different dilemmas in their children's career choices" (Chen, W., Guo, S.Y., & Guo, Z. 2025, June 3). Therefore, parents and schools should work closely together to provide comprehensive and strong support for their children in career choice. Schools may organise various forms of activities, such as family career exploration days, to create a platform for parents and children to jointly explore career choices. In the process, parents should consider in depth with their children a number of factors, such as personal interests, strengths, future industry development, etc., and help their children understand contemporary employment policies and trends. This type of activity also promotes a two-way dialogue between parents and children, which not only enhances mutual understanding, but also makes children feel respected and supported. As parents, the responsibility is not only to take care of your child on a daily basis, but also to understand your child's inner thoughts and to maintain frequent and effective communication. As society continues to progress and change, parents also need to refresh their own perceptions and endeavour to consider issues from their children's perspectives and respect their personal choices. When their children are confused about their career choices, parents should give appropriate advice based on their own experience and knowledge, rather than imposing their own wishes and avoiding putting

too much pressure on their children. Parents can more effectively assist their children in career planning by actively participating in career development-related activities organised by schools and actively absorbing the relevant knowledge. When their children feel confused about their career choices, parents should provide a warm harbour and give them reasonable and constructive advice to help them find their own direction.

Provide career values exploration activities to increase opportunities for practice

Schools can provide special courses or modules for exploring vocational values. Firstly, using the value ranking assessment tool, visually impaired students are guided to think deeply about their own vocational values. For example, by listing various elements of career values such as income, job stability, social contribution, matching interests, etc., students are asked to rank the importance of these elements, so that they can have a clearer understanding of the values that they really value in their hearts, and thus have a better direction in choosing their careers. Secondly, in order to gain a deeper understanding of career values, follow-up workshops on career values are organised, i.e. successful visually impaired persons are invited as guest speakers to give talks. These guests will share their career experiences, including how they have persevered with their values and overcome difficulties to achieve their career goals in their careers. Interactive sessions can also be set up in the workshops to allow visually impaired students to communicate with the guest speakers, solve their own problems, draw strength from role models and establish correct career values. Lastly, in addition to successful visually impaired persons, entrepreneurs from different industries can be invited into schools to have talks with visually impaired college students, introducing the operation concepts of the enterprises, the criteria for talent selection and the prospects of the industry, so as to promote social integration. Visually impaired university students can understand the expectations of enterprises on the career value of talents and recognise the connection between their own career value and the needs of enterprises and the development of society. This kind of communication and interaction helps visually impaired students to adjust their vocational values to match the needs of society and enhance their vocational maturity.

Apart from that, accessibility internship programmes can be established through university-enterprise cooperation to provide visually impaired college students with opportunities to practice in the workplace. Enterprises offer positions suitable for visually impaired college students, such as customer service, data labelling, and accessibility product evaluator. The school assists the enterprises in modifying the working environment and adapting the equipment to ensure that the visually impaired students can have a smooth internship. In the course of the internship, mentors from the enterprises and teachers from the school work together to help the students combine theoretical knowledge with practice, and at the same time deepen their understanding of the value of the profession in practice. On campus, various kinds of experiential vocational practice activities can be organised, such as job simulation and vocational role-playing. In the simulated workplace activities, different industries and job scenarios are set up for visually impaired students to play the roles of job applicants and employees, so that they can experience all kinds of situations in job-seeking and work, and learn about the job content, requirements and values of different occupations. Through these activities, they can have a more intuitive feeling of the differences in occupational values, identify "what I want" and "what I need", and make more reasonable judgements on occupational values.

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