

The Significance of Cultivating the Career Development Ability and Career Planning of Ethnic Medicine Postgraduates

Hao Zeng, Xueting Lin, Gang Fang*

Guangxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Nanning 530001, Guangxi, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: As outstanding talents of higher education in China, postgraduates majoring in ethnic medicine should have their career development ability cultivated. This study explores countermeasures to improve the professional ability training of ethnic medicine postgraduates, helping them establish correct career awareness and conduct reasonable career planning, so as to improve competitiveness in the increasingly severe employment situation and solve the employment difficulties of ethnic medicine postgraduates, which can make positive contributions to the medical and health undertakings of the motherland. It is highly necessary to cultivate postgraduates' professional ability and guide reasonable career planning.

Keywords: Postgraduates; Career development ability; Career planning; Countermeasures

Online publication: April 24, 2026

1. Introduction

In recent years, universities have expanded enrollment significantly. Beyond associate and undergraduate education, postgraduate recruitment has also increased substantially. With the vigorous development of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and ethnic medicine in China, the number of medical school applicants has repeatedly hit record highs. As aspiring students enter the medical field, majors related to TCM and ethnic medicine have become popular choices^[1]. Meanwhile, hospital demand has become increasingly saturated, with a growing preference for highly educated talents such as doctoral graduates and postdoctoral researchers. This has placed medical postgraduates, once regarded as high-level talents, in a severe employment situation.

In particular, postgraduates majoring in TCM and ethnic medicine face limited recruitment positions and insufficient competitive advantages. Although they possess TCM/ethnic medicine skills and theoretical foundations, they lack proficiency in Western medical skills and theories. For employment in primary hospitals, they are less cost-effective than undergraduates, and many primary hospitals refuse to serve as

“stepping stones” for these postgraduates. Employment prospects in tertiary hospitals are also unsatisfactory, as their clinical and research capabilities are generally inferior to those of doctoral candidates, leaving them in the awkward position of “inferior to the top, superior to the bottom.” Cultivating career development competence and guiding reasonable career planning for ethnic medicine postgraduates to enhance their competitiveness is an effective way to address this dilemma.

2. The significance of cultivating career development competence for ethnic medicine postgraduates

Career development competence refers to the ability to adapt to occupational and economic development demands and continuously improve professional capabilities based on professional qualities ^[2]. Ethnic medicine postgraduates are categorized into professional master’s and academic master’s candidates, with distinct training needs for professional competence.

For professional postgraduates, it is crucial to improve clinical practical ability, the capacity for continuous learning of cutting-edge medical knowledge, and the ability to solve practical doctor-patient issues. For academic postgraduates, strengthening research competence, innovation ability, and proficiency in studying cutting-edge medical research literature is more important. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on fostering the dynamic and diversified growth of professional qualities.

Comprehensive quality is an integrated system consisting of ideological and political literacy, cultural literacy, innovation ability, practical ability, physical and mental literacy, and other factors. The cultivation of general and professional abilities in postgraduate career development is closely related to the cultivation of innovation and practical abilities in comprehensive quality ^[3].

General ability refers to the comprehensive capability shared by all postgraduates regardless of major, reflecting basic qualities ^[4]. Examples include autonomous learning, self-management, self-expression, interpersonal communication, and teamwork—all of which support the sustainable development of professional competence. Professional ability, as the name suggests, forms the foundation for career development ^[5]. For instance, professional master’s students require specialized theoretical knowledge and clinical skills for medical practice, along with basic research competence; academic master’s students demand higher research competence with only basic clinical knowledge and skills. These abilities can be gradually enhanced through continuous learning and practice.

Having passed rigorous selection through college entrance examinations, postgraduate preliminary and supplementary examinations, medical postgraduates often exhibit greater confidence, independence, and resilience compared with associate and undergraduate students, demonstrating strong subjective consciousness. However, overemphasis on self-actualization may lead to a lack of teamwork and selfless dedication. Targeted teaching is therefore essential. For example, professional postgraduates must not only focus on theoretical knowledge but also on clinical practice; otherwise, their comprehensive quality cannot be effectively improved.

Thus, starting from the all-round development of individual professional qualities, we should consolidate the foundation of comprehensive quality training, focus on cultivating career development competence, guide postgraduates to actively participate in clinical practice, scientific research, teamwork, and other training activities, and comprehensively improve their career development competence and comprehensive quality. Cultivating postgraduates’ career development competence must respect their individual strengths and

developmental needs to stimulate internal recognition and enthusiasm for career growth.

3. Countermeasures for cultivating postgraduates' career development competence

3.1. Postgraduates

Against the backdrop of university enrollment expansion and rising academic requirements for medical majors, postgraduates' motivations for pursuing graduate studies have become diversified—some seek to avoid heavy clinical work, some respond to high parental expectations, and others face limited employment options at the undergraduate level. Due to unclear motivations and vague learning goals, some postgraduates lack initiative and enthusiasm when confronted with heavy coursework, clinical pressure, and research requirements. Many students doubt their suitability for medicine, interest in clinical work, or aptitude for research, indicating unclear career interests and planning. This confusion can lead to helplessness and even thoughts of dropping out.

To effectively cultivate career development competence for ethnic medicine postgraduates, efforts should be made in the following aspects. On the one hand, postgraduates of different degree types should set clear career goals, fully understand the particularity and demands of the medical profession, establish correct career orientation, conduct self-evaluation, and formulate reasonable career plans to avoid mismatches between professional ability and actual career demands. On the other hand, professional postgraduates should consolidate basic medical theoretical knowledge and improve professional skills, while academic postgraduates should strengthen research competence to lay a foundation for future career competition and development. Meanwhile, they should balance clinical work, scientific research, and personal life to maintain enthusiasm for learning and practice.

3.2. Supervisors

Supervisors serve as both leaders of postgraduates' academic thinking and guides of their professional competence, playing a vital role in the entire training process and acting as the primary responsible person for postgraduate education. In guiding postgraduates' learning and research, supervisors should adopt a student-centered, supervisor-supported approach.

On the one hand, supervisors should strengthen personalized guidance: through face-to-face communication or assessments of career values, planning, and choices, they can accurately grasp postgraduates' strengths, interests, conditions, and views on employment, conduct comprehensive analyses, and guide reasonable career planning based on individual realities. On the other hand, supervisors should enhance their own academic and professional capabilities to set positive examples, motivating postgraduates to continuously learn and improve clinical and research competence. Supervisors can also promote peer learning, self-expression, and teamwork through group study and regular meetings^[6], thereby fostering students' core competitiveness and career development competence.

3.3. Universities

Universities should prioritize the cultivation and guidance of students' career development competence. For medical students, concrete training in clinical practice, patient communication, and research capabilities, combined with sound career planning and professional competence, can enhance career identity and workplace adaptability.

Universities can invite experts and department directors to deliver lectures, conferences, and practical

guidance; establish dedicated teams for professional competence training to professionalize career development education. In implementing the career development training system, universities should build sound mechanisms for leadership, management, support, incentives, and ability development. On the one hand, a system for evaluating career development competence, career inclinations, and values can be established to conduct reasonable, effective, scientific, and dynamic assessments ^[7]. On the other hand, cooperation with off-campus institutions can be carried out to provide professional career ability assessments and job-hunting skills training, helping postgraduates identify strengths and weaknesses, achieve clear self-positioning, and formulate rational long-term plans.

4. The significance of career planning for ethnic medicine postgraduates

Compared with undergraduates, ethnic medicine postgraduates have improved research and clinical skills through rigorous examinations, leading to higher career expectations—such as higher salaries, better research platforms, and lighter workloads. These expectations reduce available job options and employment opportunities.

Against the current severe employment situation, career planning education should be a top priority in cultivating career development competence. Helping postgraduates make reasonable career choices and plans fully taps their potential, optimizes social resources, enhances understanding of the relationship between social development and personal career growth, and improves the quality of career decision-making and employment ^[8]. As an effective tool, career planning helps postgraduates better understand themselves, objectively analyze the environment, set scientific goals, take effective actions, and make full use of time to prepare for career and life goals.

5. Conclusion

As a key component of China's higher education, ethnic medicine education places critical importance on postgraduate training. Cultivating outstanding ethnic medicine professionals, developing postgraduates' career development competence, improving training strategies, establishing correct career awareness, and guiding reasonable career planning can enhance students' comprehensive qualities, alleviate employment difficulties, and contribute to the nation's medical and health services. Therefore, cultivating postgraduates' professional competence and guiding reasonable career planning are highly necessary.

Funding

Innovation Project of Guangxi Graduate Education (No. JGY2020105)

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Peng JH, Fang G, Huang A, 2022, Investigation on the Current Situation of Career Development Competence of

Ethnic Medicine Postgraduates—Taking Ethnic Medicine Postgraduates in the Southwest Region as an Example. *Education Forum*, 4(11): 158–159.

- [2] Yan Y, 2019, Preliminary Study on Financial Management Major Construction Oriented by Career Development Ability—Taking Financial Management Major of Gansu Agricultural University as an Example. *Journal of Lanzhou University of Arts and Science (Social Sciences)*, 35(1): 103–108.
- [3] Wu WB, Huang SY, Shi SY, et al., 2019, Thoughts on Strengthening the Cultivation of Postgraduates' Career Development Ability. *Science and Technology Innovation Herald*, 16(27): 254–256.
- [4] Wei P, Li Y, Dai YY, 2014, Research on the Development and Cultivation Approaches of College Students' Professional Development Ability. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, (3): 103–104.
- [5] Teng J, 2011, Analysis on the Cultivation of College Students' Professional Development Ability. *Education Exploration*, (1): 148–149.
- [6] Peng ZH, Wang YW, 2019, Current Situation, Challenges and Countermeasures of the Construction of Virtual Simulation Resources for Vocational Education. *Adult Education*, 39(1): 76–81.
- [7] Lu BK, Huang SY, Zhang YX, et al., 2019, Research on Countermeasures for Cultivating Postgraduates' Career Development Ability—Taking Youjiang Medical University for Nationalities in Less Developed Areas as an Example. *Science & Technology Vision*, (31): 29–33.
- [8] Chen YX, Wei W, Tang XY, et al., 2022, Research on the Current Situation and Influencing Factors of Career Planning of Postgraduates in Medical Colleges and Universities. *China Journal of Multimedia and Network Teaching*, (12): 175–179.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.