

DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COLLEGE COUNSELORS'
QUALITY AND PROMOTION STRATEGIES
IN SHAANXI PROVINCE

SUN LI

A thesis paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy Program in Educational Management for Sustainable Development

Academic Year 2025

Copyright of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University

Thesis Title Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion
Strategies in Shaanxi Province

Author Mrs. Sun Li

Thesis Committee

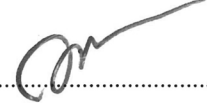

..... Chairperson
(Associate Professor Dr. Touchakorn Suwancharas)


..... Committee
(Associate Professor Dr. Sunate Thaveethavornswat)


..... Committee
(Assistant Professor Dr. Areeya Juichamlong)

Accepted by Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management for
Sustainable Development

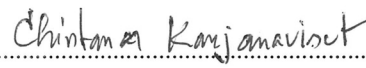

..... Dean of Graduate School
(Assistant Professor Dr. Nukul Sarawong)


..... President
(Assistant Professor Dr. Kanakorn Sawangcharoen)

Defense Committee


..... Chairperson
(Professor Dr. Prachyanun Nilsook)


..... Committee
(Associate Professor Dr. Methinee Wongwanich Rumpagaporn)


..... Committee
(Associate Professor Dr. Chintana Kanjanavisut)

Title	Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategies in Shaanxi Province
Author	Sun Li
Program	Education Management for Sustainable Development
Major Advisor	Associate Professor Dr.Touchakorn Suwancharas
Co-advisor	Associate Professor Dr.Sunate Thaveethavornsawat
Co-advisor	Assistant Professor Dr. Areeya Juichamlong
Academic Year	2025

ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study investigated sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. The research objectives were: (1) to study the current and expected status of improving the quality of college counselors in Shaanxi Province; (2) to develop strategies for enhancing sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion; and (3) to evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of the proposed strategies. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 341 counselors from five universities. Data were collected using a five-point rating scale questionnaire, supplemented by interviews, focus groups, and expert evaluation forms. The instrument demonstrated excellent content validity ($IOC=1.00$) and high reliability ($S.D.=0.94$). Quantitative data were analyzed using percentage, mean (M), standard deviation ($S.D.$), and $PNImodified$, while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. Strategy formulation was conducted using SWOT analysis and the TOWS Matrix and subsequently verified through focus group discussions.

The findings, aligned with the research objectives, revealed that:

(1) Current and expected status: The overall current status of counselors' sustainable quality was at a moderate level ($M=3.18$, $S.D.=0.22$), whereas the expected status was high ($M=4.00$, $S.D.=0.07$), indicating a significant gap across all dimensions.

Ideological and political quality emerged as a relative strength (current $M=3.56$, $S.D.=0.83$; expected $M=4.50$, $S.D.=0.55$). However, professional evaluation and assessment (current $M=3.15$, $S.D.=0.58$; expected $M=4.42$, $S.D.=0.58$) and psychological and emotional quality (current $M=2.97$, $S.D.=0.99$; expected $M=4.44$, $S.D.=0.57$) were identified as the weakest areas. Qualitative data further highlighted heavy workload, high stress, insufficient mental health support, limited professional and research support, inadequate digital management systems, and unclear promotion standards. (2) Strategy development: A comprehensive strategic framework was developed, comprising one vision, five main strategies, nine sub-strategies, and 18 operational projects designed to systematically address identified gaps. (3) Feasibility and adaptability: Expert evaluation indicated that the proposed strategies achieved very high levels of feasibility ($M=4.63$, $S.D.=0.21$) and adaptability ($M=4.65$, $S.D.=0.19$), confirming their practical applicability.

The study provides an evidence-based and operational strategic framework that can be directly implemented by universities and relevant authorities. The findings offer concrete guidance for optimizing professional evaluation systems, strengthening psychological and emotional competencies, reducing excessive workload, enhancing mental health and professional development support, upgrading digital management platforms, and clarifying promotion criteria. This research contributes practical value for advancing the sustainable development of college counselor teams in Shaanxi Province and similar higher education contexts.

Keywords: Sustainable development, college counselors, quality and promotion, strategy development, SWOT/TOWS, Shaanxi Province.

ชื่อเรื่อง	การพัฒนากลยุทธ์ด้านคุณภาพและการส่งเสริมที่ปรึกษา วิทยาลัยที่ยั่งยืนในมณฑลซานซี
ชื่อผู้วิจัย	ฉันทิ
สาขาวิชา	การจัดการการศึกษาเพื่อการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาหลัก	รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.รัชกร สุวรรณจรัส
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม	รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.สุนทร ทวีถาวรสวัสดิ์
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม	ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.อารียา จุ้ยจำลอง
ปีการศึกษา	2568

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยแบบผสมผสานครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาคุณภาพและการเลื่อนตำแหน่งอย่างยั่งยืนของอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษานักศึกษาในมณฑลซานซี โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์การวิจัย 3 ประการ ได้แก่ (1) ศึกษาสภาพปัจจุบันและสภาพที่พึงประสงค์ในการพัฒนาคุณภาพของอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษานักศึกษาในมณฑลซานซี (2) พัฒนากลยุทธ์เพื่อเสริมสร้างคุณภาพและการเลื่อนตำแหน่งอย่างยั่งยืนของอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษานักศึกษา และ (3) ประเมินความเป็นไปได้และความสามารถในการปรับใช้ของกลยุทธ์ที่พัฒนาขึ้น กลุ่มตัวอย่างได้มาจากการสุ่มแบบหลายขั้นตอน จำนวน 341 คน จากมหาวิทยาลัย 5 แห่ง เครื่องมือวิจัยเป็นแบบสอบถามมาตรฐานค่า 5 ระดับ ร่วมกับการสัมภาษณ์ การสนทนากลุ่ม และแบบประเมินโดยผู้เชี่ยวชาญ เครื่องมือมีความตรงเชิงเนื้อหาในระดับดีเยี่ยม ($IOC=1.00$) และมีความเชื่อมั่นในระดับสูง ($S.D.=0.94$) ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณวิเคราะห์ด้วยค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย (M) ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ($S.D.$) และดัชนีความต้องการจำเป็นปรับปรุง ($PNI_{modified}$) ส่วนข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพวิเคราะห์โดยการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา การพัฒนากลยุทธ์ใช้การวิเคราะห์ SWOT และเมทริกซ์ TOWS และตรวจสอบความเหมาะสมผ่านการสนทนากลุ่ม

ผลการวิจัยซึ่งสอดคล้องกับวัตถุประสงค์การวิจัย พบว่า

(1) สภาพปัจจุบันและสภาพที่พึงประสงค์ สภาพปัจจุบันโดยรวมของคุณภาพอย่างยั่งยืนของอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ($M=3.18$, $S.D.=0.22$) ขณะที่สภาพที่พึงประสงค์อยู่ในระดับสูง ($M=4.00$, $S.D.=0.07$) แสดงให้เห็นช่องว่างที่ชัดเจนในทุกมิติ คุณภาพด้านอุดมการณ์และการเมืองเป็นจุดแข็งเชิงสัมพัทธ์ (สภาพปัจจุบัน $M=3.56$, $S.D.=0.83$; สภาพที่พึงประสงค์ $M=4.50$, $S.D.=0.55$) อย่างไรก็ตาม ด้านการประเมินและการประกันคุณภาพวิชาชีพ (สภาพปัจจุบัน $M=3.15$, $S.D.=0.58$;

สภาพที่พึงประสงค์ $M=4.42$, $S.D.=0.58$) และด้านคุณภาพทางจิตวิทยาและอารมณ์ (สภาพปัจจุบัน $M=2.97$, $S.D.=0.99$; สภาพที่พึงประสงค์ $M=4.44$, $S.D.=0.57$) เป็นมิติที่มีระดับต่ำที่สุด ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพสะท้อนปัญหาสำคัญ ได้แก่ ภาระงานสูง ความเครียดสะสม การสนับสนุนด้านสุขภาพจิตไม่เพียงพอ การสนับสนุนด้านวิชาชีพและงานวิจัยจำกัด ระบบบริหารจัดการดิจิทัลไม่เพียงพอ และเกณฑ์การเลื่อนตำแหน่งที่ไม่ชัดเจน (2) การพัฒนากลยุทธ์ ได้พัฒนารอบกลยุทธ์เชิงบูรณาการ ประกอบด้วย 1 วิสัยทัศน์ 5 กลยุทธ์หลัก 9 กลยุทธ์ย่อย และ 18 โครงการปฏิบัติการ เพื่อแก้ไขช่องว่างและยกระดับคุณภาพอย่างเป็นระบบ (3) ความเป็นไปได้และความสามารถในการปรับใช้ ผลการประเมินโดยผู้เชี่ยวชาญระบุว่ากลยุทธ์ที่เสนอมีความเป็นไปได้ในระดับสูงมาก ($M=4.63$, $S.D.=0.21$) และมีความสามารถในการปรับใช้ในระดับสูงมาก ($M=4.65$, $S.D.=0.19$) สะท้อนถึงศักยภาพในการนำไปใช้จริงในบริบทของสถาบันอุดมศึกษา

ผลการวิจัยครั้งนี้นำเสนอกรอบกลยุทธ์ที่มีฐานข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์และสามารถดำเนินการได้จริง สำหรับมหาวิทยาลัยและหน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้อง โดยให้แนวทางชัดเจนในการพัฒนาระบบประเมินวิชาชีพ เสริมสร้างสมรรถนะด้านจิตวิทยาและอารมณ์ ลดภาระงานที่เกินความจำเป็น ส่งเสริมระบบสนับสนุนสุขภาพจิตและการพัฒนาวิชาชีพ ปรับปรุงแพลตฟอร์มการบริหารจัดการดิจิทัล และกำหนดมาตรฐานการเลื่อนตำแหน่งให้โปร่งใสและชัดเจน อันจะนำไปสู่การพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืนของทีมาอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาในมณฑลสำนซี และสามารถประยุกต์ใช้ในบริบทอุดมศึกษาอื่นที่มีลักษณะใกล้เคียงกัน

คำสำคัญ: การพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืน อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษานักศึกษา คุณภาพและการเลื่อนตำแหน่ง การพัฒนากลยุทธ์ SWOT/TOWS มณฑลสำนซี

Acknowledgment

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my Major Advisor Associate Professor Dr. Touchakorn Suwancharas and my Co-Advisors, Assistant Professor Dr. Sunate Thaveethavornsawat and Assistant Professor Dr. Areeya Juichamlong. Their rigorous academic standards, high expertise, and meticulous guidance have been invaluable throughout my doctoral journey. They have consistently provided professional advice, insightful feedback, and encouraging support. Their enthusiasm, patience, and friendly demeanor guided me whenever I felt lost. Their valuable suggestions and teaching have not only helped me complete my dissertation but also equipped me with research methods and guiding principles that will benefit me throughout my life.

Secondly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University and its faculty for providing an excellent learning environment. I have gained a deep appreciation for the Thai education system and the professionalism of university professors and scholars. Special thanks to the teachers of the Graduate School, the Confucius Institute, and the International Exchange Center for their meticulous and efficient work. Their sincere willingness to assist has greatly supported both my academic journey and life in Thailand.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful to the authors of all the references used in my study. I sincerely appreciate the experts who took time from their busy schedules to review this dissertation and provide valuable feedback.

Sun Li

Contents

	Page
Abstract.....	i
Abstract (Thai).....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	v
Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables.....	ix
Chapter	
1 Introduction.....	1
Rationale.....	1
Research Question.....	5
Research Objective.....	5
Scope of the Research.....	6
Advantages.....	11
Definition of Terms.....	12
Research Framework.....	15
2 Literature Review.....	17
Theoretical Foundations of Sustainable Education.....	17
Concept of College Counselor's Quality.....	21
Current State of College Counselor Quality.....	26
Theoretical Perspectives on Strategies to Improve College Counselors' Quality.....	27
Conceptual Framework of Counselor Quality Components.....	28
Strategic Framework for Quality Improvement and Promotion Mechanisms..	38
SWOT and TOWS as Strategic Analysis Tools.....	39
Review of Related Research.....	43

Contents (Continued)

	Page
3 Research Methodology.....	50
Phase 1: To Study the Current and Expected Status of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province.....	50
Phase 2: To develop strategies for enhance sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.....	62
Phase 3: To Evaluate the Feasibility and Adaptability of the Proposed Strategies.....	66
4 Results of Analysis.....	71
Symbol and Abbreviations.....	71
Presentation of Data Analysis.....	72
Results of Data Analysis.....	73
5 Discussion Conclusion and Recommendations.....	148
Conclusion.....	148
Discussion.....	155
Recommendations.....	161
References.....	164
Appendices.....	176
A List of Specialists and Letters of Specialists Invitation for IOC Verification.....	177
B Official Letter.....	185
C Research Instrument.....	190
D The Results of the Quality Analysis of Research Instruments.....	202
E Certificate of English.....	211
F The Document for Accept Research.....	213
Researcher Profile.....	225

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1.1 Research Framework.....	16
3.1 Summary of the Research Process.....	70
4.1 The Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province.....	138

List of Tables

Table	Page
2.1 Comparative Analysis of Counselor Quality Components Identified by Previous Scholars.....	31
2.2 Synthesis and Conceptual Framework of Counselor Quality Components.....	34
2.3 Example of SWOT Application in Counselor Development.....	41
2.4 Illustrative Example of TOWS Matrix for Counselor Development.....	43
3.1 Sample size table of this survey.....	54
3.2 Sample size table of this survey.....	58
3.3 List of Interviewee.....	60
4.1 Key Components of the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion.....	74
4.2 Summary of Respondents' General Information.....	76
4.3 Current and Expected Situation of Ideological and Political Quality.....	78
4.4 Current and Expected Situation of Professional and Theoretical Knowledge..	80
4.5 Current and Expected Situation of Psychological and Emotional Quality.....	82
4.6 Current and Expected Situation of Humanistic and Cultural Quality.....	84
4.7 Current and Expected Situation of Communication and Interpersonal Skills..	86
4.8 Current and Expected Situation of Management and Planning Ability.....	88
4.9 Current and Expected Situation of Professional Evaluation Dimensions.....	90
4.10 Overall Current and Expected Status of Sustainable Quality and Promotion Components of College Counselors.....	92
4.11 Distribution of Interviewees by University and Background.....	94
4.12 Key Themes and Frequency of In-depth Interviews by Dimension.....	95
4.13 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Ideological and political Quality.....	98

List of Tables (Continued)

Table	Page
4.14 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Professional and theoretical knowledge.....	100
4.15 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Psychological and emotional quality.....	102
4.16 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Humanistic and cultural quality.....	104
4.17 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Communication and Interpersonal Skills.....	106
4.18 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Management and planning ability.....	108
4.19 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Professional Evaluation Dimensions.....	110
4.20 Overall Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT Summary).....	112
4.21 SWOT Matrix for the Sustainable Quality and Promotion of College Counselors in Shaanxi Province.....	114
4.22 TOWS Matrix for the Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategies.....	115
4.23 The draft strategies for improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.....	117
4.24 Profile of Experts for Strategy Validation (Focus Group Discussion).....	125
4.25 Validation Indicators and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Strategy Refinement.....	126
4.26 Final Strategies for Improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.....	129

List of Tables (Continued)

Table	Page
4.27 Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province.....	134
4.28 Feasibility and Adaptability of Strategies for Improving Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province.....	140
4.29 The overall evaluation results regarding the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion.....	145

Chapter 1

Introduction

Rationale

College counselors occupy a pivotal position in the governance and development of Chinese higher education. Their professional responsibilities extend beyond administrative coordination to encompass ideological and political education, moral cultivation, psychological counseling, crisis intervention, and the comprehensive development of university students (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2014). At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, Xi Jinping (2016) emphasized the strategic importance of strengthening counselors' professional capacity to meet the demands of the new era, underscoring their role as frontline educators responsible for shaping students' moral character, political consciousness, and psychological resilience. Subsequent national directives further reinforced counselor professionalization as a core component of higher education reform and talent development strategies (CPC Central Committee & State Council, 2017; MOE, 2020). Accordingly, the sustainable quality improvement and structured promotion of college counselors are directly linked to China's broader educational modernization agenda. Without systematic competency enhancement and institutionalized career development mechanisms, long-term objectives of cultivating high-quality talent and maintaining social stability may be compromised (Xi, 2016).

The transformation of Chinese higher education has intensified these expectations. Rapid expansion, diversification of institutional types, digital transformation of campus management, and increasing student mental health challenges have significantly broadened the competency requirements for counselors (Feng, 2020; Liu, 2020). Contemporary counselors must demonstrate ideological literacy, professional and theoretical knowledge, psychological resilience, communication competence, crisis management capability, and strategic planning

skills (Li & Wang, 2021). Empirical studies suggest that rising academic pressure, employment uncertainty, and social transition have increased psychological

vulnerability among university students, thereby placing greater responsibility on counselors to provide integrated academic, emotional, and developmental support (Li & Wang, 2021). Consequently, sustainable counselor development is not merely a professional aspiration but an institutional imperative. When counselors possess balanced competencies across ideological, professional, psychological, managerial, and evaluative domains, universities are better positioned to foster inclusive, stable, and high-quality educational environments (Feng, 2020).

Recognizing these demands, the Chinese government has established structured policy frameworks to professionalize counselor roles. The Professional Ability Standards for College Counselors (Provisional) (MOE, 2014) articulated competency benchmarks and clarified professional responsibilities. Subsequent policy documents emphasized recruitment optimization, standardized evaluation systems, promotion channels, and incentive mechanisms (CPC Central Committee & State Council, 2017; MOE, 2020). While these frameworks provide normative guidance, research indicates that policy implementation remains uneven across institutions and provinces (Fang, 2017). Variations in institutional resources, administrative culture, and local governance capacity often lead to disparities between policy intention and operational practice. Therefore, provincial-level research is essential to assess contextual realities and generate evidence-based strategic recommendations aligned with both national mandates and institutional conditions.

Moreover, China's counselor development agenda aligns with global educational priorities. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (S.D.Gs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), advocate inclusive, equitable, and sustainable education systems (UNESCO, 2017). Counselors contribute directly to these objectives through mental health education, values formation, student support, and social integration. By strengthening sustainable quality and promotion mechanisms, universities can simultaneously

respond to domestic reform imperatives and demonstrate alignment with international commitments to educational sustainability (UNESCO, 2017). Hence, this research carries both national policy relevance and global educational significance.

Despite policy advances, persistent structural and professional challenges remain evident. Counselors frequently encounter excessive administrative workloads that limit meaningful student engagement (Ning, 2021). Administrative documentation, crisis reporting, and compliance tasks often overshadow counseling, mentoring, and developmental guidance functions. Additionally, conservative pedagogical approaches and insufficient innovation in ideological education restrict effective student engagement (Fang, 2017). Scholars have also noted gaps between theoretical training and practical implementation, suggesting that counselors may possess conceptual knowledge without adequate mechanisms for applied practice (Feng & Zheng, 2014). Such discrepancies weaken the operationalization of professional standards and reduce overall effectiveness in student development services.

Career development mechanisms further complicate sustainable professional growth. Although national policies advocate transparent promotion systems and professional recognition (MOE, 2020), many institutions provide limited advancement pathways, insufficient research support, and unclear performance criteria (Ning, 2021). This often results in diminished professional identity, reduced motivation, and high turnover risk. Interviews conducted in Shaanxi Province indicate that counselors perceive inequities in promotion opportunities compared with academic faculty, contributing to weakened institutional commitment. These structural challenges demonstrate that sustainable quality improvement cannot be achieved solely through competency training; it requires integrated systems addressing evaluation, promotion, workload regulation, and digital governance support (Feng & Zheng, 2014).

The regional context of Shaanxi Province further intensifies these concerns. As a major educational hub hosting numerous public, private, and application-oriented universities, Shaanxi experiences substantial diversity in institutional capacity. Resource constraints, uneven counselor-to-student ratios, and recruitment difficulties

place additional strain on professional practice. Counselors frequently supervise disproportionately large student cohorts, limiting individualized counseling and psychological support (Ning, 2021). The rapid expansion of application-oriented institutions amplifies managerial complexity and demands enhanced planning, communication, and digital management skills. Therefore, context-specific research in Shaanxi Province is crucial to identify strategic responses that reflect regional realities while aligning with national reform objectives (Fang, 2017).

Although prior domestic scholarship conceptualized counselor quality as multidimensional (Han, 2008; Wu, 2009; Ye, 2007), existing studies rarely integrate competency dimensions into measurable and implementable strategic frameworks. Sustainable improvement requires operational indicators, structured evaluation systems, and adaptable promotion mechanisms capable of institutional monitoring (MOE, 2020). Moreover, empirical evidence remains limited regarding the magnitude of discrepancies between current and expected counselor quality levels across different competency domains. Without systematic needs assessment and evidence-based prioritization, policy implementation risks remaining normative rather than transformative (Fang, 2017).

In light of the above, the present research identifies seven critical dimensions requiring systematic examination: (1) Ideological & Political Quality, (2) Professional & Theoretical Knowledge, (3) Psychological & Emotional Quality, (4) Humanistic & Cultural Quality, (5) Communication & Interpersonal Skills, (6) Management & Planning Ability, and (7) Professional Evaluation Dimensions. Existing literature and practice reveal deficiencies across these variables. Ideological education lacks pedagogical innovation; professional knowledge is insufficiently linked to applied practice; psychological competence is constrained by counselor burnout and limited training; humanistic quality is overshadowed by administrative tasks; communication skills require strengthening to manage diverse student needs; managerial capacity is strained by large student populations and digital transformation; and evaluation systems lack clarity, transparency, and fairness (Feng, 2020; Fang, 2017; Ning, 2021).

These interconnected gaps demonstrate systemic weakness rather than isolated shortcomings.

Therefore, there is an urgent necessity to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment examining current and expected levels across these seven dimensions, quantify priority gaps, and formulate feasible, adaptable, and evidence-based strategies for sustainable improvement. The necessity for development arises not only from competency deficiencies but also from structural inconsistencies in evaluation, promotion, and institutional support mechanisms. By addressing ideological, professional, psychological, humanistic, communicative, managerial, and evaluative variables simultaneously, this research responds directly to policy imperatives and institutional realities. Ultimately, the development of context-sensitive strategic frameworks will strengthen counselor professionalism, enhance institutional governance capacity, improve student developmental outcomes, and advance sustainable higher education reform in Shaanxi Province and comparable regions.

Research Questions

1. What is the current and expected situation of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province?
2. What are the characteristics of the strategies developed to enhance the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province?
3. What are the results of the evaluation of the developed strategies in terms of their feasibility and adaptability?

Objectives

1. To study the current and expected status for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province
2. To develop strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province
3. To evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of the strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

Scope of the Research

Population and Sample Group

Objective 1

To study the current and expected status for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

Population

At present, there are 98 universities and 6,605 college counselors in Shaanxi Province (Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education, 2024). This entire group represents the population from which the study's sample was drawn.

Sample Group

To obtain a representative and diverse sample that reflects the regional characteristics of Shaanxi Province, a multi-stage sampling approach was employed.

In the first stage, five representative universities were purposively selected from different geographical areas of the province to ensure comprehensive regional coverage. These include:

1. Xi'an Jiaotong University (representing the Xi'an region; a leading institution in academic excellence)
2. Xianyang Normal University (representing Xianyang; known for its focus on teacher education)
3. Yan'an University (representing Yan'an; a historically significant institution)
4. Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College (representing Tongchuan; recognized for its technical and vocational programmes)
5. Hanzhong University (representing Hanzhong; a key contributor to regional higher education)

This selection ensures coverage of major educational zones within Shaanxi Province (Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education, 2024).

In the second stage, stratified random sampling was applied to select counselors from the five institutions. Stratification considered variables such as institutional size, type, and geographic location to ensure proportional representation across strata. According to the guidelines of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a minimum

sample size of 341 participants was determined as statistically adequate to represent a population of 3,000 with a 95% confidence level. Thus, 341 counselors were selected as respondents for the questionnaire survey.

Sampling Procedure for Questionnaire Distribution

Based on the sampling framework, the study used a purposive and stratified random sampling method to select 341 representative counselors from the five universities. The sampling aimed to ensure that the participants were proportionally distributed according to gender, age, years of experience, and institutional type, thereby maximizing representativeness.

Scientific principles of randomness and proportionality were followed to maintain validity and reduce sampling bias. Ethical considerations were strictly observed; all participants were informed of the research purpose, assured of confidentiality, and provided with voluntary participation rights to uphold research ethics and integrity.

Interviewees

For the qualitative phase of this study, ten full-time college counselors were selected from five higher education institutions in Shaanxi Province. The selection followed a purposive sampling technique, which is appropriate for qualitative research aiming to obtain in-depth insights from individuals with relevant experience and knowledge.

Each institution represented a distinct geographic region to ensure a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the context of higher education across the province. The selected universities included Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xianyang Normal University, Yan'an University, Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College, and Hanzhong University, with two counselors from each institution participating in the interviews.

The inclusion criteria for selecting interviewees were as follows:

1. The participants must be full-time college counselors who have worked in their institutions for at least five years.

2. They must possess comprehensive knowledge of the university's development plan, teaching management, and student development systems.

3. They must voluntarily consent to participate in structured, recorded interviews.

4. They must be willing to review and verify their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy and credibility of the data.

This selection process ensured that the participants were experienced professionals capable of providing reliable and in-depth perspectives on the sustainable development of college counselors' quality and promotion strategies in Shaanxi Province. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the process. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and given the right to withdraw at any stage.

Objective 2

To develop strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.

Population and Sample Group

The population for this phase consisted of educational management experts from universities in Shaanxi Province who possess extensive knowledge of higher education administration and counselor development.

Sample Group

To evaluate and enhance the quality components of college counselors, this study employed a purposive sampling method to select twelve exemplary counselors from five higher education institutions in Shaanxi Province. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate because it allows the deliberate selection of participants with substantial experience and insights directly relevant to the study's objectives.

The selection of institutions ensured a balanced representation across Shaanxi's major educational regions, including Xi'an, Xianyang, Yan'an, Tongchuan, and Hanzhong. Each institution contributed counselors who demonstrated

professional excellence and contextual experience in student affairs and educational management.

The criteria for participant selection were as follows:

1. Work Experience: All selected counselors had more than five years of professional experience within their respective institutions, ensuring familiarity with institutional operations and student development practices.

2. Professional Knowledge: Participants possessed comprehensive understanding of their universities' development plans, teaching management systems, and student development strategies.

3. Professional Title or Position: Selected counselors held senior professional titles or management positions, reflecting leadership roles and expertise in educational administration.

This purposeful selection ensured that participants could provide informed and practical perspectives on the sustainable development and promotion of counselor quality within higher education in Shaanxi Province. The study adhered to ethical research principles, ensuring that all participants were informed of the research objectives, assured of confidentiality, and granted the right to withdraw voluntarily.

Objective 3

To evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.

Population and Sample Group

The population for this phase consisted of educational management experts from universities in Shaanxi Province who possess extensive knowledge of higher education administration and counselor development.

The sample group was composed of five experts selected from Shaanxi universities using a purposive sampling method, which is appropriate for qualitative evaluation research that requires in-depth, informed opinions from individuals with extensive experience and expertise relevant to the study objectives. The selection criteria were as follows:

1. Work Experience: Each expert had over 15 years of professional experience in university administration or student affairs.

2. Professional Rank: Each participant held a senior professional title, reflecting advanced academic or administrative qualifications.

3. Leadership Role: Each expert occupied a senior leadership position, such as dean, department head, or director of student affairs, ensuring practical insight into institutional management and policy implementation.

This purposive sampling approach ensured that the evaluators possessed the necessary academic and managerial background to assess the developed strategies objectively. The experts' extensive experience contributed to a rigorous evaluation of the feasibility and adaptability of the proposed sustainable strategies for improving the quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

All experts participated voluntarily, were informed of the study's purpose, and were assured of confidentiality in accordance with research ethics protocols.

The Variable

Independent Variable

Research on sustainable development strategies for improving the quality and promotion of college counselors. Based on an analysis of relevant theories and studies, the current status of counselor quality and its promotion in Shaanxi Province is as follows:

1. Ideological & Political Quality
2. Professional & Theoretical Knowledge
3. Psychological & Emotional Quality
4. Humanistic & Cultural Quality
5. Communication & Interpersonal Skills
6. Management & Planning Ability
7. Professional Evaluation Dimensions

Dependent Variable

Sustainable College Counselors' Quality

Contents

This study aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of college counselors in Shaanxi Province through the development of a sustainable strategy. The research is conducted in three main phases. First, it identifies and defines the key quality components required of college counselors and assesses their current status. Second, it evaluates these components to formulate and implement strategies for improving counselor quality. Third, it comprehensively examines the feasibility and impact of the proposed strategies to ensure their effectiveness in enhancing the sustainable quality of college counselors.

Time

Semester 2 Academic Year 2025 (September 2024-January 2025)

Advantages

The findings of this study are expected to yield both theoretical and practical benefits as follows:

1. For University Administrators and Policymakers:

The results provide a practical framework for designing and implementing evidence-based strategies to enhance the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion. These findings can be used to formulate institutional policies, performance appraisal systems, and incentive mechanisms that strengthen counselor development in higher education.

2. For College Counselors and Student Affairs Practitioners:

The developed strategies can be applied to improve counselors' professional competencies, counseling skills, and self-efficacy. They will also help strengthen professional identity, motivation, and job satisfaction, enabling counselors to perform their educational and mentoring roles more effectively.

3. For Training Institutions and Education Authorities:

The findings can be used as a foundation for designing targeted training programmes, professional development workshops, and scientific evaluation systems

for counselors. Such initiatives will promote continuous learning and sustainable professional growth across the higher education sector.

4. For Higher Education Institutions in Shaanxi Province:

The implementation of the proposed strategies will improve the overall quality of counseling services, enhance student support systems, and foster innovation in student affairs management. These improvements will directly contribute to achieving sustainable development goals in education.

5. For Future Research and Policy Development:

The study provides a theoretical reference and empirical foundation for future research on counselor development and educational management. It may serve as a model for other provinces or institutions seeking to promote sustainable quality improvement among college counselors.

Definition of Terms

Sustainable development is a development model that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It emphasizes the coordinated development of the economy, society, and environment, aiming for a balance and the maximization of long-term benefits. Within the framework of sustainable development, economic growth should be environmentally friendly, social progress should be fair and harmonious, and there should be a focus on the efficient use of resources and the protection of the ecosystem.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (S.D.Gs) include Goal 4, which aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.' Education is a key factor in achieving many other sustainable development goals. When people have access to quality education, they can break the cycle of poverty

Colleges and universities are referred to as 'institutions of higher learning,' which are institutions primarily focused on implementing higher education. The term 'institutions of higher learning' includes universities, colleges, and vocational schools,

while the broader category encompasses radio and television universities, staff colleges, peasant colleges and universities, management cadre colleges, education colleges, independent correspondence colleges, correspondence courses (colleges, classes), and night colleges organized by ordinary colleges and universities (Encyclopedia of China, 1995). In this study, the term 'universities' refers specifically to ordinary colleges and universities.

College counselor refers to university counselors are an important component of the teaching and management teams in higher education institutions, possessing dual identities as both teachers and officials. their work mainly revolves around students, including ideological and political education, daily student management, employment guidance, mental health, and student party and league building

Counselor's quality and promoting refers to their comprehensive abilities, qualifications, and competencies in carrying out the fundamental task of cultivating education in universities

Ideological and Political Quality refers to counselors' moral integrity, political literacy, and sense of social responsibility. This element involves their ability to guide students in developing correct values, civic awareness, and a positive worldview in accordance with national and institutional ideals.

Professional and Theoretical Knowledge refers to the counselors' mastery of educational theories, counseling psychology, pedagogy, and management knowledge that form the academic foundation for effective student guidance, professional judgment, and problem-solving.

Psychological and Emotional Quality refers to counselors' self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and resilience, which enable them to maintain psychological stability and establish supportive relationships with students in challenging educational environments.

Humanistic and Cultural Quality refers to counselors' moral refinement, ethical awareness, and cultural sensitivity. This quality highlights their ability to

respect diversity, promote humanistic education, and foster inclusive and harmonious interpersonal relationships within the learning community.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills refer to counselors' ability to communicate effectively, listen empathetically, and build mutual trust with students, colleagues, and administrators. These skills are crucial for fostering collaboration, resolving conflicts, and strengthening student engagement.

Management and Planning Ability Denotes systematic Organization, time management, coordination, and strategic planning skills that enable counselors to implement educational policies, design developmental programmes, and achieve institutional objectives efficiently.

Professional Evaluation Dimensions Refers to measurable indicators used to assess counselor performance, including research productivity, project achievement, academic influence, and student mentorship. These dimensions are supported by fair evaluation systems, professional training, and institutional incentives that encourage sustainable growth.

SWOT analysis, also known as situation analysis, is one of the most commonly used strategic analysis methods. It stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This method lists and analyzes the main internal strengths, weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats closely related to the research object to help formulate the corresponding development strategy and plan.

TOWS analysis, also known as the inverse SWOT analysis method, is a deformation application of SWOT analysis. The analysis sequence is opposite to the SWOT analysis method. First, analyze the opportunities and threats of the market, and then analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the enterprise.

Strategic methods refer to a series of planned actions or means to achieve specific goals. It is an idea or scheme to guide practice and solve problems, which is targeted, systematic and flexible.

Research Framework

This study focuses on the development of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion strategies in Shaanxi Province. To systematically guide the research process, a structured research framework was established based on an Input–Process–Output–Outcome model.

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the framework begins with the identification of the input factors, which include the current state of counselor quality, seven core quality dimensions, relevant theoretical foundations, and the policy context supported by SWOT analysis. The seven core dimensions comprise: (1) Ideological and Political Quality, (2) Professional and Theoretical Knowledge, (3) Psychological and Emotional Quality, (4) Humanistic and Cultural Quality, (5) Communication and Interpersonal Skills, (6) Management and Planning Ability, and (7) Professional Evaluation Dimensions. These dimensions form the fundamental variables for diagnosing existing gaps in counselor development.

The process stage involves a systematic gap analysis comparing current and expected levels of counselor quality. Based on $PNI_{modified}$ prioritisation and SWOT–TOWS strategic analysis, development strategies are formulated. The proposed strategies are subsequently refined and validated through expert evaluation to ensure feasibility and adaptability.

The output stage produces a sustainable counselor quality development model, a structured promotion mechanism, and an evaluation framework designed to support institutional implementation.

Finally, the outcome stage reflects the long-term impact of the developed strategies, including institutional sustainability, enhancement of professional identity among counselors, and alignment with national educational reform policies and Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Overall, the research framework demonstrates a logical progression from problem diagnosis to strategic intervention and long-term sustainability, ensuring that the proposed model is both theoretically grounded and practically implementable.

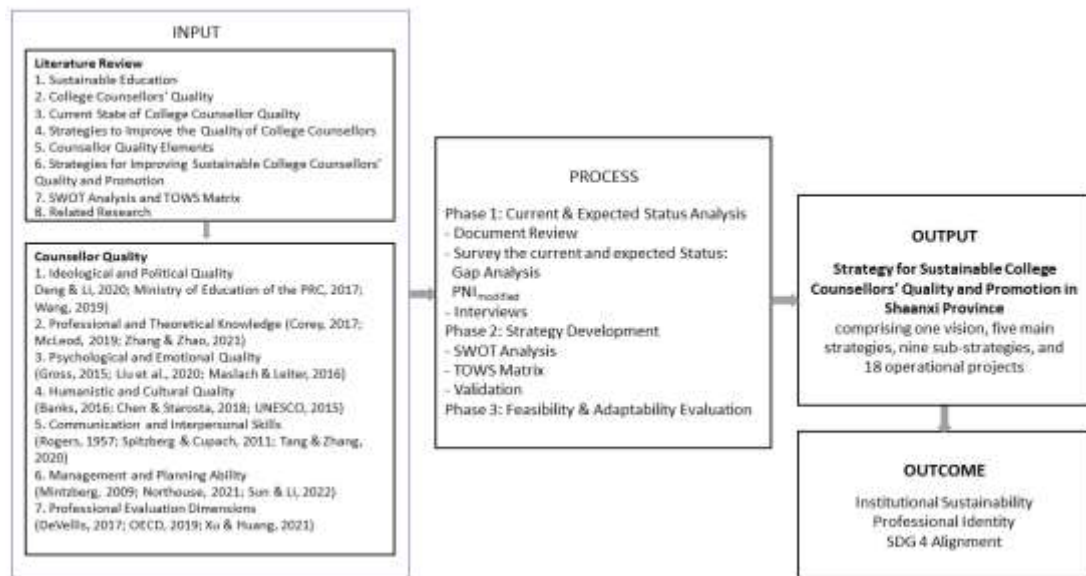


Figure 1.1 Research Framework

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature, concepts, theories, and empirical studies related to the development of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion strategies in Shaanxi Province. The chapter is organised as follows.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Sustainable Education
2. Concept of College Counselor's Quality
3. Current State of College Counselor Quality
4. Theoretical Perspectives on Strategies to Improve College Counselors' Quality
5. Conceptual Framework of Counselor Quality Components
6. Strategic Framework for Quality Improvement and Promotion Mechanisms
7. SWOT and TOWS as Strategic Analysis Tools
8. Review of Related Research

The details are as follows.

Theoretical Foundations of Sustainable Education

Conceptual Background

Sustainable education is an evolving educational paradigm that integrates environmental, economic, and social dimensions to foster holistic human development. It reflects a philosophy of learning that seeks to prepare individuals not only to comprehend global sustainability challenges but also to act responsibly towards achieving a balanced coexistence between human progress and the natural world (Sterling, 2016). The core intent of sustainable education is to cultivate learners who possess the awareness, values, and competencies necessary to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and social equity both in the present and in the future generations alike.

Integrative Discussion

The philosophy underpinning sustainable education transcends traditional teaching approaches by embedding sustainability principles within curriculum design, pedagogy, and institutional culture (Davis & Summers, 2021). It aims to develop cognitive, affective, and behavioral capacities that enable learners to engage in systems thinking, problem-solving, and innovation in complex sustainability contexts. This educational model also emphasizes the interconnectedness of global citizenship, social justice, and ecological consciousness, thereby aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2020). Furthermore, sustainable education requires the participation of policymakers, educators, and communities in fostering environments that support lifelong learning and active citizenship.

Synthesis and Implications: Ultimately, sustainable education represents a vital mechanism for achieving the goals of sustainable development. Through the cultivation of critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and global awareness, education can empower individuals to contribute meaningfully to sustainable societies. The integration of sustainability into educational systems ensures that development efforts do not compromise the needs of future generations while promoting human well-being and environmental stewardship (Wals, 2010). Hence, sustainable education is both an educational necessity and a societal imperative in the twenty-first century.

The Concept of Sustainable Development

Conceptual Background: The concept of sustainable development emerged from ecological thought and has progressively expanded to encompass economic, social, and cultural dimensions World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987). Initially defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own, it has become a guiding framework for addressing the multifaceted crises of modern society. In education, this concept underscores the role of learning in enabling individuals to understand, evaluate, and act upon sustainability challenges at local and global levels.

Integrative Discussion: Wals (2010) proposed a “leapfrog learning model” that challenges conventional modes of instruction by encouraging innovation and participatory learning. According to Wals, education for sustainable development should not merely focus on the acquisition of knowledge (“what to know”) but should cultivate learners’ capacity for practical application (“how to know”). By engaging students in real-world problem-solving, this approach promotes critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Similarly, Davis and Summers (2021) emphasised that sustainable education must integrate systems thinking and participatory practice, allowing learners to analyse interactions among environmental, social, and economic systems while applying theoretical knowledge to tangible contexts. The incorporation of policy support and professional training for educators is also crucial to sustaining such educational transformation.

Synthesis and Implications: Sustainable development and education are inherently intertwined, as the success of one depends on the advancement of the other. Education serves as the foundation for cultivating responsible citizens capable of addressing global sustainability challenges. Through continuous reflection, collaboration, and innovation, sustainable education becomes an essential pathway toward achieving environmental balance, economic equity, and social harmony (Tilbury & Wortman, 2004). Therefore, the effective implementation of sustainable education contributes directly to the global pursuit of sustainable development.

Sustainable Thinking and Educational Transformation

Conceptual Background: As societies evolve, education undergoes continuous transformation to meet emerging human and social needs. Zhao (2022) noted that the pursuit of spiritual and intellectual enrichment has driven significant changes in educational philosophy, policy, and design. The modern educational mission extends beyond academic achievement to encompass the cultivation of responsible, reflective, and lifelong learners who can engage meaningfully with the world around them. The integration of sustainable thinking into educational practice plays a pivotal role in this transformation, as it encourages learners to develop empathy, critical awareness, and environmental connectedness.

Integrative Discussion: The concept of sustainable thinking promotes a mindset of equality, interdependence, and adaptive learning (Zhao, 2022). It seeks to guide students towards establishing positive relationships with their social and ecological environments while developing problem-solving capacities and creative thinking. Embedding sustainable thinking in educational design enhances the relevance of education, linking theory with real-life experiences and fostering holistic human development. This alignment is particularly important in preparing students for the complexities of contemporary global society, where ethical reasoning, cultural sensitivity, and environmental literacy are indispensable attributes for future citizens.

Synthesis and Implications: Integrating sustainable thinking into education enriches its functional and transformative potential. It supports the creation of well-rounded individuals capable of adapting to changing global realities and contributing constructively to sustainable communities. In doing so, education transcends the transmission of knowledge and becomes an active force for social innovation and ecological preservation. As Zhao (2022) suggested, cultivating sustainable thinking is therefore not only an educational reform but also a moral and cultural imperative.

Sustainable Professional Development of University Counselors

Conceptual Background

The sustainability of educational quality in higher education institutions is significantly influenced by the professional development of university counselors. Liu (2018) highlighted that counselors serve dual roles as educators and administrators, forming the backbone of ideological and political education in universities. However, in the face of contemporary societal transformations, counselors encounter numerous challenges related to professionalism, competence, and identity. Addressing these challenges through sustainable development frameworks is essential to strengthening the quality and resilience of the counseling profession.

Integrative Discussion

Research has underscored the importance of system-level and individual-level strategies in promoting sustainable counselor development. Sun (2018) proposed that sustainable professional competence among counselors should be

advanced through coherent policy frameworks, value-based training, and experiential learning opportunities. Similarly, Fang (2017) introduced a four-stage career life cycle model comprising onboarding, growth, professionalisation, and sustainability, emphasising continuous progression and reflection. Guo (2014) further asserted that enhancing professional identity is central to achieving long-term sustainability, while Zhang (2013) recognised that building strong counselor teams is vital for the broader sustainable development of universities. These studies collectively indicate that sustainable professional development requires an integrated approach involving personal motivation, institutional support, and systemic reform.

Synthesis and Implications

Sustainable professional development among university counselors not only improves individual competency but also enhances institutional capacity for achieving educational excellence. Strengthening professional identity, clarifying job roles, and promoting lifelong learning are essential measures in fostering a stable and high-quality counselor workforce (Liu, 2018; Fang, 2017). Moreover, establishing supportive policies and continuous professional training ensures that counselors remain adaptive to evolving educational contexts. Consequently, the sustainable advancement of the counselor profession forms a cornerstone of higher education's long-term development and its alignment with global sustainability goals.

Concept of College Counselor's Quality

The quality of college counselors has become a critical concern in contemporary higher education, particularly as universities face increasingly complex challenges related to students' psychological well-being, ideological development, and career guidance. College counselors serve not only as educators and administrators but also as mentors who shape students' values and facilitate their holistic growth. Yang Xiaodan (2014) presented an early framework describing counselors as holding five interrelated roles: ideological educators, management organizers, recommend behavioral supervisors, psychological counselors, and talent

developers. This framework underscores the multidimensional responsibilities that counselors assume in nurturing students' ideological awareness and personal discipline. Yang argued that effective counselors must balance these diverse functions to cultivate moral integrity, social responsibility, and independent thinking among students. By defining these five roles, Yang's work laid the theoretical foundation for the multidimensional concept of counselor quality, demonstrating that professional excellence in counseling requires not only technical competence but also moral and ideological commitment.

Building upon this perspective, Li Haidong (2017) examined counselor quality within the context of higher vocational colleges, offering a practical interpretation of the counselor's professional positioning. He categorized the counselor's function across three dimensions: the subject dimension, where counselors act as spiritual guides who influence students' worldviews; the functional dimension, where they serve as assistants in students' academic and career decision-making; and the managerial dimension, where counselors act as trusted friends in daily student life. Li's classification aligns with Yang's earlier argument but extends it into the realm of applied higher education, where student needs are more pragmatic and career-focused. His findings highlight that counselors' quality cannot be separated from their ability to form meaningful human connections while maintaining institutional order. By positioning counselors as both companions and mentors, Li emphasised the importance of empathy, adaptability, and emotional intelligence as core components of counselor professionalism, directly linking interpersonal skill with institutional effectiveness.

In contrast, Kong Xiameng (2019) explored the internal and external conflicts that counselors face when attempting to reconcile their dual roles as educators and administrators. He argued that the coexistence of these roles often leads to confusion regarding professional identity, ethical boundaries, and authority relationships. Kong's study introduced a psychological and sociological dimension to the discussion of counselor quality, proposing that counselors must engage in self-construction through the three "worlds of meaning": the symbolic world,

representing professional norms; the real world, representing institutional practice; and the world of belonging, representing self-identity. This perspective reflects an advanced understanding that counselor quality is not static but developmental, evolving through reflection, experience, and identity negotiation. Kong's insights reveal that the sustainable development of counselor quality depends on both personal growth and institutional support, which together shape professional confidence and ethical resilience.

While Chinese scholars focus on counselors' ideological and developmental attributes, Western literature tends to highlight professional standards and competency frameworks. Paisley and MacMahon (2012) provided a comprehensive overview of American counselors' responsibilities, identifying nine major domains: academic consultation, classroom guidance, student engagement, parental communication, crisis intervention, psychological counseling, conflict resolution, behavioral prevention, and character development. This model establishes a systematic, competency-based approach to assessing counselor quality, reflecting an integration of guidance, teaching, and care. Similarly, Beth (2018) noted that professional Organizations such as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) emphasise that counselors must possess both specialised skills and holistic knowledge to effectively support students in academic preparation and life planning. Mullen and Lambie (2016) extended this discussion by introducing the concept of counselor self-efficacy, asserting that counselors with higher self-efficacy demonstrate greater motivation, persistence, and success in helping students achieve academic and personal goals. These Western studies collectively highlight the interdependence between professional competence and psychological confidence, reinforcing the notion that counselor quality must encompass both measurable skills and internalised belief systems.

Recent Chinese research has further expanded on these foundations by addressing the dynamic interaction between counselors' internal motivation and the external institutional environment. Lu Siqiao (2024) investigated the professional

development of counselors in Guangxi, identifying motivation as the driving force behind sustainable professional growth. By analysing the profiles of outstanding counselors in regional competitions, Lu concluded that both internal factors, such as personal ambition and commitment, and external conditions, such as institutional support and training opportunities, shape the evolution of counselor quality. Similarly, Wang Chunxu (2024) argued that the “new era” of ideological and political education demands higher levels of professional ethics, interpersonal competence, and emotional tolerance from counselors. He proposed a multi-mechanism system encompassing training, evaluation, supervision, and accountability to strengthen counselors’ continuous development. Both scholars converge on the idea that counselor quality requires systematic institutional mechanisms that promote learning, reflection, and adaptation, thereby ensuring sustainable professional advancement.

In addition to professional competence and institutional support, psychological resilience has emerged as a central indicator of counselor quality. An Xiang (2022) conducted an empirical study on the psychological quality of college counselors in Shaanxi Province, identifying strong emotional stability, self-regulation, and adaptability as essential for effective student engagement. The study suggested that institutions should integrate psychological quality training into professional development programmes to prevent burnout and promote mental health among counselors. Liang Cailing (2022) echoed this concern, noting that the growing complexity of student populations in the digital era places unprecedented stress on counselors. She emphasised the need for innovation and standardisation in student management, urging counselors to prioritise empathy, proactive communication, and data-informed decision-making to improve management efficiency. Together, these studies underline that counselor quality extends beyond technical and ideological competence and includes the ability to maintain psychological balance and relational awareness in increasingly demanding environments.

Several recent scholars have sought to systematise the improvement of counselor quality through structural and strategic models. Jinjing (2024) developed the OPN model (Planning–Practice–Branding), a precision empowerment framework

designed to support counselors' career development through targeted interventions at theoretical, practical, and individual levels. This model provides a sustainable pathway for professional empowerment, aligning with national goals for higher education reform. Likewise, Chai Xiaoting (2022) explored effective ways to enhance counselors' professional qualities through role-based approaches, identifying them as organisers, implementers, and guides in ideological education. Wang Pule (2022) traced the evolution of the counselor system in Chinese universities, arguing that its development follows the broader trajectory of moral education reform. He stressed the necessity of robust policy frameworks that integrate assessment, incentives, and professional accountability. Collectively, these models and frameworks indicate a paradigm shift from traditional ideological education towards data-driven, capacity-oriented, and institutionally embedded approaches to quality assurance.

In conclusion, the reviewed literature reveals that the quality of college counselors is a multifaceted, evolving construct grounded in ideological, ethical, professional, and psychological dimensions. Early theories (Yang, 2014; Li, 2017; Kong, 2019) established a foundation for understanding the counselor's composite identity, while contemporary research (Lu, 2024; Wang, 2024; An, 2022; Jinjing, 2024) has expanded this view to include developmental motivation, institutional mechanisms, and psychological sustainability. Western perspectives complement these findings by introducing measurable competency frameworks and emphasising the role of self-efficacy (Mullen & Lambie, 2016; Beth, 2018). Together, these strands of research support a comprehensive understanding that counselor quality must be continuously cultivated through balanced attention to ideological conviction, professional competence, and emotional resilience. This synthesis provides a conceptual basis for the present study, which aims to develop sustainable strategies to enhance the quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

Current State of College Counselor Quality

College counselors hold a central position in higher education as organisers of students' ideological and political education, mentors of development, and facilitators of holistic growth. Their work influences not only students' academic adjustment and psychological well-being but also the cultivation of national talent and the sustainable progress of society. As the first point of contact for freshmen entering an unfamiliar academic and social environment, counselors play an indispensable role in helping students adapt to new learning methods, interpersonal relationships, and independent living. Consequently, the quality of counselors is a decisive factor in determining the effectiveness of educational outcomes and student development. Recent research in China has increasingly examined the current state of counselor quality to ensure that ideological and political education remains responsive to the evolving demands of higher education (Bai, 2017; Wen, 2014; Hua, 2014).

Empirical investigations across regions provide valuable insights into the competencies and limitations of college counselors. Bai Zhanting (2017) reported that although most counselors possessed a high level of professional quality, weaknesses persisted in cultural knowledge, operational capacity, and psychological resilience. Similarly, Wen Ting (2014) observed an overall upward trend in counselor quality but noted imbalances in knowledge composition and insufficient professional depth. Dong Jiao (2017) identified new challenges in the digital media era, emphasising low levels of digital literacy and limited innovation among counselors. Su Yajie (2019) pointed out that the emergence of the knowledge-based economy has intensified anxiety regarding professional competence, revealing gaps in theoretical foundations and educational modernisation. A large-scale study by Xiang Wei (2021) involving 490 counselors from 21 universities showed that, while the overall quality level was above average, particularly in emotional education, value guidance, and motivational support, counselors still needed improvement in research ability, physical health, and disciplinary knowledge. Likewise, Jin Yujun (2018) and Hua Xiumei (2014) confirmed that counselors generally had strong political convictions but lacked

advanced understanding of Marxist theory and psychological endurance. Zheng Deqian (2016) compared perspectives among counselors, students, and administrators, concluding that although ideological commitment was firm, professional integration of theory and practice required enhancement.

Overall, the reviewed studies reveal that Chinese college counselors maintain a generally satisfactory standard of ideological, political, and moral quality, reflecting their strong sense of duty and commitment to student development. Nonetheless, persistent shortcomings remain in theoretical knowledge, research competence, innovation, digital literacy, and psychological adaptability. The evidence suggests that, while counselors perform effectively in ideological and moral guidance, many still struggle to adjust to the rapid transformations of educational technology and the knowledge economy. To address these challenges, researchers advocate for a multidimensional approach to quality enhancement, integrating continuous professional training, institutional support mechanisms, and the cultivation of self-efficacy and adaptive capacity. In conclusion, the quality of college counselors in China shows steady progress but requires systematic improvement to achieve a more balanced, professionalised, and sustainable counseling workforce capable of meeting the complex requirements of modern higher education.

Theoretical Perspectives on Strategies to Improve College Counselors' Quality

Conceptual Background

Strategies to improve college counselors' quality are targeted and systematic measures to boost their comprehensive abilities, matching sustainable higher education and changing student demands. In the digital and diverse landscape, counselors take multiple roles, and these strategies integrate individual growth, institutional support, and social coordination to fix skill and theoretical gaps, building a high-quality, stable team (Gu, 2023; Zhao, 2024).

Integrative Discussion

Improving counselors' quality requires joint efforts from individuals, universities, and the education system: counselors should pursue lifelong learning, master digital tools, and strengthen psychological resilience (Wang Chunxu, 2024; An Xiang, 2022); universities need to build systematic training systems, optimize the dual-line promotion mechanism, and establish scientific evaluation and incentive systems (Yao, 2014; Song, 2024); governments and educational institutions should issue supportive policies, increase training investment, and promote inter-university cooperation and skill exchange through institutionalized competitions (Li Huanhuan, 2024; Tan Jieli, 2021); meanwhile, technological innovation such as the "Five-Micro" model and intelligent platforms should be fully applied to realize personalized guidance (Zeng, 2024; Lin C., 2023).

Synthesis and Implications

Improving counselors' quality is a systematic project that addresses current shortcomings and cultivates long-term professional abilities. Universities should formulate targeted plans based on their own characteristics—vocational colleges focusing on career guidance skills and comprehensive universities emphasizing research capabilities (Li Haidong, 2017; Huang Gao, 2024)—while counselors actively participate in training and self-improvement. These strategies, integrating individual initiative, institutional support, and technological innovation, are crucial for the sustainable development of higher education, helping build a high-quality counselor team that supports students' all-round development and national education goals.

Conceptual Framework of Counselor Quality Components

Counselor quality components represent the comprehensive set of competencies, values, and professional attributes required for effective guidance, student development, and sustainable educational outcomes. High-quality counselors serve as both mentors and moral exemplars, contributing to the holistic growth of students and the stability of higher education institutions. According to Wernick (2000), counselors must combine theoretical mastery, professional ethics,

and interpersonal competence to address students' evolving psychological and social needs. In contemporary education systems, these qualities extend beyond traditional counseling functions to encompass emotional intelligence, cultural literacy, management capability, and evaluative skills that collectively ensure sustainable counselor development (Henderson, 2010; Liu Qi, 2015; Thornton, 2006). Therefore, counselor quality is a multidimensional construct that reflects not only professional proficiency but also the moral and civic consciousness that underpin educational sustainability.

A review of both international and Chinese scholarship indicates a convergence of perspectives on the essential components of counselor quality. Wernick (2000) underscored the necessity of solid theoretical foundations and ethical standards, emphasising cultural awareness and continual professional growth. Liu Fang (2010) introduced the MHTP model, which integrates ideological, humanistic, theoretical, and psychological dimensions of counselor competence, while Liu Qi (2015) conceptualised a four-dimensional framework comprising political literacy, cultural and knowledge quality, professional ability, and psychological well-being. Empirical findings by Zheng Ye (2013) further confirmed that political literacy and personality traits are critical determinants distinguishing excellent counselors from average ones. Similarly, Han Ying (2008) identified six key domains including management, student consciousness, personality, psychological regulation, cultural identity, and political awareness, which highlight the interrelation between internal qualities and professional performance. Henderson (2010) expanded the scope by noting that counselors must address contemporary challenges such as social conflict, campus violence, and mental health crises through empathy and emotional resilience. In alignment with Thornton's (2006) conceptualisation of educator quality as a reflection of values and beliefs, Zhang Liying (2006) and Chen and Wang (2009) stressed the importance of communication and interpersonal competence, while Feng Gang (2012) emphasised managerial and Organizational capacity as vital to institutional alignment. More recent analyses by Trey (2004), McCarthy (2016), and Kong Xianghui (2016) have extended the discussion to include professional evaluation

dimensions, which refer to measurable performance outcomes, academic contributions, and systematic training that ensure sustained quality in higher education counseling.

In synthesis, the reviewed literature affirms that counselor quality is not a singular construct but a dynamic integration of ideological, cognitive, emotional, and managerial attributes. These components collectively form the foundation for effective student engagement and institutional development. Based on a systematic review of prior studies, this research identifies seven core counselor quality components essential for the sustainable advancement of counseling professionalism in higher education: (1) Ideological and Political Quality, (2) Professional and Theoretical Knowledge, (3) Psychological and Emotional Quality, (4) Humanistic and Cultural Quality, (5) Communication and Interpersonal Skills, (6) Management and Planning Ability, and (7) Professional Evaluation Dimensions. These components establish a holistic framework that not only enhances counselor competence but also supports the broader objectives of educational sustainability in Shaanxi Province and beyond.

Various scholars have examined the essential qualities required for effective counselors in higher education. Table 2.1 presents a comparative analysis of the counselor quality components proposed by different researchers, highlighting the dimensions that have been most frequently emphasised in the literature.

Table 2.1 Comparative Analysis of Counselor Quality Components Identified by Previous Scholars

Researcher	Ideological and Political Quality	Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	Psychological and Emotional Quality	Humanistic and Cultural Quality	Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Management and Planning Ability	Professional Evaluation Dimensions
1. Borko, H. (2004)							√
2. Chen Jianwen (2009)	√	√	√	√			
3. Danielson, C. (2013)							√
4. Darling-Hammond, L. (2017)							√
5. Dimitris Fouskakis et al. (2014)							√
6. Feng Gang (2012)	√		√	√			
7. Fullan, M. (2001)							√
8. Guskey, T. R. (2002)							√
9. Han Ying (2008)	√	√	√	√	√	√	
10. Henderson (2010)	√	√	√	√	√	√	
11. Killion and Hirsh (2012)							√
12. Kong Xianghui (2016)	√			√	√		√
13. Liu Fang (2010)	√			√	√	√	
14. Liu Qi (2015)	√	√	√	√	√		
15. Mark E. Wernick (2000)	√	√	√	√	√		
16. McCarthy (2016)	√		√	√	√	√	√
17. OECD (2019)							√
18. Samiya Khan and Mansaf Alam (2017)							√
19. Schön, D. (1983)							√

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Researcher	Ideological and Political Quality	Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	Psychological and Emotional Quality	Humanistic and Cultural Quality	Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Management and Planning Ability	Professional Evaluation Dimensions
20. Thornton (2006)	√	√	√	√		√	
21. Trey (2004)	√		√	√	√		
22. Wang Zhuhua (2009)	√	√	√	√		√	
23. Xie Xue (2011)					√		
24. Zhang Liying (2005)	√	√	√	√	√		
25. Zheng Ye (2013)	√		√	√	√	√	
Total	14	8	12	14	11	7	12

According to Table 2.1, a synthesis of findings from 25 scholars identified seven core components of counselor quality. These components collectively represent the essential dimensions of professional competence that underpin effective counseling practice and sustainable development in higher education. The seven components include (1) Ideological and Political Quality, (2) Professional and Theoretical Knowledge, (3) Psychological and Emotional Quality, (4) Humanistic and Cultural Quality, (5) Communication and Interpersonal Skills, (6) Management and Planning Ability, and (7) Professional Evaluation Dimensions.

Each element plays a crucial role in shaping counselor effectiveness. Ideological and political quality forms the moral and civic foundation that guides counselors' professional conduct and value orientation. Professional and theoretical knowledge ensures the integration of academic theory with practice, enabling

evidence-based decision-making. Psychological and emotional quality supports emotional stability, empathy, and resilience essential for student support. Humanistic and cultural quality encourages ethical sensitivity, inclusiveness, and respect for diversity within educational contexts. Communication and interpersonal skills foster cooperation, conflict resolution, and trust between counselors, students, and institutions. Management and planning ability allows for strategic Organization and coordination of student development activities, while professional evaluation dimensions promote continuous improvement through reflection, accountability, and performance enhancement.

Together, these seven components constitute a comprehensive framework that reflects the multidimensional nature of counselor quality. They provide not only the basis for evaluating professional competence but also a roadmap for developing counselors who contribute meaningfully to the sustainable progress of higher education.

Following the comparative analysis, the key findings from prior studies were synthesized to construct a conceptual framework of counselor quality. As summarised in Table 2.2, seven interrelated components were identified as the core dimensions that underpin sustainable professional development for college counselors.

Table 2.2 Synthesis and Conceptual Framework of Counselor Quality Components

No.	Element	Expanded Definition	Key References
1	Ideological and Political Quality	Refers to counselors' moral integrity, political literacy, and alignment with national and institutional values. This element emphasizes the counselor's role in shaping students' civic responsibility, patriotic awareness, and value orientation in accordance with social ethics and educational policy. High ideological and political quality ensures that counselors can effectively guide students in cultivating correct beliefs, fostering moral reasoning, and adhering to the ethical standards expected in higher education.	Liu Fang (2010); Liu Qi (2015); Kong Xianghui (2016)
2	Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	Encompasses mastery of pedagogy, psychology, and educational theories that underpin evidence-based counseling practice. This element stresses the integration of theoretical learning with practical problem solving to improve decision-making, student guidance, and programme evaluation. Counselors with solid theoretical foundations demonstrate competence in applying psychological principles and educational strategies to meet diverse student needs and institutional objectives.	Wernick (2000); Zheng Ye (2013); Feng Gang (2012)

Table 2.2 (Continued)

No.	Element	Expanded Definition	Key References
3	Psychological and Emotional Quality	Involves self-awareness, emotional stability, empathy, and resilience. Counselors possessing strong psychological and emotional qualities can manage stress, regulate emotions, and sustain mental health while supporting students through personal, academic, and social challenges. Emotional intelligence enables them to build trust, respond empathetically to students' concerns, and maintain professionalism under pressure, which is essential for sustainable counseling performance.	Henderson (2010); Han Ying (2008)
4	Humanistic and Cultural Quality	Represents moral refinement, ethical awareness, and sensitivity to cultural diversity. This quality promotes inclusion, respect, and equity in educational environments. Counselors with high humanistic and cultural awareness value students' individual differences, foster intercultural understanding, and integrate ethical reasoning into daily practice. Such awareness supports moral education and social harmony within universities.	Han Ying (2008); Thornton (2006)

Table 2.2 (Continued)

No.	Element	Expanded Definition	Key References
5	Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Encompasses the ability to build rapport, foster collaboration, and communicate effectively with students, colleagues, and administrators. Strong interpersonal competence allows counselors to resolve conflicts constructively, motivate student engagement, and facilitate team-based educational initiatives. Effective communication is also crucial for policy implementation, coordination of student affairs, and maintaining a positive institutional climate.	Zhang Liying (2006); Chen Jianwen and Wang Zhuhua (2009)
6	Management and Planning Ability	Refers to the counselor's capacity to organise, plan, and coordinate programmes strategically. This includes designing student development plans, managing projects, and aligning counseling activities with institutional strategies. Effective management and planning skills ensure that counseling services are goal-oriented, efficiently executed, and responsive to both student and Organizational needs.	Feng Gang (2012); Trey (2004)

Table 2.2 (Continued)

No.	Element	Expanded Definition	Key References
7	Professional Evaluation Dimensions	Comprises measurable performance indicators that assess a counselor's professional impact and contribution to institutional goals. These include research productivity, innovation in counseling practice, project completion, teaching performance, academic influence, and mentorship effectiveness. Counselors' quality is strengthened through continuous professional training, performance-based evaluation, and supportive reward systems that foster sustainable professional growth. This element integrates accountability with career development, linking individual excellence to institutional advancement.	McCarthy (2016); Kong Xianghui (2016); Danielson (2013); Guskey (2002); Darling-Hammond (2017); OECD (2019)

Table 2.2 presents the synthesized framework of counselor quality derived from prior research. The seven identified components collectively illustrate that counselor competence extends beyond professional knowledge to include moral integrity, emotional intelligence, interpersonal effectiveness, and strategic management. These dimensions interact to create a balanced and sustainable model of counseling professionalism. Overall, the framework emphasizes that developing counselor quality requires a holistic approach integrating ethical, academic, emotional, and Organizational capacities to meet the evolving needs of higher education.

Strategic Framework for Quality Improvement and Promotion Mechanisms

Enhancing the quality and promotion mechanisms of college counselors is a crucial prerequisite for advancing sustainable higher education development. Counselors act as a bridge between students and institutions, playing an indispensable role in ideological education, student development, and campus harmony (Zhao, 2024). With the rapid transformation of higher education, the sustainable development of counselor teams requires strategic improvement in both individual competency and institutional systems. To strengthen this professional group, universities must implement multidimensional strategies encompassing professional quality enhancement, systematic training, transparent evaluation, and diversified career pathways. Establishing comprehensive mechanisms for counselor growth not only improves their effectiveness in guiding students but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of educational institutions (Gu, 2023).

Scholars have proposed various models and strategies to promote the high-quality development of counselors. Zhao (2024) emphasised that graduate counselors play a key role in ideological and political education, yet many institutions still lack sufficient recognition of their professional value. Song (2024) and Lin K. (2023) discussed the dual-line promotion system, which enables counselors to advance through both academic and administrative tracks, thereby addressing diverse career aspirations. However, Song (2024) highlighted that the current dual-line system often suffers from structural inconsistencies and insufficient humanistic support. Lin C. (2023) and Wang (2017) further noted that integrating information technology into the dual-line system enhances efficiency, research capability, and student service quality. Similarly, Yao (2014) underscored that in-depth tutoring and personalised guidance strengthen counselors' effectiveness in promoting students' moral and psychological development. Zeng (2024) proposed a "Five-Micro" digital model (micro-class, micro-lecture, micro-discussion, micro-video, and micro-live) to modernise counselor studios, aligning them with the needs of digital-age students. These studies collectively highlight

that sustainable counselor development depends not only on institutional reforms but also on continuous professional learning, innovation, and digital adaptability.

In summary, improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion requires an integrated approach combining professional enhancement, institutional reform, and technological innovation. Key strategies include strengthening ideological and political education, establishing systematic training and evaluation mechanisms, diversifying promotion pathways, and incorporating information technology to improve efficiency and engagement. By synthesising the perspectives of Zhao (2024), Song (2024), Gu (2023), Lin K. (2023), and Zeng (2024), it is evident that sustainable counselor development relies on cultivating competencies aligned with modern educational transformation. These multidimensional strategies not only elevate counselor professionalism but also ensure that higher education institutions maintain stability, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability.

SWOT and TOWS as Strategic Analysis Tools

SWOT Analysis

Strategic management in higher education increasingly relies on analytical tools that help institutions align internal resources with external challenges. Among these tools, SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) remains one of the most widely applied methods for strategic evaluation. The model is commonly attributed to work on corporate strategy associated with Harvard Business School (Andrews, 1971), providing a structured approach for analysing both internal and external factors that influence Organizational development. In the context of universities, SWOT analysis allows administrators and counselors to assess their strengths, identify areas needing improvement, explore potential opportunities for professional advancement, and anticipate external risks such as policy changes or student behavioral shifts (Panagiotou, 2003; Gürel & Tat, 2017).

Several scholars have successfully applied the SWOT model to analyse and enhance the professional quality of college counselors. Sun (2024) examined the

characteristics of the “post-90s” generation of vocational college counselors, finding that they possess strong adaptability, enthusiasm, and digital competence but lack practical experience and role clarity. Chen (2024) highlighted that counselors, as central figures in ideological and political education, must regularly evaluate their internal competencies and external working environments to improve the effectiveness of their educational responsibilities. Similarly, Li (2024) conducted a SWOT-based study on new counselors in vocational institutions and discovered that while these professionals show high motivation and academic grounding, they face barriers such as limited promotion pathways and insufficient managerial skills. Qu (2024) analysed the strengths and weaknesses of part-time graduate counselors and used the SWOT framework to propose improvement strategies across four domains: strengths-opportunities, weaknesses-opportunities, strengths-threats, and weaknesses-threats. Liu (2023) further demonstrated that continuous self-assessment through SWOT analysis enhances counselors’ professional development and allows them to anticipate potential challenges in their careers. These findings demonstrate that SWOT analysis is not only a strategic planning method but also an effective self-diagnostic tool for enhancing counselor competence and long-term sustainability in higher education.

In summary, SWOT analysis offers a clear, structured framework for counselors and institutions to identify internal strengths such as professional ethics, communication skills, and institutional support, while acknowledging weaknesses like limited research output or promotion constraints. It also enables recognition of external opportunities, including educational reform, policy incentives, and technological innovation, as well as threats such as workload expansion or declining student engagement (Ommani, 2011). By combining these insights, universities can design targeted training programmes, incentive systems, and professional growth mechanisms that align with sustainable development goals. Therefore, SWOT analysis serves as both a diagnostic and decision-making instrument that helps counselors build professional resilience and institutions strengthen long-term strategic capability.

Table 2.3 Example of SWOT Application in Counselor Development

Category	Example Related to Counselor Development
Strengths (S)	Strong ideological knowledge, empathy, and commitment to student growth.
Weaknesses (W)	Limited research capacity and insufficient international exposure.
Opportunities (O)	Increasing government support for mental health education and digital counseling platforms.
Threats (T)	Rising student stress levels, reduced budgets for training, and competition from external mental health agencies.

Explanation:

For instance, a counselor team at a vocational university might use its strengths in communication and empathy to implement online peer-support projects (SO strategy), while addressing its weaknesses in research by collaborating with educational psychologists (WO strategy). At the same time, the institution can use innovation grants to mitigate threats such as resource shortages (ST strategy) and establish workload management policies to reduce burnout (WT strategy).

TOWS Matrix

The TOWS Matrix, developed by Heinz Weirich (1982), expands upon SWOT analysis by converting analytical results into actionable strategies. Whereas SWOT focuses on identifying factors, TOWS focuses on designing strategies by linking internal and external components. In higher education, the TOWS approach enables universities to formulate concrete action plans for improving counselor quality by combining internal competencies such as professional skills and emotional resilience with external factors including policy reforms and social expectations (Helms & Nixon, 2010).

When applied to counselor development, the TOWS Matrix provides a systematic process for strategic formulation. Sun (2024) recommended SO strategies that leverage young counselors' digital expertise and enthusiasm to promote innovation in student engagement. Li (2024) proposed WO strategies that use government incentives and academic partnerships to reduce skill gaps among inexperienced counselors. Qu (2024) identified ST strategies that apply counselors' ideological understanding to mitigate social pressures and institutional challenges. Meanwhile, Chen (2024) and Gu (2023) highlighted WT strategies that focus on strengthening management systems, ensuring transparent evaluations, and improving motivation under reform stress. This multi-dimensional integration demonstrates that the TOWS Matrix allows for balanced strategy development, where institutions use their strengths to seize opportunities while minimising the impact of weaknesses and threats.

In conclusion, the TOWS Matrix transforms SWOT analysis into an actionable framework for sustainable strategic management. It provides a structured method for counselors and administrators to align internal potential with external conditions. SO and WO strategies stimulate innovation and capability enhancement, while ST and WT strategies reinforce stability and risk control. When implemented effectively, the TOWS framework ensures that higher education institutions can achieve sustainable counselor development through evidence-based policy design, transparent evaluation systems, and adaptive leadership (Weihrich, 1982; Helms & Nixon, 2010).

Table 2.4 Illustrative Example of TOWS Matrix for Counselor Development

Strategy Type:	Strategic Application Example
SO (Strengths–Opportunities)	Use counselors’ empathy and communication skills to lead digital mental health programmes for students.
ST (Strengths–Threats)	Apply professional ethics and teamwork to maintain student engagement during policy reforms.
WO (Weaknesses–Opportunities)	Introduce mentorship and online training to address lack of practical experience while leveraging national funding.
WT (Weaknesses–Threats)	Develop defensive measures such as workload management, well-being programmes, and clear promotion pathways.

Review of Related Research

Wang Chunxu (2024) conducted a study entitled Enhancing the Quality and Ability of College Counselors in the New Era. The research aimed to identify effective methods for improving the professional competence and overall quality of college counselors in the context of modern ideological and political education. The participants were counselors from several comprehensive universities. Data were collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The results indicated that some counselors were unable to meet the demands of their roles due to limited skills and inadequate professional preparation. Wang suggested that counselors should strengthen their knowledge base, cultivate tolerance in interpersonal relationships, pursue excellence in professional performance, and project a positive image in public. In addition, universities should develop systematic mechanisms for training, management, evaluation, supervision, and accountability to

support long-term counselor development and ensure sustainability in education (Wang, 2024).

Huang Gao (2024) conducted research entitled *Construction of University Counselor Teams in the New Era: Challenges and Countermeasures*. The study focused on issues faced by counselor teams at Hohhot Vocational College, such as insufficient professional capacity, weak motivation mechanisms, and unclear career advancement paths. The sample consisted of 65 counselors representing various faculties. The instruments included questionnaires and policy document analyses. The findings revealed that optimising team structure, providing regular capacity-building programmes, and improving promotion systems are crucial for enhancing overall performance. Huang proposed that universities should align counselor team development with national higher education reform policies and establish transparent evaluation criteria to strengthen morale and job satisfaction (Huang, 2024).

Li Huanhuan (2024) conducted a study titled *The Role of College Counselors in Enhancing Ideological and Political Education Quality in the New Era*. The purpose of this research was to determine how counselors could better contribute to the ideological and moral education of students. The study targeted counselors from ten universities in Shaanxi Province. Data collection involved interviews and documentary reviews. The findings revealed that counselors should adhere to their professional mission of “educating students for the Party and the nation” while continuously improving moral integrity and professional competence. Li concluded that sustained professional training and ideological awareness are vital for ensuring the long-term development and quality of higher education (Li, 2024).

Yu Weibiao (2023) conducted a study entitled *Improving Counselors’ Comprehensive Quality and Ability under Changing Educational Environments*. The research aimed to examine how counselors could adapt to the changing educational landscape and promote students’ physical and psychological development. The participants were 80 counselors from five universities. Data were gathered using a mixed-method approach, combining questionnaires with qualitative interviews. The study found that counselors should continuously update their knowledge in pedagogy

and psychology, master guidance and communication techniques, and integrate these competencies to support students' learning and emotional well-being. The author recommended that counseling systems should combine educational and psychological functions to enhance overall student support (Yu, 2023).

Zhang Rui (2022) carried out research entitled *Improving the Quality and Competence of College Counselors within the Ten-Dimensional Education Framework*. The study sought to propose practical strategies to strengthen ideological and political education through the implementation of a comprehensive educational system. The research sample consisted of 100 counselors from 12 universities. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires and group discussions. The results demonstrated that applying the "ten-dimensional education model" effectively improved counselors' teaching and management capabilities. Zhang concluded that a multi-dimensional framework is essential for developing counselors' professional capacity and promoting sustainable educational quality (Zhang, 2022).

Liang Caiqin (2021) conducted a study entitled *Development of a Professional Competence Model for College Counselors*. The purpose of this research was to establish a theoretical model describing the essential competencies of counselors in higher education. The participants were counselors from leading universities in eastern China. Data were collected through behavioral event interviews and questionnaires, followed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The findings identified four major dimensions of counselor competency, namely professional skills, theoretical knowledge, political awareness, and personality traits. Among these, political quality and personal character were found to be the most critical components influencing effective counseling (Liang, 2021).

Tan Jieli (2021) explored *Counselor Quality and Ability Competitions as a Mechanism for Professional Growth*. The study aimed to investigate how participation in national counselor competitions could enhance theoretical foundations, counseling techniques, and professional ethics. The participants were 50 counselors who had taken part in national and regional competitions. Data were collected through performance evaluations and feedback analysis. The findings suggested that

competitions served as an effective mechanism for professional learning by promoting the concept of “learning through competition” and “improvement through practice.” Tan concluded that such competitions should be institutionalised as part of the professional development framework for counselors (Tan, 2021).

Jiang Shenglin (2021) conducted a study entitled *Strengthening the Quality of Political Counselors under New Educational Conditions*. The research aimed to explore how universities could improve the ideological and political training of counselors. The participants included 70 political counselors from three provincial universities. The study used structured interviews to collect data. The results showed that enhancing counselors’ theoretical understanding of Marxist ideology, educational policy, and practical counseling skills could significantly improve ideological education. Jiang recommended a holistic training model combining theory, practice, and reflection to elevate counselor quality (Jiang, 2021).

Chen Ming (2021) carried out a study titled *The Role of Heart-to-Heart Counseling in Enhancing Professional Competence among University Counselors*. The objective was to assess how interpersonal communication and empathy contribute to ideological and moral guidance. The study sample consisted of 45 counselors who participated in the National Counselor Quality and Ability Competition. The research adopted a qualitative approach, analysing real counseling interactions. The findings revealed that effective heart-to-heart communication strengthened student trust, enhanced moral influence, and reflected counselors’ emotional intelligence. Chen concluded that communication skills training should be prioritised in counselor development programmes (Chen, 2021).

Wang Xiaoxiao (2021) conducted a study entitled *The Dual Role of University Counselors as Managers and Coordinators in Student Development*. The study aimed to identify how counselors balance administrative responsibilities with educational guidance. The participants included 60 counselors from four universities. Data were collected through surveys and focus group interviews. The results indicated that counselors play a critical role in promoting students’ academic progress, psychological well-being, and moral development. The author concluded that

management and interpersonal skills are key areas for professional training and team improvement (Wang, 2021).

Onyinyeowuamanam, T. (2005) conducted research entitled *The Role of School Counselors in Improving Education Quality in Nigerian Public Schools*. The study aimed to investigate how counselors and other school personnel could cooperate to improve educational quality and student outcomes. The participants were school counselors and administrators from public schools across several Nigerian states. Data were collected through interviews and document reviews. The results revealed that collaboration among counselors, principals, teachers, and health staff effectively reduced academic failure, dropout rates, and maladaptive behaviours. The study recommended that federal and state governments institutionalise counseling systems to promote holistic education and national development (Onyinyeowuamanam, 2005).

Summary

The reviewed studies collectively reveal that counselors' quality improvement depends on systematic professional training, strong institutional support, and personal commitment to lifelong learning. The key themes that emerge across the literature include ideological education, professional competence, communication ability, and emotional intelligence. These findings underscore the importance of establishing integrated systems of training, evaluation, and career development to ensure sustainable progress in higher education counseling.

Concise Summary

The review of related literature establishes a theoretical foundation for developing sustainable strategies to enhance the quality of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. It integrates perspectives from both global and Chinese scholarship, focusing on sustainability in education, professional competence, and institutional development.

Sustainable education is presented as a transformative framework that aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, promoting moral responsibility, systems thinking, and civic engagement. Counselors are expected to

become agents of sustainability who foster students' emotional resilience and ethical awareness. Integrating sustainable thinking into higher education ensures that development efforts address both present and future societal needs.

Sustainable professional development is identified as vital to maintaining educational quality in universities. Studies by Liu (2018), Fang (2017), and Sun (2018) emphasise that counselor sustainability depends on continuous learning, institutional support, and policy reform. Professional identity formation and lifelong learning mechanisms are crucial for strengthening the stability and adaptability of the counseling profession.

Research by Yang (2014), Li (2017), and Kong (2019) conceptualises counselor quality as a multidimensional construct encompassing ideological, educational, psychological, and managerial competence. Western models highlight professional standards and self-efficacy, while recent Chinese studies focus on innovation and emotional sustainability. Together, these perspectives define counselor quality as an integration of moral conviction, professional skills, and psychological resilience.

Empirical studies show that counselors in China generally maintain strong ideological and moral standards but still need improvement in research ability, innovation, and digital literacy. These gaps underline the necessity for systematic training and institutional mechanisms that foster continuous development.

From comparative analyses, seven essential components of counselor quality are identified: ideological and political quality, professional and theoretical knowledge, psychological and emotional stability, humanistic and cultural understanding, communication and interpersonal skills, management and planning ability, and professional evaluation competence. These dimensions form the conceptual framework guiding this study.

The literature further suggests strategic directions for promoting sustainable counselor development. Key approaches include strengthening ideological education, implementing dual-track promotion systems, integrating information technology, and establishing transparent evaluation and incentive mechanisms.

Tools such as SWOT and TOWS analyses are recommended to align internal strengths with external opportunities while addressing professional challenges.

Empirical research supports the conclusion that counselor quality improvement relies on institutional support, professional competence, moral education, and psychological well-being. Collectively, the reviewed works affirm that developing sustainable counselor quality is essential for achieving long-term educational excellence, aligning with the objectives of Healthy China 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

The study titled “The study, Development of Sustainable College Counselors’ Quality and Promotion Strategies in Shaanxi Province” employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches within a convergent parallel design. This methodological structure was adopted to comprehensively examine, develop, and validate strategies for enhancing the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

The research methodology consisted of four main components:

1. Population and Sample Group
2. Research Instruments
3. Data Collection Procedures
4. Data Analysis Methods

The research was conducted through the following procedures:

1. To study the current and expected status of improving the quality of college counselors in Shaanxi province
2. To develop strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors’ quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province
3. To evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of the strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors’ quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

The detailed procedures are described as follows.

Phase 1 To Study the Current and Expected Status for Enhancing the Sustainable College Counselors’ Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province

This phase employed a mixed-methods approach, combining document review, field surveys, and in-depth interviews. The phase was structured into three sub-phases:

1. Sub-phase 1: Document Review
2. Sub-phase 2: Field Survey on the Current and Expected Status
3. Sub-phase 3: In-depth Interviews

Sub-phase 1: Document Review

The purpose of this sub-phase was to identify essential issues, influencing factors, and contextual characteristics of the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion strategies in Shaanxi Province.

According to the Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education (2024), there are currently 98 universities and approximately 6,605 college counselors in the province, forming the population framework for this study. The document review focused on literature and policy documents relevant to counselor quality, professional development, sustainability in education, and strategic management within higher education.

Resources

The reviewed resources included peer-reviewed academic journals, books, doctoral dissertations, conference proceedings, and official government or institutional policy reports. The selection criteria emphasized relevance, reliability, and academic credibility.

Research Tools

1. Academic Databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, and the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) were used to access updated and authoritative sources.

2. Reference Management Software: EndNote and Zotero were employed for citation management.

3. Analytical Frameworks: Content frameworks and SWOT analysis were applied to identify key determinants, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with sustainable counselor quality and promotion.

Data Collection Procedures

1. Literature Review: A systematic review of existing documents was conducted to synthesize current knowledge.
2. Search and Retrieval: Focused keyword searches were performed within the selected academic databases.
3. Screening and Categorisation: Studies were screened and categorized into major themes, such as talent cultivation, institutional support mechanisms, counselor competencies, and student development.

Data Analysis

1. Content Analysis: Identification of trends, key issues, and theoretical perspectives from the reviewed literature.
2. Thematic Analysis: Organization of data into categories based on influencing factors affecting sustainable counselor development.
3. Synthesis of Findings: Integration of the analyzed results to construct a conceptual basis for developing sustainable college counselors' quality and promoting strategies in Shaanxi Province.
4. SWOT Analysis: Examination of internal and external factors influencing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion.

Sub-phase 2: Field Survey on the Current and Expected Status

Population and Sample Group

Population

At present, there are 98 universities and 6,605 college counselors in Shaanxi Province (Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education, 2024). This entire group represents the population from which the study's sample was drawn.

Sample Group

To obtain a representative and diverse sample that reflects the regional characteristics of Shaanxi Province, a multi-stage sampling approach was employed.

In the first stage, five representative universities were purposively selected from different geographical areas of the province to ensure comprehensive regional coverage. These include:

1. Xi'an Jiaotong University (representing the Xi'an region; a leading institution in academic excellence)
2. Xianyang Normal University (representing Xianyang; known for its focus on teacher education)
3. Yan'an University (representing Yan'an; a historically significant institution)
4. Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College (representing Tongchuan; recognized for its technical and vocational programs)
5. Hanzhong University (representing Hanzhong; a key contributor to regional higher education)

This selection ensures coverage of major educational zones within Shaanxi Province (Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education, 2024).

In the second stage, stratified random sampling was applied to select counselors from the five institutions. Stratification considered variables such as institutional size, type, and geographic location to ensure proportional representation across strata. According to the guidelines of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a minimum sample size of 341 participants was determined as statistically adequate to represent a population of 3,000 with a 95% confidence level. Thus, 341 counselors were selected as respondents for the questionnaire survey.

Sampling Procedure for Questionnaire Distribution

Based on the sampling framework, the study used a purposive and stratified random sampling method to select 341 representative counselors from the five universities. The sampling aimed to ensure that the participants were proportionally distributed according to gender, age, years of experience, and institutional type, thereby maximizing representativeness.

Scientific principles of randomness and proportionality were followed to maintain validity and reduce sampling bias. Ethical considerations were strictly observed; all participants were informed of the research purpose, assured of confidentiality, and provided with voluntary participation rights to uphold research ethics and integrity. The details of the sample group are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Sample size table of this survey

No.	Institution	Population	Sample (n)	Rationale
1.	Xi'an Jiaotong University	650	68	Representative school in Xi'an region
2.	Xianyang Normal University	600	65	Representative school in Xianyang region
3.	Yan'an University	500	70	Representative school in Yan'an region
4.	Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College	700	66	Representative school in Tongchuan region
5.	Hanzhong University	550	72	Representative school in Hanzhong region
Total		3000	341	

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument utilized in this study was a questionnaire, designed to study the current and expected status of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The questionnaire was administered to 341 respondents, selected from the target population. It comprised four main sections as follows:

Section 1: General Information of Respondents, This section collected demographic data using a checklist format.

Section 2: Professional Competency and Development of College Counselors

This section consisted of questions covering four key dimensions:

1. Basic Professional Background and Cognition
2. Professional Ability and Ethical Cognition

3. School Support and Management Mechanism

4. Career Development and Work Experience

All items in this section were constructed in a checklist format.

Section 3: Current and Expected ~~Situation~~ Status for Enhancing the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province

This section adopted a five-point Likert rating scale to assess both the current and expected status. The scale values were interpreted as follows:

Score Interpretation (Current/Expected)

5 The highest level of practice

4 A high level of practice

3 A moderate level of practice

2 A low level of practice

1 The lowest level of practice

Section 4: Open-ended Questions

This section provided space for respondents to offer additional opinions or recommendations regarding the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion strategies in Shaanxi Province.

Instrument Development

The questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive review of relevant theories, documents, and prior research on sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in higher education (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The process involved the following steps:

1. Drafting the Questionnaire

The initial questionnaire was constructed according to the study's conceptual framework to examine both the current *and* expected conditions of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.

2. Consultation with Thesis Advisors

The draft was reviewed by the thesis advisors to verify content validity, clarity of language, appropriateness of item quantity, and format consistency. Revisions were made in accordance with the advisors' suggestions.

3. Expert Validation

The revised questionnaire was evaluated by five experts with academic and professional experience related to counselor quality and development in higher education. The experts assessed the relevance and appropriateness of each item. (Details are provided in Appendix A.)

4. Content Validity Analysis

The Item–Objective Congruence (IOC) index was used to determine content validity. Each expert rated the relevance of each item to the research objectives. The IOC value was computed using the following formula (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977):

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

Where IOC = the index of item–objective congruence between each question item and the behavioral objective,
 = the total sum of the content experts' ratings for each item,
 and
 = the total number of experts.

IOC values range from –1 to +1, interpreted as:

+1 = definitely consistent with the objective,
 0 = uncertain,
 –1 = definitely inconsistent with the objective.

Items with an IOC value ≥ 0.50 were considered acceptable for inclusion (Polit & Beck, 2006). The results showed that all items met this criterion, although some were refined following expert recommendations. Therefore, the questionnaire was deemed to have satisfactory content validity and was appropriate for use in this study. The index of item–objective congruence (IOC) indicated unanimous agreement among all panel members, with every item receiving an IOC value of 1.00. as presented in Therefore, all questionnaire items were considered acceptable and were retained for data collection.

5. Pilot Testing and Reliability Assessment

The validated questionnaire was piloted with 30 college counselors from Shaanxi Province who were not part of the main sample. The pilot aimed to verify language clarity, question comprehension, and response consistency.

Reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), defined by the following equation:

$$\alpha = \left[\frac{k}{k-1} \right] \left[1 - \frac{\sum S_i^2}{S_t^2} \right]$$

Where α represents the reliability coefficient of the instrument,

k represents the number of items,

S_i^2 represents the sum of the variances of individual item scores,

and S_t^2 represents the variance of the total questionnaire scores.

In summary, the overall questionnaire demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.94, indicating that the developed questionnaire is appropriate and can be effectively used for data collection from the respondents.

Data collection

For Objective 1 (to study the current and expected Status regarding the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province), data were collected using the following steps:

1. An official letter from the Graduate School of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University was used to request cooperation in collecting research data from 341 representative counselors across five universities.

2. The researcher directly coordinated with five universities in Shaanxi Province to seek assistance in distributing and collecting the questionnaires. Initial contact was made via telephone to obtain consent and cooperation, after which the questionnaires were sent by post. Participants were invited to participate voluntarily after being selected through stratified random sampling. To facilitate the return process, stamped and addressed envelopes were included with the questionnaires In

addition, the questionnaire was distributed electronically via email and WeChat.

3. Telephone calls were made to remind participants in cases of delayed responses and to confirm that the intended respondents had received the questionnaire.

4. A total of 341 completed questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 100%.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and appropriate inferential tests to address the research questions. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were employed. The data analysis was conducted as follows:

Part 1: General information of the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics to present frequency and percentage distributions.

Part 2: Data on the professional competency and development of college counselors were analyzed using frequency and percentage.

Part 3: Data on the Current and Expected Status of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. This section employed a five-point Likert scale, and the interpretation of the mean scores was based on the following criteria (adapted from Best, 1977):

Table 3.2 Sample size table of this survey

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.50 - 5.00	The current and expected situation is at the highest level
3.50 - 4.49	The current and expected situation is at a high level
2.50 - 3.49	The current and expected situation is at a moderate level
1.50 - 2.49	The current and expected situation is at a low level
1.00 - 1.49	The current and expected situation is at the lowest level

Part 4: Responses to open-ended questions were summarised using frequency and percentage and analyzed using content analysis to synthesise key ideas.

Sub-phase 3: In-depth Interviews

Interviewees

In this phase, ten full-time college counselors were selected from five higher education institutions in Shaanxi Province through purposive sampling. Each institution represented a distinct geographical area to ensure diversity and comprehensive perspectives. The participating institutions included Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xianyang Normal University, Yan'an University, Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College, and Hanzhong University, with two counselors from each institution.

The inclusion criteria for the interviewees were as follows:

1. They must be full-time college counselors with at least five years of experience in student affairs and counseling.
2. They must possess an in-depth understanding of their institution's development plan, educational management system, and student support mechanisms.
3. They must voluntarily consent to participate in structured, recorded interviews.
4. They must be willing to review and confirm their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy and reliability.

This selection ensured that participants were experienced professionals capable of providing comprehensive and credible insights into the sustainable development of counselors' quality and promotion strategies in Shaanxi Province.

Table 3.3 List of Interviewees

NO.	Institutions	Number of interviewees	Rationale
1.	Xi'an Jiaotong University	2	Representative school in Xi'an region
2.	Xianyang Normal University	2	Representative school in Xianyang region
3.	Yan'an University	2	Representative school in Yan'an region
4.	Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College	2	Representative school in Tongchuan region
5.	Hanzhong University	2	Representative school in Hanzhong region
Total		10	

Research Instrument

Interview Instrument

The main instrument used in this phase was a structured interview form, developed based on the results of the quantitative phase and the conceptual framework of counselors' quality and promotion strategies. The interview form was designed to explore seven key dimensions of sustainable counselors' quality and promotion:

1. Ideological and Political Quality
2. Professional and Theoretical Knowledge
3. Psychological and Emotional Quality
4. Humanistic and Cultural Quality
5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills
6. Management and Planning Ability
7. Professional Evaluation Dimensions

The interview form consisted of two sections:

Part 1: Personal and professional background of the interviewee, including name (coded), gender, educational background, years of experience, and institutional affiliation.

Part 2: Open-ended questions addressing each of the seven dimensions above, focusing on the current practices, challenges, and suggestions for enhancing sustainable development of counselor quality and promotion strategies.

Construction of the Interview Form

The development of the structured interview form followed systematic procedures:

1. Review of Literature: Relevant theories, concepts, and empirical studies related to the sustainable quality development and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province were systematically reviewed to identify key themes underpinning the development of the proposed strategies.

2. Framework Alignment: The seven dimensions of counselor quality served as the foundation for constructing the interview questions.

3. Expert Validation: The draft interview form was submitted to three experts in educational management and counseling for validation and feedback to ensure clarity, relevance, and content validity.

4. Revision: The interview form was revised based on expert suggestions before being used in the field.

Data collection

1. An official permission letter was obtained from the Graduate School of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University to collect qualitative data from the five selected institutions in Shaanxi Province.

2. The researcher contacted each institution to coordinate the interviews and sent formal invitation letters to selected counselors.

3. Each interview was conducted face-to-face, lasting approximately 30–45 minutes, in a quiet and private setting within the university campus to ensure comfort and confidentiality.

4. The interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and supplemented by field notes to capture non-verbal expressions and contextual details.

5. Upon completion, the transcribed interviews were sent back to each participant for review and confirmation to ensure accuracy and credibility of the data.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using content analysis. The process involved:

1. Transcription and Familiarisation: All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the researcher thoroughly reviewed the transcripts to gain an overall understanding.

2. Coding and Categorisation: Key statements and ideas were identified, coded, and categorized according to the seven counselor quality dimensions.

3. Theme Development: Emerging themes were synthesized within each dimension to reflect common patterns, differences, and key insights.

4. Interpretation: The themes were interpreted in relation to the research objectives and supported by relevant literature to ensure academic rigour and validity.

To enhance credibility, interview transcripts and summary interpretations were returned to participants for confirmation (member checking), and an audit trail of coding decisions was maintained.

Phase 2 To develop strategies for enhance sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.

The development of strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province was conducted in four sub-phases as follows:

Sub-phase 1: **SWOT Analysis Procedure:** Analysis of Needs, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The SWOT analysis was undertaken to identify the strategic factors influencing

the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. This analysis integrated the results obtained from the questionnaire survey by applying the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}), enabling the systematic classification of internal and external factors relevant to strategic development.

1. Calculation of Priority Needs Using PNI_{modified}

The Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}), proposed by Wongwanich and Viratchai (2005), was used to determine the priority level of developmental needs. The PNI_{modified} value was computed using the following formula:

$$PNI_{\text{modified}} = (I - D)/D$$

Where:

PNI_{modified}	=	the index value indicating the magnitude of need
I	=	the mean score of the expected situation regarding the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.
D	=	the mean score of the current situation regarding the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

The resulting PNI_{modified} values were ranked in descending order, forming the basis for identifying key strategic issues.

2. Classification of SWOT Components

The ranked PNI_{modified} values were interpreted to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as part of the SWOT framework.

Internal Factors: Strengths and Weaknesses

$$PNI_{\text{modified}} \leq \text{mean} \rightarrow \text{Strength (S)}$$

$$PNI_{\text{modified}} > \text{mean} \rightarrow \text{Weakness (W)}$$

External Factors: Opportunities and Threats

$$PNI_{\text{modified}} \leq \text{mean} \rightarrow \text{Opportunity (O)}$$

$$PNI_{\text{modified}} > \text{mean} \rightarrow \text{Threat (T)}$$

A higher PNI_{modified} value indicates a factor that poses a challenge or requires improvement (weakness or threat), whereas a lower or average value indicates

favourable conditions that may support development (strength or opportunity).

3. Synthesis of SWOT Findings

The internal and external factors identified through the PNI_{modified} analysis were synthesized to establish strategic issues essential for developing sustainable strategies. These synthesized findings formed the foundation for constructing comprehensive and context-specific strategies aimed at enhancing the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

Sub-phase 2: Drafting of Development Strategies

Following the SWOT analysis, the results were synthesized to formulate strategic directions for developing the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. The formulation process applied the TOWS Matrix framework proposed by Weihrich (1982), which enables the systematic integration of internal and external factors. The strategies were categorized into four types as follows:

1. Proactive Strategies (SO Strategies: Strengths–Opportunities)

These strategies aim to leverage the institution's internal strengths to maximise potential external opportunities.

2. Responsive Strategies (ST Strategies: Strengths–Threats)

These strategies utilise Organizational strengths to counter, reduce, or manage external threats that may hinder the development of counselor quality.

3. Adaptive Strategies (WO Strategies: Weaknesses–Opportunities)

These strategies focus on addressing and improving internal weaknesses to enhance the institution's capacity to take advantage of external opportunities.

4. Preventive Strategies (WT Strategies: Weaknesses–Threats)

These strategies seek to minimise internal weaknesses while avoiding or mitigating the potential adverse effects of external threats.

The outcomes of the TOWS analysis were consolidated into a set of Draft Strategies for Developing the Sustainable Quality and Promotion of College Counselors in Shaanxi Province. These draft strategies were subsequently reviewed by academic advisors to ensure their suitability, clarity, internal coherence, and

alignment with the research objectives before proceeding to the next stage.

Sub-phase 3: Validation and Refinement of the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy

Participants (Expert Panel) and Selection

The population in this phase comprised educational management experts and senior counselors from universities in Shaanxi Province who possessed extensive experience in higher education administration and counselor development.

The target group consisted of 12 exemplary counselors, purposively selected from five higher education institutions: Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xianyang Normal University, Yan'an University, Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College, and Hanzhong University. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants had substantial expertise and professional experience aligned with the objectives of the study.

Selection Criteria

1. **Work Experience:** A minimum of five years of professional counseling experience within their respective institutions.

2. **Professional Knowledge:** Demonstrated understanding of institutional development plans, teaching management systems, and student development processes (e.g., documented responsibilities in student affairs management, committee roles, or related project experience).

3. **Professional Position:** Holding senior professional titles or administrative roles in educational management.

Ethical principles were strictly adhered to throughout data collection, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time.

Data Collection Procedures

An official permission letter was obtained from the Graduate School of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University to request cooperation and invite experts to participate in the focus group discussion.

1. Focus Group Discussion: A formal focus group meeting was organized, during which the researcher presented the study's background, significance, research methodology, and the draft Development Strategy for Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province.

The discussion addressed the vision, mission, goals, strategic approaches, and key performance indicators. Expert feedback was collected to refine the draft strategy. Audio recordings were made with participants' consent, stored securely with restricted access, and deleted according to the approved data-retention plan after analysis and completion of the research report.

2. Synthesis and Review: The findings from the focus group discussion were summarised and submitted to academic advisors for verification of content accuracy and methodological coherence.

3. Revision and Finalisation: Revisions were made based on expert recommendations to produce the final version of the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the focus group were analyzed using content analysis. Key comments were summarised, categorised according to the strategy components, and reviewed to refine the final strategy framework.

Phase 3 To Evaluate the Feasibility and Adaptability of the Proposed Strategies

Participants (Expert Panel) and Selection

The population for this phase consisted of educational management experts from universities in Shaanxi Province who possessed extensive knowledge of higher education administration and counselor development.

The target group comprised five experts selected through purposive sampling, which is appropriate for expert-based evaluation requiring informed, experience-based judgment. The selection criteria were as follows:

1. Work Experience: Each expert had more than 15 years of professional experience in university administration or student affairs.

2. Professional Rank: All experts held senior professional titles, demonstrating advanced academic or administrative expertise.

3. Leadership Role: Each participant occupied a senior leadership position, such as dean, department head, or director of student affairs, providing practical insight into institutional management and policy implementation.

This sampling approach ensured that all evaluators possessed the academic and managerial competence required to assess the feasibility and adaptability of the proposed strategies objectively. Participation was voluntary, and all experts were informed of the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality in accordance with research ethics protocols.

Research Instruments

The instrument used in this phase was a questionnaire designed to evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

Part 1: Basic information of respondents, presented in a checklist format.

Part 2: Experts' opinions on the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province, measured using a five-point Likert rating scale.

Instrument Development Procedures

1. The researcher identified key components of the strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province and formulated them into questionnaire items.

2. A draft questionnaire was constructed using a five-point Likert rating scale to evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of the strategies.

3. The draft questionnaire was submitted to the thesis advisor for review of linguistic accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness.

4. Revisions were made according to the advisor's recommendations to ensure that the instrument accurately reflected the aim of evaluating feasibility and adaptability.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for Objective 3: To evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province was based on the strategies developed in Phase 2. The procedures were as follows:

1. The researcher formally requested permission from the Graduate School of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University to contact five experts and obtain their evaluation of the feasibility and adaptability of the strategies.

2. The questionnaires were distributed to the experts through email and in-person delivery, with the aim of retrieving all five completed forms. Follow-up communication ensured a 100% response rate.

3. Returned questionnaires were checked for completeness and accuracy before analysis.

4. The researcher summarised and analyzed the evaluation results.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Basic Information of Respondents
analyzed using frequency and percentage.

Section 2: Experts' Opinions on Feasibility and Adaptability

analyzed using a five-point Likert rating scale, interpreted as follows:

Level 5 – Highest feasibility and adaptability

Level 4 – High feasibility and adaptability

Level 3 – Moderate feasibility and adaptability

Level 2 – Low feasibility and adaptability

Level 1 – Lowest feasibility and adaptability

The interpretation of mean scores was based on the concept of the five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). For this study, the following criteria were applied:

4.50 – 5.00 = Very high feasibility and adaptability

3.50 – 4.49 = High feasibility and adaptability

2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate feasibility and adaptability

1.50 – 2.49 = Low feasibility and adaptability

1.00 – 1.49 = Very low feasibility and adaptability

A statistical software package was used to compute the mean and standard deviation.

Summary

The operational procedures for developing and evaluating strategies to improve the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province, together with the overall methodology across all three phases of the study, are presented in Figure 3.1.

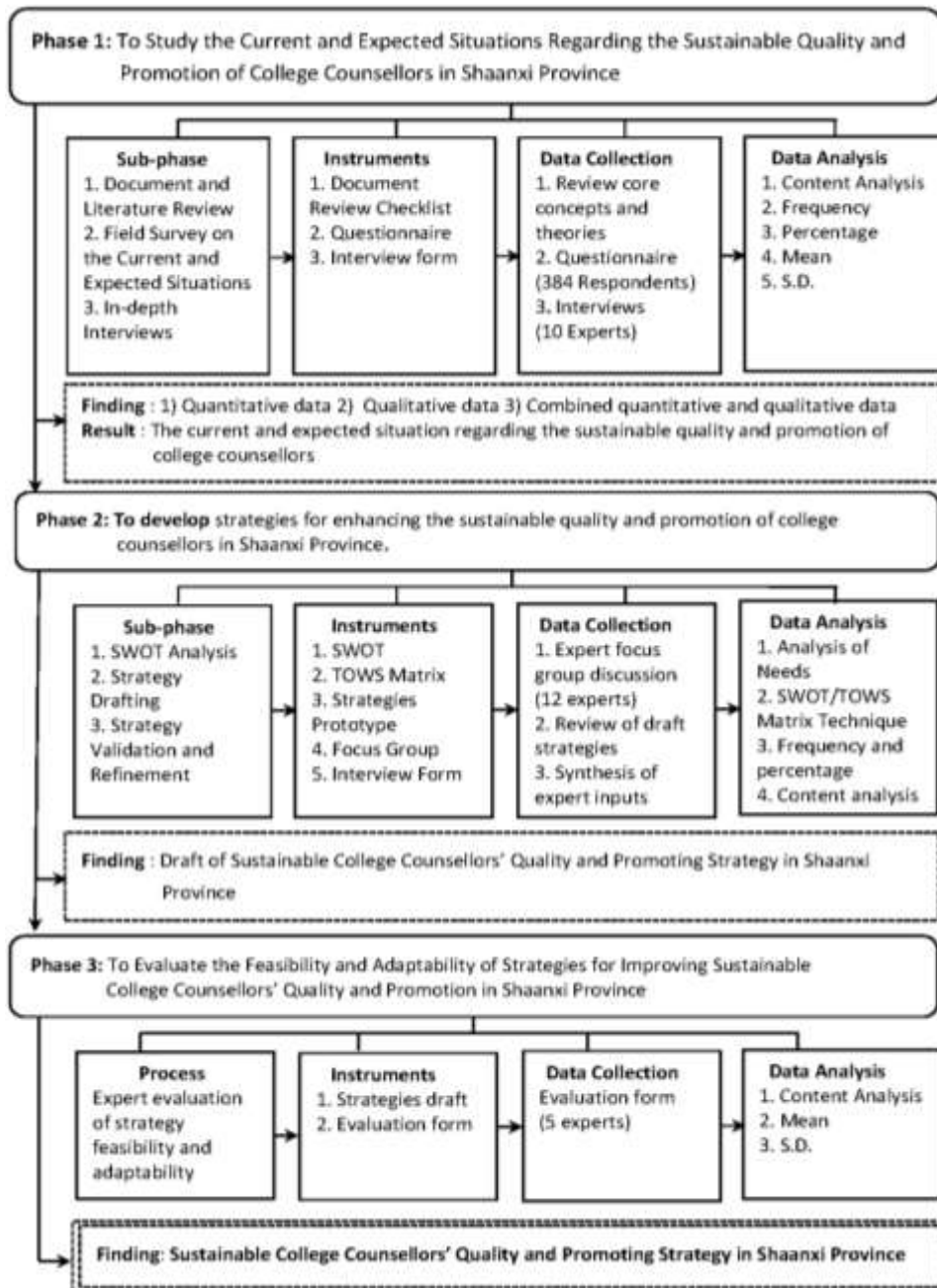


Figure 3.1 Summary of the Research Process

Chapter 4

Results of Analysis

The presentation of research data analysis on Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promoting Strategies in Shaanxi Province is organized as follows:

1. Symbol and abbreviations
2. Presentation of data analysis
3. Results of data analysis

Symbol and Abbreviations

To ensure a clear understanding of the interpretation of the data analysis, the researcher has defined the meanings of the symbols used in the analysis as follows:

N	refers to the sample size
M	refers to the mean value
S.D.	refers to the standard deviation
PNI_{modified}	refers to the Modified Priority Needs Index
S	refers to internal factors that constitute strengths related to the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province
W	refers to internal factors that constitute weaknesses related to the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province
O	refers to external factors that present opportunities for the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

T refers to external factors that pose threats or challenges to the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

Presentation of Data Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis for the study entitled Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province. The analysis was conducted in three phases, as follows.

Phase 1: Study of the current and expected Status regarding the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

Phase 1 comprised three sub-phases:

Sub-phase 1: Document review

Sub-phase 2: Field survey on the current and expected Status

Sub-phase 3: In-depth interviews

Phase 2: Development of strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.

Strategy development was undertaken in three sub-phases:

1. Sub-phase 1: SWOT analysis of needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

2. Sub-phase 2: Drafting the development strategies

3. Sub-phase 3: Validation and refinement of the proposed strategy

Phase 3: Evaluation of the feasibility and adaptability of the strategies for improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

The detailed results of each phase are presented in the following sections.

Results of Data Analysis

Phase 1: Analysis of the current and expected Status regarding the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

This stage focused on analysing the current and expected Status, as well as identifying priority needs, to inform the development of strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.

Sub-phase 1: Document review

A review of relevant documents and research studies was conducted to identify the key components of the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The analysis indicated that the sustainable strategy comprises seven essential components, as follows:

1. Ideological and political quality
2. Professional and theoretical knowledge
3. Psychological and emotional quality
4. Humanistic and cultural quality
5. Communication and interpersonal skills
6. Management and planning ability
7. Professional evaluation dimensions

Table 4.1 Key Components of the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion.

Key Component	Description	Resources
1. Ideological and political quality	Demonstrates ethical conduct, policy awareness, and social responsibility when guiding students' values, civic awareness, and worldview.	Deng and Li (2020); Ministry of Education of the PRC (2017); Wang (2019)
2. Professional and theoretical knowledge	Applies educational, counseling, and management knowledge to make sound judgements and address student issues effectively.	Corey (2017); McLeod (2019); Zhang and Zhao (2021)
3. Psychological and emotional quality	Maintains emotional stability and resilience, demonstrates empathy, and provides supportive responses in demanding counseling contexts.	Gross (2015); Maslach and Leiter (2016); Liu et al. (2020)
4. Humanistic and cultural quality	Respects diversity and promotes humanistic values to foster inclusive learning communities and harmonious relationships.	Banks (2016); Chen and Starosta (2018); UNESCO (2015)
5. Communication and interpersonal skills	Communicates clearly and listens empathetically to build trust, strengthen collaboration, and manage conflicts constructively.	Rogers (1957); Spitzberg and Cupach (2011); Tang and Zhang (2020)

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Key Component	Description	Resources
6. Management and planning ability	Organises work systematically, coordinates resources, and plans programmes to implement policies and achieve student development goals efficiently.	Mintzberg (2009); Northouse (2021); Sun and Li (2022)
7. Professional evaluation dimensions	Produces measurable professional outputs (e.g., research, projects, mentoring) aligned with fair evaluation systems and continuous development mechanisms.	DeVellis (2017); OECD (2019); Xu and Huang (2021)

Sub-phase 2: Field survey on the current and expected Status

Results of the questionnaire survey on the current and expected Status of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province (questionnaire survey)

A questionnaire survey was administered to examine respondents' perceptions of the current situation and the expected situation regarding the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors. A total of 341 respondents completed the questionnaire, representing a 100% response rate.

The findings are presented in Tables 4.2–4.10. Table 4.2 summarises respondents' general information (demographic and professional background). Tables 4.3–4.10 present the current and expected levels across the seven dimensions of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

In the interpretation of mean scores on the five-point scale, the following criteria were adopted: 1.00–1.49 = Extremely low; 1.50–2.49 = Relatively low; 2.50–3.49 = Moderate; 3.50–4.49 = Relatively high; 4.50–5.00 = Extremely high.

Table 4.2 Summary of Respondents' General Information (n=341)

General information	Frequency	Percentage
University Name		
1. Xi'an Jiaotong University	68	19.94
2. Xianyang Normal University	65	19.06
3. Yan'an University	70	20.53
4. Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College	66	19.35
5. Hanzhong University	72	21.11
Total	341	100.00
Gender		
1. Male	153	44.87
2. Female	188	55.13
Total	341	100.00
Age Group		
1. Below 30	92	26.98
2. 31-40	167	48.97
3. 41-50	68	19.94
4. Above 50	14	4.10
Total	341	100.00

Table 4.2 (Continued)

General information	Frequency	Percentage
Educational Qualification		
1. Bachelor's degree	45	13.20
2. Master's degree	273	79.94
3. Doctoral degree	23	6.74
Total	341	100.00
Years of Experience		
1. Less than 3 years	76	22.29
2. 3-5 years	112	32.84
3. 6-10 years	105	30.79
4. More than 10 years	48	14.08
Total	341	100.00

Explanation (Table 4.2): General information of respondents (n = 341)

The respondents were drawn from five selected institutions with a highly comparable distribution across sites. The proportions ranged from 19.06% to 21.11%, with Hanzhong University contributing the largest share (21.11%) and Xianyang Normal University the smallest (19.06%). This relatively even spread supports meaningful institutional comparability in subsequent analyses.

In terms of gender, female counselors constituted a slight majority (55.13%), while male counselors accounted for 44.87%. No respondents selected "Other/Prefer not to say," indicating a complete classification within the two reported categories.

Regarding age, the sample was predominantly young to middle-aged. The 31–40 age group represented the largest proportion (48.97%), followed by those below 30 (26.98%), while older age groups were less represented (41–50: 19.94%;

above 50: 4.10%). This pattern indicates a workforce concentrated in early and mid-career stages.

With respect to educational attainment, most respondents held a master's degree (79.94%), whereas bachelor's degrees accounted for 13.20% and doctoral degrees for 6.74%. Overall, the data indicate a generally high level of academic preparation among college counselors.

Concerning years of counseling experience, the largest group reported 3–5 years (32.84%), followed by 6–10 years (30.79%) and less than 3 years (22.29%). Those with more than 10 years of experience constituted 14.08%, suggesting that most respondents were in the early-to-mid stages of professional practice, with a smaller cohort of highly experienced counselors.

Overall, the respondents' general information indicates a balanced institutional representation, a slightly female-majority workforce, a predominantly young-to-middle-aged profile, a high level of educational attainment, and an experience structure concentrated in early-to-mid career stages, providing an appropriate basis for analysing the current and expected Status across the seven dimensions.

Table 4.3 Current and Expected Situation of Ideological and Political Quality

Ideological and Political Quality	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
1. Availability of regular institutional training on political literacy and counselor ethics	3.62	0.85	High	4.58	0.52	Highest
2. Integration of moral and civic values in student counseling and leadership programmes	3.75	0.78	High	4.63	0.48	Highest

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Ideological and Political Quality	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
3. Use of provincial/national education policies to guide counselor development goals	3.81	0.72	High	4.51	0.55	Highest
4. Provision of recognition or incentives for promoting ideological and moral education	3.24	0.91	Moderate	4.35	0.61	High
5. Existence of an evaluation system linking counselor assessment to moral/ideological performance	3.37	0.88	Moderate	4.42	0.58	High
Dimension Mean	3.56	0.83	High	4.50	0.55	Highest

Table 4.3 shows that the overall current situation of Ideological and Political Quality was at a high level ($M=3.56$, $S.D.=0.83$), whereas the expected situation was at the high level ($M=4.50$, $S.D.=0.55$). Among the current indicators, the high mean scores were reported for using provincial/national education policies to guide counselor development goals ($M=3.81$, $S.D.=0.72$) and integrating moral and civic values in counseling and leadership programmes ($M=3.75$, $S.D.=0.78$), both at a high level. In contrast, recognition or incentives for promoting ideological and moral education recorded only a moderate current level ($M=3.24$, $S.D.=0.91$), and the existence of an evaluation system linking counselor assessment to moral/ideological performance was also moderate ($M=3.37$, $S.D.=0.88$).

For the expected condition, all items were rated high to high, with the strongest expectations for integration of moral and civic values ($M=4.63$, $S.D.=0.48$) and regular institutional training on political literacy and counselor ethics

(M=4.58, S.D.=0.52).

Overall, Table 4.3 indicates that strategy development should build on existing strengths (policy-guided practice and value integration) while closing the main gaps through (1) stronger incentive and recognition systems, (2) standardised performance evaluation linked to moral/ideological outcomes, and (3) structured, continuous training to meet the high level of stakeholder expectations.

Table 4.4 Current and Expected Situation of Professional and Theoretical Knowledge

Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
6. Participation in at least two professional development workshops per academic year	3.18	0.93	Moderate	4.47	0.56	High
7. Institutional encouragement for counselors' research and publication	3.05	0.95	Moderate	4.32	0.63	High
8. Access to funded projects and/or national-level counselor training opportunities	2.97	0.98	Moderate	4.53	0.51	Highest
9. Use of scientific and transparent indicators for counselor performance evaluation	3.22	0.90	Moderate	4.41	0.59	High
10. Government programme support for continuous professional development of counselors	3.31	0.87	Moderate	4.38	0.60	High
Dimension Mean	3.15	0.58	Moderate	4.42	0.58	High

Table 4.4 shows that the overall current situation of Professional and Theoretical Knowledge was at a moderate level ($M=3.15$, $S.D.=0.58$), whereas the expected situation was at a high level ($M=4.42$, $S.D.=0.58$). Among the current indicators, the high mean score was reported for government programme support for continuous professional development of counselors ($M=3.31$, $S.D.=0.87$), followed by the use of scientific and transparent indicators for counselor performance evaluation ($M=3.22$, $S.D.=0.90$), both at a moderate level. In contrast, access to funded projects and/or national-level counselor training opportunities recorded the lowest current mean ($M=2.97$, $S.D.=0.98$), and institutional encouragement for counselors' research and publication was also comparatively low ($M=3.05$, $S.D.=0.95$).

For the expected condition, all items were rated high to highest, with the strongest expectation for access to funded projects and/or national-level counselor training opportunities ($M=4.53$, $S.D.=0.51$), which reached the highest level. High expectations were also reported for participation in at least two professional development workshops per academic year ($M=4.47$, $S.D.=0.56$) and the use of scientific and transparent performance indicators ($M=4.41$, $S.D.=0.59$).

Overall, Table 4.4 indicates that strategy development should prioritise strengthening structured professional development opportunities, particularly access to funded projects and national-level training, while reinforcing institutional support for research and publication and maintaining transparent evaluation indicators to close the current–expected gap.

Table 4.5 Current and Expected Situation of Psychological and Emotional Quality

Psychological and Emotional Quality	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
11. Provision of annual training in psychological resilience and/or stress management	2.89	1.02	Moderate	4.55	0.50	Highest
12. Availability of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for staff mental well-being	2.76	1.05	Low	4.48	0.53	High
13. Access to professional counseling services during high-stress periods	2.93	1.01	Moderate	4.39	0.61	High
14. Inclusion of mental health support for counselor staff in national/local policies	3.01	0.99	Moderate	4.45	0.57	High
15. A work environment that supports emotional expression and peer support	3.27	0.89	Moderate	4.32	0.62	High
Dimension Mean	2.97	0.99	Moderate	4.44	0.57	High

Table 4.5 shows that the overall current situation of Psychological and Emotional Quality was at a moderate level ($M=2.97$, $S.D.=0.99$), whereas the expected situation was at a high level ($M=4.44$, $S.D.=0.57$).

Among the current indicators, the high mean score was reported for a work environment that supports emotional expression and peer support ($M=3.27$, $S.D.=0.89$), followed by the inclusion of mental health support for counselor staff in national/local policies ($M=3.01$, $S.D.=0.99$), both at a moderate level. In contrast, the

availability of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for staff mental well-being recorded the lowest current mean and was rated at a low level ($M=2.76$, $S.D.=1.05$), while annual training in psychological resilience and/or stress management was also relatively low within the dimension ($M=2.89$, $S.D.=1.02$).

For the expected condition, all items were rated high to high, with the strongest expectation for annual training in psychological resilience and/or stress management ($M=4.55$, $S.D.=0.50$), which reached the highest level. High expectations were also reported for the availability of EAP support ($M=4.48$, $S.D.=0.53$) and the inclusion of mental health support in national/local policies ($M=4.45$, $S.D.=0.57$).

Overall, Table 4.5 indicates that strategy development should prioritise establishing formal staff mental health support systems (particularly EAP provision) and institutionalising structured resilience training, while strengthening supportive workplace practices to reduce the current-expected gap in psychological and emotional quality.

Table 4.6 Current and Expected Situation of Humanistic and Cultural Quality

Humanistic and Cultural Quality	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
16. Promotion of cross-cultural understanding and tolerance in student guidance	3.42	0.86	High	4.37	0.60	High
17. Availability of programmes integrating humanistic values with modern innovation	3.19	0.92	Moderate	4.28	0.64	High
18. Encouragement for counselors' participation in community outreach/volunteering	3.08	0.94	Moderate	4.41	0.59	High
19. Government project support for cultural and moral education among university staff	3.25	0.90	Moderate	4.33	0.62	High
20. Availability of physical wellness programmes to improve health and morale	3.12	0.93	Moderate	4.25	0.65	High
Dimension Mean	3.22	0.91	Moderate	4.33	0.62	High

Table 4.6 shows that the overall current situation of Humanistic and Cultural Quality was at a moderate level ($M=3.22$, $S.D.=0.91$), whereas the expected situation was at a high level ($M=4.33$, $S.D.=0.62$).

Among the current indicators, the high mean score was reported for promotion of cross-cultural understanding and tolerance in student guidance ($M=3.42$, $S.D.=0.86$), which was rated at a high level. In contrast, the remaining indicators were rated at a moderate level, including availability of programmes

integrating humanistic values with modern innovation ($M=3.19$, $S.D.=0.92$), encouragement for counselors' participation in community outreach/volunteering ($M=3.08$, $S.D.=0.94$), government project support for cultural and moral education among university staff ($M=3.25$, $S.D.=0.90$), and availability of physical wellness programmes to improve health and morale ($M=3.12$, $S.D.=0.93$).

For the expected condition, all items were rated high, with the strongest expectation for encouragement for counselors' participation in community outreach/volunteering ($M=4.41$, $S.D.=0.59$), followed by promotion of cross-cultural understanding and tolerance ($M=4.37$, $S.D.=0.60$) and government project support for cultural and moral education ($M=4.33$, $S.D.=0.62$).

Overall, Table 4.6 indicates that strategy development should strengthen institutional and programme support for humanistic and cultural initiatives, particularly by expanding outreach/volunteering opportunities and integrating humanistic values with innovation, while sustaining good practice in cross-cultural guidance to reduce the current–expected gap.

Table 4.7 Current and Expected Situation of Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
21. Effectiveness of communication with students from diverse academic/cultural backgrounds	3.78	0.75	High	4.52	0.54	Highest
22. Provision of leadership and communication training for counselors	3.35	0.89	Moderate	4.39	0.60	High
23. Frequency of counselors' collaboration with academic departments and student Organizations	3.51	0.83	High	4.45	0.57	High
24. Existence of external collaboration with government/social agencies to support counseling work	3.02	0.97	Moderate	4.28	0.64	High
25. Availability of a feedback system for evaluating counselors' communication performance	3.18	0.93	Moderate	4.32	0.63	High
Dimension Mean	3.37	0.87	Moderate	4.40	0.59	High

Table 4.7 shows that the overall current situation of Communication and Interpersonal Skills was at a moderate level ($M=3.37$, $S.D.=0.87$), whereas the expected situation was at a high level ($M=4.40$, $S.D.=0.59$).

Among the current indicators, the high mean score was reported for effectiveness of communication with students from diverse academic/cultural backgrounds ($M=3.78$, $S.D.=0.75$), which was rated at a high level, followed by the frequency of collaboration with academic departments and student Organizations ($M=3.51$, $S.D.=0.83$), also at a high level. In contrast, the existence of external collaboration with government/social agencies to support counseling work recorded the lowest current mean ($M=3.02$, $S.D.=0.97$), while the availability of a feedback system for evaluating counselors' communication performance remained at a moderate level ($M=3.18$, $S.D.=0.93$).

For the expected condition, all items were rated high to high, with the strongest expectation for effective communication with students from diverse academic/cultural backgrounds ($M=4.52$, $S.D.=0.54$), which reached the highest level. High expectations were also reported for collaboration with academic departments and student Organizations ($M=4.45$, $S.D.=0.57$) and leadership and communication training for counselors ($M=4.39$, $S.D.=0.60$).

Overall, Table 4.7 indicates that strategy development should maintain strengths in interpersonal communication and internal collaboration, while prioritising stronger external multi-agency collaboration and more systematic feedback and evaluation mechanisms, supported by structured leadership and communication training to reduce the current–expected gap.

Table 4.8 Current and Expected Situation of Management and Planning Ability

Management and Planning Ability	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
26. Use of data-based approaches to design and evaluate student development programmes	3.09	0.94	Moderate	4.43	0.58	High
27. Use of digital systems for counseling management, records, and student tracking	3.15	0.92	Moderate	4.51	0.55	Highest
28. Workload adjustment to maintain an effective counselor–student ratio	2.98	0.98	Moderate	4.37	0.60	High
29. Availability of institutional funding for technological tools supporting counseling management	2.87	1.03	Low	4.48	0.53	High
30. Provincial policy support for equitable allocation of counseling staff across universities	3.21	0.89	Moderate	4.32	0.63	High
Dimension Mean	3.06	0.95	Moderate	4.42	0.58	High

Table 4.8 shows that the overall current situation of Management and Planning Ability was at a moderate level ($M=3.06$, $S.D.=0.95$), whereas the expected situation was at a high level ($M=4.42$, $S.D.=0.58$).

Among the current indicators, the high mean score was reported for provincial policy support for equitable allocation of counseling staff across universities ($M=3.21$, $S.D.=0.89$), followed by the use of digital systems for counseling management,

records, and student tracking ($M=3.15$, $S.D.=0.92$), both at a moderate level. In contrast, the availability of institutional funding for technological tools supporting counseling management recorded the lowest current mean and was rated at a low level ($M=2.87$, $S.D.=1.03$). The workload adjustment to maintain an effective counselor–student ratio was also relatively low within this dimension ($M=2.98$, $S.D.=0.98$), indicating constraints in staffing and workload management.

For the expected condition, all items were rated high to high, with the strongest expectation for the use of digital systems for counseling management, records, and student tracking ($M=4.51$, $S.D.=0.55$), which reached the highest level. High expectations were also reported for institutional funding for technological tools ($M=4.48$, $S.D.=0.53$) and data-based approaches to design and evaluate student development programmes ($M=4.43$, $S.D.=0.58$).

Overall, Table 4.8 indicates that strategy development should prioritise strengthening digital management capacity and data-driven programme planning, while addressing key constraints in institutional funding for technological tools and workload/staffing arrangements to reduce the current–expected gap in management and planning ability.

Table 4.9 Current and Expected Situation of Professional Evaluation Dimensions

Professional Evaluation Dimensions	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
31. Research/publication output related to counseling or student development	2.79	1.04	Low	4.25	0.65	High
32. Completion of applied research projects contributing to university practice	2.83	1.02	Low	4.31	0.63	High
33. Research performance evaluation based on completion and practical outcomes	3.01	0.99	Moderate	4.40	0.59	High
34. Invitations to share expertise through conferences or professional networks	2.67	1.06	Low	4.18	0.67	High
35. Mentoring of junior counselors and/or supervision of student research/internships	3.35	0.89	Moderate	4.37	0.60	High
36. Participation in public-engagement activities promoting understanding of counseling (e.g., seminars, outreach)	3.12	0.93	Moderate	4.22	0.66	High
Dimension Mean	2.96	1.00	Moderate	4.29	0.63	High

Table 4.9 shows that the overall current situation of Professional Evaluation Dimensions was at a moderate level ($M=2.96$, $S.D.=1.00$), whereas the expected situation was at a high level ($M=4.29$, $S.D.=0.63$).

Among the current indicators, the high mean score was reported for mentoring of junior counselors and/or supervision of student research/internships ($M=3.35$, $S.D.=0.89$), followed by participation in public-engagement activities promoting understanding of counseling (e.g., seminars, outreach) ($M=3.12$, $S.D.=0.93$), both at a moderate level. In contrast, invitations to share expertise through conferences or professional networks recorded the lowest current mean and was rated at a low level ($M=2.67$, $S.D.=1.06$). Similarly, research/publication output related to counseling or student development ($M=2.79$, $S.D.=1.04$) and completion of applied research projects contributing to university practice ($M=2.83$, $S.D.=1.02$) were also rated low, indicating limited current performance in research- and dissemination-related indicators.

For the expected condition, all items were rated high, with the strongest expectation for research performance evaluation based on completion and practical outcomes ($M=4.40$, $S.D.=0.59$), followed by mentoring of junior counselors and/or supervision of student research/internships ($M=4.37$, $S.D.=0.60$) and completion of applied research projects contributing to university practice ($M=4.31$, $S.D.=0.63$). Expected ratings for research/publication output ($M=4.25$, $S.D.=0.65$), public-engagement activities ($M=4.22$, $S.D.=0.66$), and conference/professional network invitations ($M=4.18$, $S.D.=0.67$) were also consistently high.

Overall, Table 4.9 indicates that strategy development should prioritise strengthening research and knowledge-dissemination capacity (publications, applied projects, and professional networking), while formalising outcome-based research performance evaluation and sustaining mentoring and public-engagement practices to reduce the current-expected gap in professional evaluation dimensions.

The results for the first research question, What is the current and expected situation of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province? are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Overall Current and Expected Status of Sustainable Quality and Promotion Components of College Counselors

Sustainable Quality and Promotion Components of College Counselors	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
1. Ideological and Political Quality	3.56	0.83	High	4.50	0.55	Highest
2. Professional and theoretical knowledge	3.15	0.58	Moderate	4.42	0.58	High
3. Psychological and emotional quality	2.97	0.99	Moderate	4.44	0.57	High
4. Humanistic and cultural quality	3.22	0.91	Moderate	4.33	0.62	High
5. Communication and interpersonal skills	3.37	0.87	Moderate	4.40	0.59	High
6. Management and planning ability	3.06	0.95	Moderate	4.42	0.58	High
7. Professional evaluation dimensions	2.96	1.00	Moderate	4.29	0.63	High
Overall	3.18	0.22	Moderate	4.00	0.07	High

Table 4.10 shows that the overall current situation of the sustainable quality and promotion components of college counselors was at a moderate level ($M=3.18$, $S.D.=0.22$), whereas the expected situation was at a high level ($M=4.00$, $S.D.=0.07$).

Among the current dimension means, Ideological and Political Quality recorded the high level (High; $M=3.56$, $S.D.=0.83$), indicating a relative strength in this area. By contrast, the lowest current mean was found in Professional Evaluation

Dimensions (M=2.96, S.D.=1.00), closely followed by Psychological and Emotional Quality (M=2.97, S.D.=0.99), suggesting comparatively weaker performance in evaluation-related outputs and staff psychological support. The remaining dimensions were rated at moderate levels, including Communication and Interpersonal Skills (M=3.37, S.D.=0.87), Humanistic and Cultural Quality (M=3.22, S.D.=0.91), Professional and Theoretical Knowledge (M=3.15, S.D.=0.58), and Management and Planning Ability (M=3.06, S.D.=0.95).

For the expected condition, all seven dimensions were rated high to high, with the strongest expectation for Ideological and Political Quality (highest; M=4.50, S.D.=0.55). Expectations for the remaining dimensions were consistently highest, including Psychological and Emotional Quality (M=4.44, S.D.=0.57), Professional and Theoretical Knowledge (M=4.42, S.D.=0.58), Management and Planning Ability (M=4.42, S.D.=0.58), Communication and Interpersonal Skills (M=4.40, S.D.=0.59), Humanistic and Cultural Quality (M=4.33, S.D.=0.62), and Professional Evaluation Dimensions (M=4.29, S.D.=0.63).

Overall, Table 4.10 indicates a consistent current–expected gap across all dimensions. Strategy development should therefore maintain the existing strength in ideological and political quality while prioritising improvement in professional evaluation dimensions and psychological and emotional quality, alongside strengthening knowledge development, management capacity, and communication systems to align current practice with the uniformly high expectations reported.

Sub-phase 3: In-depth interviews

Following the document review and questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. This qualitative phase aimed to clarify and contextualise the quantitative findings by exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and practical challenges, as well as identifying suggestions for improvement. The interview data were analysed through thematic analysis, and the key themes and supporting evidence are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Distribution of Interviewees by University and Background

University	No. of interviewees	Experience (years)		Qual.	
		Mean	S.D.	M	PhD
1. Xi'an Jiaotong University	2	8.5	1.20	2	0
2. Xianyang Normal University	2	7.8	0.90	2	0
3. Yan'an University	2	9.2	1.50	1	1
4. Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College	2	6.9	1.10	2	0
5. Hanzhong University	2	7.5	1.30	1	1
Total	10	7.9	1.30	8	2

Explanation: Table 4.11 summarises the background information of the 10 in-depth interviewees. The participants were equally distributed across the five universities (two from each institution), supporting institutional and regional representation. The gender distribution was balanced (5 male and 5 female), and the mean years of experience was 7.9 years (S.D.=1.3), indicating substantial practical experience. Most interviewees held a master's degree (n=8), while two held doctoral degrees (n=2), broadly aligning with the educational profile of the questionnaire respondents.

Overall, the interview sample provides a balanced and appropriately experienced group for generating credible qualitative insights to complement the survey findings.

Table 4.12 Key Themes and Frequency of In-depth Interviews by Dimension (n = 10)

Dimension	Key theme	Frequency	Percentage
		(n)	(%)
1. Ideological and Political Quality	Need for more targeted political training	8	80.00
2. Ideological and Political Quality	Imperfect evaluation mechanism for ideological work	7	70.00
3. Ideological and Political Quality	Policy interpretation and implementation support	6	60.00
4. Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	Lack of systematic professional training	9	90.00
5. Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	Insufficient research support and resources	8	80.00
6. Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	Limited opportunities for academic exchange	7	70.00
7. Psychological and Emotional Quality	Heavy workload and high pressure	10	100.00
8. Psychological and Emotional Quality	Lack of effective mental health support	9	90.00
9. Psychological and Emotional Quality	Need for stress management training	8	80.00
10. Humanistic and Cultural Quality	Insufficient integration of humanistic education	7	70.00
11. Humanistic and Cultural Quality	Lack of cultural and volunteer activity resources	6	60.00

Table 4.12 (Continued)

Dimension	Key theme	Frequency	Percentage
		(n)	(%)
12. Humanistic and Cultural Quality	Need for cross-cultural communication training	5	50.00
13. Comm. and Interpersonal Skills	Difficulty in communicating with special student groups	6	60.00
14. Comm. and Interpersonal Skills	Lack of collaboration mechanisms with other departments	7	70.00
15. Comm. and Interpersonal Skills	Need for professional communication skills training	5	50.00
16. Management and Planning Ability	Backward digital management tools	9	90.00
17. Management and Planning Ability	Unreasonable counselor-student ratio	8	80.00
18. Management and Planning Ability	Lack of data-based planning capacity	7	70.00
19. Professional Evaluation Dimensions	Unclear evaluation indicators	8	80.00
20. Professional Evaluation Dimensions	Inadequate recognition of research achievements	7	70.00
21. Professional Evaluation Dimensions	Lack of career development channels	9	90.00

Explanation: Table 4.12 summarises the key themes and their frequency of mention across the seven dimensions based on the in-depth interviews (n = 10). The most frequently reported issues related to psychological and emotional quality, with heavy workload and high pressure mentioned by all interviewees (100%), followed by lack of effective mental health support (90%) and the need for stress management training (80%). In professional and theoretical knowledge, lack of systematic professional training was most prominent (90%), alongside insufficient research support and resources (80%). In management and planning ability, backward digital management tools was highly cited (90%), and concerns about the counselor–student ratio were also common (80%). For professional evaluation dimensions, lack of career development channels was frequently mentioned (90%), indicating perceived constraints in progression and recognition.

Overall, these themes converge on four priority areas for Phase 2 strategy development: counselor well-being support, structured professional training, strengthened digital management capacity, and clearer career development and evaluation mechanisms.

Phase 2: Development of strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

Sub-phase 1: SWOT analysis of needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

A needs and environmental analysis was conducted to inform the development of strategies for enhancing sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The detailed findings are presented in Tables 4.13–4.20. Ranked PNI_{modified} values were used to classify factors within the SWOT framework, as follows:

Internal factors

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| - Strengths (S): | $PNI_{\text{modified}} \leq \text{mean}$ |
| - Weaknesses (W): | $PNI_{\text{modified}} > \text{mean}$ |

External factors

- Opportunities (O): $PNI_{\text{modified}} \leq \text{mean}$

- Threats (T): $PNI_{\text{modified}} > \text{mean}$

Table 4.13 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Ideological and political quality

Ideological and political quality	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
1. Availability of regular institutional training on political literacy and counselor ethics	3.62	4.58	0.27	3		√		
2. Integration of moral and civic values in student counseling and leadership programmes	3.75	4.63	0.23	4*	√			
3. Use of provincial/national education policies to guide counselor development goals	3.81	4.51	0.18	5			√	√
4. Provision of recognition or incentives for promoting ideological and moral education	3.24	4.35	0.34	1*		√		
5. Existence of an evaluation system linking counselor assessment to moral/ideological performance	3.37	4.42	0.31	2		√		
Overall	3.56	4.50	0.26					

Note. CS = Current Situation; ES = Expected Situation.

Table 4.13 indicates that, within the dimension of Ideological and Political Quality, the largest priority need (high PNI_{modified}) concerns the provision of recognition or incentives for promoting ideological and moral education ($CS=3.24$)

($ES = 4.35$; $PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.34$; Rank 1). This was followed by the existence of an evaluation system linking counselor assessment to moral/ideological performance ($CS=3.37$;

$ES = 4.42$; $PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.31$; Rank 2). Moderate priority needs were found for the availability of regular institutional training on political literacy and counselor ethics

($CS=3.62$; $ES=4.58$; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.27$; Rank 3) and the integration of moral and civic values in counseling and leadership programmes ($CS=3.75$; $ES=4.63$; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.23$; Rank 4). The lowest priority need was the use of provincial/national education policies to guide counselor development goals ($CS=3.81$; $ES=4.51$; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.18$; Rank 5). suggesting comparatively stronger current practice in this area. Overall, the dimension showed a moderate level of priority need (overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.26$), indicating that strategy development should prioritise strengthening incentive/recognition mechanisms and standardising evaluation processes, while maintaining policy-guided practice and value integration as established foundations.

Table 4.14 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Professional and theoretical knowledge

Professional and theoretical knowledge	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
6. Participation in at least two professional development workshops per academic year	3.18	4.47	0.41	3		√		
7. Institutional encouragement for counselors' research and publication	3.05	4.32	0.42	2		√		
8. Access to funded projects and/or national-level counselor training opportunities	2.97	4.53	0.53*	1*				√
9. Use of scientific and transparent indicators for counselor performance evaluation	3.22	4.41	0.37	4	√			
10. Government programme support for continuous professional development of counselors	3.31	4.38	0.32	5			√	
Overall	3.15	4.42	0.40					

Note. CS = Current Situation; ES = Expected Situation.

Table 4.14 indicates that, within the dimension of Professional and Theoretical Knowledge, the high priority need (high PNI_{modified}) concerns access to funded projects and/or national-level counselor training opportunities (CS=2.97; ES=4.53; PNI_{modified} =0.53; Rank 1). This was followed by institutional encouragement for counselors' research and publication (CS=3.05; ES=4.32; PNI_{modified} =0.42; Rank 2) and

participation in at least two professional development workshops per academic year (CS=3.18; ES=4.47; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.41$; Rank 3), indicating substantial gaps between current practice and expected conditions in professional capacity development.

Moderate priority needs were identified for the use of scientific and transparent indicators for counselor performance evaluation (CS=3.22; ES=4.41; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.37$; Rank 4) and government programme support for continuous professional development of counselors (CS=3.31; ES=4.38; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.32$; Rank 5). These findings suggest that, although some institutional and policy support mechanisms are in place, their current effectiveness remains insufficient to meet professional development expectations.

Overall, the dimension demonstrated a relatively high level of priority need (overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.40$), indicating that strategy development should prioritise expanding access to funded projects and national-level training, strengthening institutional support for research and publication, and systematising professional development pathways, while reinforcing transparent performance evaluation mechanisms as a supporting foundation.

Table 4.15 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Psychological and emotional quality

Psychological and emotional quality	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
11. Provision of annual training in psychological resilience and/or stress management	2.89	4.55	0.57	2		√		
12. Availability of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for staff mental well-being	2.76	4.48	0.62	1*		√		
13. Access to professional counseling services during high-stress periods	2.93	4.39	0.50	4		√		
14. Inclusion of mental health support for counselor staff in national/local policies	3.01	4.45	0.48	5	√		√	
15. A work environment that supports emotional expression and peer support	3.27	4.32	0.32	3	√			
Overall	2.97	4.44	0.49					

Note. CS = Current Situation; ES = Expected Situation

Table 4.15 indicates that, within the dimension of Psychological and Emotional Quality, the high priority need (high PNI_{modified}) concerns the availability of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for staff mental well-being (CS=2.76; ES=4.48; PNI_{modified} =0.62; Rank 1).

This was followed by the provision of annual training in psychological resilience and/or stress management (CS=2.89; ES=4.55; PNI_{modified} =0.57; Rank 2), indicating a substantial gap between current provision and expected support.

Moderate priority needs were identified for access to professional counseling services during high-stress periods (CS=2.93; ES=4.39; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.50$; Rank 4) and the inclusion of mental health support for counselor staff in national/local policies (CS=3.01; ES=4.45; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.48$; Rank 5).

The lowest priority need within this dimension was a work environment that supports emotional expression and peer support (CS=3.27; ES=4.32; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.32$; Rank 3), suggesting comparatively stronger current practice in informal or workplace-based support than in formal service provision.

Overall, the dimension showed a relatively high level of priority need (overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.49$), indicating that strategy development should prioritise establishing formal mental health support systems (particularly EAP provision) and institutionalising resilience training, alongside improving access to professional counseling support to better align current practice with stakeholder expectations.

Table 4.16 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Humanistic and cultural quality

Humanistic and cultural quality	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
16. Promotion of cross-cultural understanding and tolerance in student guidance	3.42	4.37	0.28	5	√			
17. Availability of programmes integrating humanistic values with modern innovation	3.19	4.28	0.34	3	√			
18. Encouragement for counselors' participation in community outreach/volunteering	3.08	4.41	0.43	1*		√		
19. Government project support for cultural and moral education among university staff	3.25	4.33	0.33	4			√	
20. Availability of physical wellness programmes to improve health and morale	3.12	4.25	0.36	2		√		
Overall	3.22	4.33	0.34					

Note. CS = Current Situation; ES = Expected Situation

Table 4.16 indicates that, within the dimension of Humanistic and Cultural Quality, the high priority need (high PNI_{modified}) concerns encouragement for counselors' participation in community outreach/volunteering (CS=3.08; ES=4.41; PNI_{modified} =0.43; Rank 1).

This was followed by the availability of physical wellness programmes to improve health and morale (CS=3.12; ES=4.25; PNI_{modified} =0.36; Rank 2) and the

availability of programmes integrating humanistic values with modern innovation (CS=3.19; ES=4.28; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.34$; Rank 3).

Moderate priority needs were identified for government project support for cultural and moral education among university staff (CS=3.25; ES=4.33; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.33$; Rank 4).

The lowest priority need was promotion of cross-cultural understanding and tolerance in student guidance (CS=3.42; ES=4.37; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.28$; Rank 5), suggesting comparatively stronger current practice in this area.

Overall, the dimension showed a moderate level of priority need (overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.34$), indicating that strategy development should prioritise expanding outreach/volunteering mechanisms and staff well-being programmes, while strengthening humanistic–innovation integration and external project support, and maintaining cross-cultural guidance as an existing strength.

Table 4.17 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
21. Effectiveness of communication with students from diverse academic/cultural backgrounds	3.78	4.52	0.20	5	√			
22. Provision of leadership and communication training for counselors	3.35	4.39	0.31	3	√			
23. Frequency of counselors' collaboration with academic departments and student Organizations	3.51	4.45	0.27	4	√			
24. Existence of external collaboration with government/social agencies to support counseling work	3.02	4.28	0.42	1				√
25. Availability of a feedback system for evaluating counselors' communication performance	3.18	4.32	0.36	2		√		
Overall	3.37	4.40	0.31					

Note. CS = Current Situation; ES = Expected Situation

Table 4.17 indicates that, within the dimension of Communication and Interpersonal Skills, the high priority need (high PNI_{modified}) concerns the existence of external collaboration with government/social agencies to support counseling work (CS=3.02; ES=4.28; PNI_{modified} =0.42; Rank 1).

This was followed by the availability of a feedback system for evaluating counselors' communication performance (CS=3.18; ES=4.32; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.36$; Rank 2) and the provision of leadership and communication training for counselors (CS=3.35; ES=4.39; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.31$; Rank 3).

Moderate priority needs were identified for the frequency of counselors' collaboration with academic departments and student Organizations (CS=3.51; ES=4.45; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.27$; Rank 4). The lowest priority need was effectiveness of communication with students from diverse academic/cultural backgrounds (CS=3.78; ES=4.52; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.20$; Rank 5), suggesting comparatively stronger current practice in this area.

Overall, the dimension showed a moderate level of priority need (overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.31$), indicating that strategy development should prioritise strengthening external partnership mechanisms, institutionalising communication performance feedback/evaluation systems, and expanding structured leadership/communication training, while sustaining effective practice in communication with diverse student groups as an existing strength.

Table 4.18 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Management and planning ability

Management and planning ability	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
26. Use of data-based approaches to design and evaluate student development programmes	3.09	4.43	0.43	3	√			
27. Use of digital systems for counseling management, records, and student tracking	3.15	4.51	0.43	3	√			
28. Workload adjustment to maintain an effective counselor–student ratio	2.98	4.37	0.47	2		√		
29. Availability of institutional funding for technological tools supporting counseling management	2.87	4.48	0.56	1		√		
30. Provincial policy support for equitable allocation of counseling staff across universities	3.21	4.32	0.35	5			√	
Overall	3.06	4.42	0.44					

Note. CS = Current Situation; ES = Expected Situation

Table 4.18 indicates that, within the dimension of Management and Planning Ability, the high priority need (high $PNI_{modified}$) concerns the availability of institutional funding for technological tools supporting counseling management (CS=2.87; ES=4.48; $PNI_{modified}$ =0.56; Rank 1). This was followed by workload adjustment to maintain an effective counselor–student ratio (CS=2.98; ES=4.37; $PNI_{modified}$ =0.47; Rank 2), indicating a substantial gap related to staffing and workload management.

The next priority needs were the use of data-based approaches to design and evaluate student development programmes (CS=3.09; ES=4.43; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.43$) and the use of digital systems for counseling management, records, and student tracking (CS=3.15; ES=4.51; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.43$), which share the same PNI_{modified} value and should be reported as a joint rank (Rank 3).

The lowest priority need was provincial policy support for equitable allocation of counseling staff across universities (CS=3.21; ES=4.32; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.35$; Rank 5), suggesting comparatively stronger current conditions in policy support than in resourcing and operational capacity.

Overall, the dimension showed a relatively high level of priority need (overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.44$), indicating that strategy development should prioritise strengthening funding for digital tools and improving workload/staffing arrangements, while advancing data-driven planning and digital system use to align current practice with expected conditions.

Table 4.19 Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT): Professional Evaluation

Dimensions

Professional Evaluation Dimensions	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
31. Research/publication output related to counseling or student development	2.79	4.25	0.52	2				√
32. Completion of applied research projects contributing to university practice	2.83	4.31	0.52	2				√
33. Research performance evaluation based on completion and practical outcomes	3.01	4.40	0.46	4		√		
34. Invitations to share expertise through conferences or professional networks	2.67	4.18	0.57	1*				√
35. Mentoring of junior counselors and/or supervision of student research/internships	3.35	4.37	0.30	6	√			
36. Participation in public-engagement activities promoting understanding of counseling (e.g., seminars, outreach)	3.12	4.22	0.35	5			√	
Overall	2.96	4.29	0.45					

Note. CS = Current Situation; ES = Expected Situation

Table 4.19 indicates that, within the Professional Evaluation Dimensions, the high priority need (high PNI_{modified}) concerns invitations to share expertise through conferences or professional networks (CS=2.67; ES=4.18; PNI_{modified} =0.57; Rank 1).

The next high priority needs relate to research/publication output (CS=2.79; ES=4.25; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.52$) and completion of applied research projects contributing to university practice (CS=2.83; ES=4.31; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.52$). Because both indicators have the same PNI_{modified} value, they share the same rank.

Moderate priority needs were observed for research performance evaluation based on completion and practical outcomes (CS=3.01; ES=4.40; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.46$; Rank 4) and participation in public-engagement activities (CS=3.12; ES=4.22; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.35$; Rank 5). The lowest priority need was mentoring of junior counselors and/or supervision of student research/internships (CS=3.35; ES=4.37; $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.30$; Rank 6), suggesting comparatively stronger current practice in mentoring than in research output and professional visibility.

Overall, this dimension shows a relatively high level of priority need (Overall CS=2.96; ES=4.29; overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.45$), indicating that strategy development should prioritise strengthening professional networking/visibility mechanisms and research and applied-project productivity, while maintaining and scaling existing mentoring practice as a supportive foundation.

Table 4.20 Overall Needs and Environmental Analysis (SWOT Summary)

Component	Mean		Overall		Internal		External	
	CS	ES	PNI	Rank	S	W	O	T
1. Ideological and political quality	3.56	4.50	0.26	7	√			
2. Professional and theoretical knowledge	3.15	4.42	0.40	4		√		
3. Psychological and emotional quality	2.97	4.44	0.49	1*		√		
4. Humanistic and cultural quality	3.22	4.33	0.34	5	√			
5. Communication and interpersonal skills	3.37	4.40	0.31	6	√			
6. Management and planning ability	3.06	4.42	0.44	3		√		
7. Professional evaluation dimensions	2.96	4.29	0.45	2				√
Overall	3.18	4.40	0.38					

Table 4.20 provides an overall summary of the needs and environmental analysis (SWOT) across the seven components. The results show that Psychological and Emotional Quality recorded the high priority need (CS=2.97; ES=4.44; $PNI_{modified}=0.49$; Rank 1), followed by Professional Evaluation Dimensions (CS=2.96; ES=4.29; $PNI_{modified}=0.45$; Rank 2) and Management and Planning Ability (CS=3.06; ES=4.42; $PNI_{modified}=0.44$; Rank 3). The mid-level priority needs were Professional and Theoretical Knowledge ($PNI_{modified}=0.40$; Rank 4) and Humanistic and Cultural Quality ($PNI_{modified}=0.34$; Rank 5), whereas the comparatively lower priority needs were Communication and Interpersonal Skills ($PNI_{modified}=0.31$; Rank 6) and Ideological and Political Quality ($PNI_{modified}=0.26$; Rank 7), indicating relatively stronger current conditions in these areas. Overall, the combined results suggest a moderate-to-high

priority need across components (overall $PNI_{\text{modified}}=0.38$), implying that Phase 2 strategy development should prioritise interventions targeting counselor well-being support, evaluation and career development systems, and management capacity, while sustaining existing strengths in ideological/political and communication-related practices.

Sub-phase 2: Drafting the development strategies

The findings from the analysis and synthesis conducted in this study were used to draft the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province. The results are first summarised in the SWOT analysis table, which synthesizes key internal and external conditions informing strategy development. Strategies were then formulated using the TOWS Matrix technique. The resulting draft strategy is presented in Tables 4.21–4.24.

Based on the analysis of priority needs using the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}) and the classification of internal and external factors reported in Tables 4.13–4.20, a SWOT analysis was conducted to synthesize the key conditions influencing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The SWOT matrix identifies internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, thereby providing an analytical foundation for subsequent strategy formulation through the TOWS framework.

Table 4.21 SWOT Matrix for the Sustainable Quality and Promotion of College Counselors in Shaanxi Province

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
S1 Clear national and institutional policies guiding higher education and student affairs (Ideological and Political Quality; low PNI_{modified}). S2 Relatively strong communication capacity and effective internal coordination. S3 A solid foundation for integrating ideological, humanistic, and cultural values into counseling practice. S4 Existing mentoring and peer-support practices among counselors.	W1 Lack of clear and systematic professional evaluation and career progression mechanisms (Professional Evaluation Dimensions; high PNI_{modified}). W2 Insufficient and unsystematic mental health support for counselors (e.g. EAP, resilience training). W3 Limited institutional support structures for research, publication, and applied projects. W4 Limited capacity in digital management and data-driven planning.
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
O1 Government policies promoting well-being, human resource development, and digital transformation. O2 Increasing demand for high-quality counseling and mental health services in universities. O3 Opportunities for collaboration with external agencies (government, social, and professional Organizations). O4 National trends supporting professional development through funded projects and training programmes.	T1 High workload and imbalanced counselor–student ratios. T2 Budgetary constraints and limited technological resources. T3 Rising expectations for evidence-based outcomes while evaluation systems remain underdeveloped. T4 Increasing complexity of student-related problems.

Note. The SWOT matrix was developed from the PNI_{modified} synthesis in Tables 4.13–4.20.

Following the SWOT analysis, the results were synthesized to formulate strategic directions for developing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The formulation process applied the TOWS Matrix framework proposed by Weihrich (1982), which enables systematic integration of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats). The strategies were categorized into four types: proactive (SO), responsive (ST), adaptive (WO), and preventive (WT).

The synthesis of Tables 4.13–4.20 indicates that the high priority needs relate to psychological and emotional quality, professional evaluation dimensions, and management and planning ability (high PNI_{modified} values), whereas ideological and political quality and communication and interpersonal skills show comparatively stronger current conditions. Accordingly, the TOWS matrix was developed to translate these empirical findings into draft strategy directions.

Table 4.22 TOWS Matrix for the Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategies

	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
Strengths (S)	SO Strategies SO1 Utilise policy alignment and ideological value frameworks as a foundation for enhancing counseling service quality. SO2 Expand external collaboration by leveraging strengths in communication and network-based working. SO3 Develop humanistic- and culture-oriented counseling models aligned with national well-being policies.	ST Strategies ST1 Use strong Organizational values and communication capacity to manage workload pressures and increasingly complex student issues. ST2 Apply supportive policy structures and Organizational culture to facilitate the transition towards digital management systems.

Table 4.22 (Continued)

	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
Weaknesses (W)	WO Strategies	WT Strategies
	WO1 Utilise government policies and programmes to improve evaluation systems, career pathways, and professional progression.	WT1 Restructure workload allocation and resource management to reduce counselor burnout and well-being risks.
	WO2 Mobilise external resources to establish systematic mental health support mechanisms (e.g. EAPs and resilience programmes).	WT2 Develop standardised evaluation and data-driven management systems to minimise risks related to quality assurance and accountability.
	WO3 Link national funding and training opportunities to strengthen academic competence and research capacity.	

Note. The TOWS matrix links SWOT factors to generate four strategy types (SO, ST, WO, WT) for subsequent strategy drafting.

Building on the findings from the SWOT and TOWS analyses, together with the evidence obtained from Sub-phase 3: In-depth interviews, the strategic directions were further operationalised by specifying (1) each main strategy and its intended goal, (2) each corresponding sub-strategy and its specific goal, and (3) the supporting projects designed to achieve the sub-strategy goals. In addition, each project was linked to specific and measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure that the proposed strategies are not only conceptually sound, but also feasible to implement and objectively assess within institutional contexts. Accordingly, the draft strategies for improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province are presented in Table 4.23

Table 4.23 The draft strategies for improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

TOWS link	Main strategy	Main strategy goal	Sub-strategy	Sub-strategy goal	Projects for Sub-strategy	Project indicators (measurable)	Priority rationale
WO2 / WT1	MS1 Counselor well-being and resilience	To strengthen counselors' psychological well-being and reduce burnout risks to sustain service quality.	SS1 Establish systematic mental health support (EAP and referral pathway)	To provide accessible, confidential, and timely mental health support for counselors.	P1 Establish an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).	• EAP established (Yes/No) by target date. • EAP utilisation rate (%) per quarter.	Interview: heavy workload/high pressure (100%); lack of mental health support (90%). SWOT: Psychological and Emotional Quality shows the high overall priority need (PNI _{modified} Rank 1).
					P2 Set up a referral and crisis-support pathway (internal–external).	• Number of counseling/referral cases completed (#/quarter). • Mean perceived stress score reduced by ≥10% from baseline (survey).	
WO2	MS1 Counselor well-being and resilience	To strengthen counselors' psychological well-being and reduce burnout risks to sustain service quality.	SS2 Institutionalise resilience training and supervision	To build coping capacity through regular stress-management training and structured supervision/peer	P1 Annual resilience and stress-management training programme.	• Training completion rate (%) annually. • Supervision/peer support sessions delivered (#/term). • Participation rate (%) per term.	Interview: need for stress-management training (80%). Supports closing the current–expected gap in psychological and emotional

Table 4.23 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy	Main strategy goal	Sub-strategy	Sub-strategy goal	Projects for Sub-strategy	Project indicators (measurable)	Priority rationale
		reduce burnout risks to sustain service quality.		support.	supervision and peer-support sessions.	• Stress-related sick leave days reduced (#/year).	quality.
WO3	MS2 Professional development and research capacity	To strengthen professional competence through structured training, academic exchange, and research support.	SS3 Build a systematic professional training pathway	To ensure continuous, standardised professional learning aligned with counselor roles and emerging student issues.	P1 Competency-based annual training plan (minimum hours and modules). P2 National training access and academic exchange programme.	• Average training hours per counselor (hours/year). • Counselors completing ≥2 workshops/year (%). • National training/academic exchange participation (#/year). • Post-training competency assessment improvement (mean score increase).	Interview: lack of systematic professional training (90%); limited opportunities for academic exchange (70%).

Table 4.23 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy	Main strategy goal	Sub-strategy	Sub-strategy goal	Projects for Sub-strategy	Project indicators (measurable)	Priority rationale
WO3	MS2 Professional development and research capacity	To strengthen professional competence through structured training, academic exchange, and research support.	SS4 Strengthen research support and applied project mechanisms	To increase research/publication outputs and applied projects that improve counseling practice.	P1 Research mentoring and writing support scheme. P2 Seed funding for applied counseling/student-development projects.	• Publications or conference papers produced (#/year). • Applied projects completed (#/year). • Seed grants awarded (#/year). • Proportion of projects with documented practical outcomes (%).	Interview: insufficient research support/resources (80%). SWOT: Professional evaluation outputs and visibility are weak in current practice.
WO1/ WT2	MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	To establish transparent evaluation and career progression systems that motivate	SS5 Standardise evaluation indicators, tools, and processes	To implement a fair, consistent performance evaluation system with clear criteria and procedures.	P1 Develop counselor evaluation framework, rubrics, and tools. P2 Pilot implementation	• Evaluation framework issued (Yes/No) by target date. • Implementation coverage across units (%). • Inter-rater reliability ≥ 0.70.	Interview: unclear evaluation indicators (80%); imperfect evaluation mechanism for ideological work (70%). SWOT: evaluation system

Table 4.23 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy	Main strategy goal	Sub-strategy	Sub-strategy goal	Projects for Sub-strategy	Project indicators (measurable)	Priority rationale
		performance and sustain professional growth.		with clear criteria and procedures.	and evaluator calibration.	• On-time completion of evaluations (%).	weakness and accountability risk.
WO1	MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	To establish transparent evaluation and career progression systems that motivate performance and sustain professional growth.	SS6 Establish career pathways and recognition mechanisms	To clarify progression routes and strengthen incentives linked to performance and contribution.	P1 Career pathway and promotion criteria development. P2 Annual recognition and award scheme (including research achievements).	• Career pathway document approved (Yes/No). • Promotion cases processed on schedule (%). • Number of award/recognition recipients (#/year). • Annual retention rate (%) and turnover rate (%).	Interview: lack of career development channels (90%); inadequate recognition of research achievements (70%). SWOT: Professional Evaluation Dimensions has very high priority need (Rank 2 overall).

Table 4.23 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy	Main strategy goal	Sub-strategy	Sub-strategy goal	Projects for Sub-strategy	Project indicators (measurable)	Priority rationale
ST2/ WO1	MS4 Digital management and data-based planning	To enhance efficiency and decision-making through digital systems and data-driven planning.	SS7 Upgrade digital tools and counseling information systems	To modernise counseling management, records, and student tracking using integrated digital platforms.	P1 Deploy a digital counseling management system. P2 Establish a reporting dashboard and data governance procedures.	• System deployed (Yes/No) and user adoption rate (%). • Cases recorded digitally (%/month). • On-time reporting rate (%/term). • Data dashboard usage frequency (#/month).	Interview: backward digital management tools (90%). SWOT: Management and Planning Ability is a high priority area (Rank 3 overall).
WT1/ ST1	MS4 Digital management and data-based planning	To enhance efficiency and decision-making through digital systems and data-driven planning.	SS8 Optimise workload allocation and counselor–student ratio	To reduce workload pressure and improve service responsiveness through staffing and workload redesign.	P1 Workload assessment and ratio optimisation plan. P2 Work allocation guideline and monitoring mechanism.	• Counselor–student ratio improved to target value. • Average caseload per counselor (#/month). • Overtime hours reduced (%/term). • Case response/turnaround time reduced (days).	Interview: heavy workload/high pressure (100%); unreasonable counselor–student ratio (80%). Addresses major threat and well-being risk.

Table 4.23 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy	Main strategy goal	Sub-strategy	Sub-strategy goal	Projects for Sub-strategy	Project indicators (measurable)	Priority rationale
SO2/ ST1	MS5 Collaboration and service quality enhancement	To strengthen collaboration mechanisms and service quality through partnerships, coordination, and feedback systems.	SS9 Strengthen multi-agency collaboration and internal coordination mechanisms	To improve coordinated support for complex student issues through clear collaboration procedures and partnerships.	P1 Develop MoUs and referral collaboration with external agencies. P2 Establish inter-departmental coordination protocol for special student groups.	• Active MoUs/partnerships (#). • Joint activities/case conferences (#/year). • Referral completion rate (%). • Stakeholder satisfaction score (mean) increased (points).	Interview: lack of collaboration mechanisms (70%); difficulty communicating with special student groups (60%). Leverages existing communication strengths.

Based on the synthesis of the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}) results, the SWOT and TOWS analyses, and the findings from the in-depth interviews, Table 4.23 presents a systematic set of draft strategies for improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The draft strategy framework comprises five main strategies and nine sub-strategies, addressing key dimensions of counselor development, including psychological well-being and resilience, professional competence and research capacity, evaluation and career development systems, digital management and planning capability, as well as collaboration and service quality enhancement.

Each sub-strategy is articulated with clearly defined goals and supported by specific development projects. Furthermore, measurable and quantitative key performance indicators (KPIs) are specified to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of implementation progress. The prioritisation of strategies is grounded in empirical evidence derived from both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview findings, ensuring alignment with actual needs, institutional contexts, and policy environments of higher education institutions in Shaanxi Province. Overall, the draft strategies provide a structured and evidence-based framework that balances the strengthening of existing institutional strengths with targeted interventions to address critical development gaps.

Sub-phase 3: Validation and Refinement of the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy

Focus Group Expert Recommendations for Refining the Draft Strategy

Following the formulation of the draft strategies, a focus group discussion was convened with 12 educational management experts and senior college counselors to validate the relevance, feasibility, and contextual fit of the proposed strategy package. The experts confirmed that the overall framework was comprehensive, logically structured, and applicable within the higher education context. Importantly, they recommended strengthening the strategic identity by incorporating a clear and distinctive vision for the Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion strategy. Accordingly, the revised strategic vision presented above was adopted to

provide a coherent direction and shared identity for implementation across institutions.

In addition, the focus group provided the following recommendations to refine the draft strategy:

1. Clarify operational definitions and scoring criteria, including mean-interpretation ranges and PNI_{modified} thresholds, to ensure consistent interpretation across institutions.
2. Strengthen the measurability of KPIs by specifying baseline values, targets, data sources, reporting frequency, and responsible units for each project.
3. Prioritise counselor well-being interventions, such as access to employee assistance programmes, resilience training, and workload management, as cross-cutting enablers that support performance across all dimensions.
4. Embed a digital transition roadmap that covers data governance, platform adoption, staff training, and technical support, in order to address limitations in digital management and planning capacity.
5. Align evaluation and recognition mechanisms with professional development, research outputs, and student support outcomes, while ensuring fairness and feasibility within existing resource constraints.
6. Enhance collaboration protocols for internal coordination and external referrals by defining clear workflows, escalation pathways, and case-management standards for complex student issues.

The researcher incorporated these expert recommendations to refine and strengthen the draft strategies, resulting in a validated strategy for improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. To operationalise the refinements and support systematic monitoring, the validation indicators and project-level key performance indicators, including baseline information, targets, data sources, reporting frequency, and responsible units, are presented in the subsequent table on Validation Indicators and Key Performance Indicators for Strategy Refinement. Improvements were made based on feedback from the 12 experts participating in the focus group.

Details are presented in Tables 4.24 and 4.25.

Table 4.24 Profile of Experts for Strategy Validation (Focus Group Discussion)

Institution	Number of participants	Selection basis	Key expertise area	Minimum experience requirement
Xi'an Jiaotong University	3	Purposive selection	Educational management / counseling development	≥ 5 years
Xianyang Normal University	3	Purposive selection	Educational management / student affairs	≥ 5 years
Yan'an University	2	Purposive selection	Counselor development / quality assurance	≥ 5 years
Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College	2	Purposive selection	Student affairs / management practice	≥ 5 years
Hanzhong University	2	Purposive selection	Counselor supervision / institutional planning	≥ 5 years
Total	12	-	-	-

Purposive sampling was applied to ensure that participants met the selection criteria specified in Chapter 3 and possessed expertise aligned with the objectives of strategy validation.

Table 4.25 Validation Indicators and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Strategy Refinement

Strategic domain	Validation focus	Key indicators / KPIs	Evidence base
Counselor well-being and sustainability	Feasibility and adequacy of support mechanisms	• Establishment of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). • Percentage of counselors receiving annual resilience/stress-management training. • Reduction in reported work-related stress and burnout indicators. • Availability and utilisation of professional counseling referral services.	4.15, 4.12, 4.20
Professional development and evaluation	Clarity, fairness, and operational practicality	• Availability of a standardised performance evaluation framework. • Proportion of counselors meeting professional development requirements. • Number of research/publication outputs and applied projects. • Satisfaction with recognition and career progression mechanisms.	4.13, 4.14, 4.19, 4.20

Table 4.25 (Continued)

Strategic domain	Validation focus	Key indicators / KPIs	Evidence base
Management and planning capacity	Operational suitability and sustainability	• Adoption of digital counseling management systems. • Use of data-based approaches in programme planning and evaluation. • Improvement in counselor–student ratio and workload balance. • Budget allocation for technological tools.	4.18, 4.12
Collaboration and service quality	Adaptability to institutional contexts	• Number of active collaborations with government/social agencies. • Establishment of feedback mechanisms for communication performance. • Frequency of cross-departmental coordination activities. • Participation in outreach/volunteering programmes.	4.16, 4.17
Overall strategy feasibility and adaptability	Consensus and endorsement	• Expert ratings of feasibility and adaptability. • Degree of alignment with research objectives and institutional constraints.	4.20; focus group synthesis

Table 4.25 (Continued)

Strategic domain	Validation focus	Key indicators / KPIs	Evidence base
		• Evidence of scalability and institutional adoption intentions.	

Table 4.25 presents the validation focus and corresponding indicators/KPIs used by focus group experts to review the draft strategy. Overall, experts emphasised (1) improving the specificity and measurability of KPIs by adding baselines, targets, and reporting arrangements; (2) prioritising counselor well-being support as a foundational condition for sustainable performance; (3) strengthening digital management capacity and data use for planning and accountability; and (4) clarifying evaluation and career development mechanisms to enhance motivation and fairness. These recommendations were incorporated to produce the final, implementation-ready strategy in Table 4.26.

Table 4.26 Final Strategies for Improving the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province

Vision: A resilient and digitally competent college counselor workforce delivering ethical and sustainable student support.							
TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)	Data source and reporting frequency	Responsible unit(s)	Implementation notes
SO1/ ST1	MS1 Ideological and value-based development	SS1 Strengthen value integration in counselor practice	Project 1. Values-integrated guidance toolkit and training module; Project 2. Annual thematic activities aligned with national/provincial policy	• ≥80% counselors trained annually; • ≥1 toolkit approved and deployed; • Mean item score on value integration increases by ≥0.20 within 12 months	Training attendance records (semester); toolkit approval minutes (annual); survey (annual)	Student Affairs Office; HR/Staff Development Centre	Maintain existing strengths; scale good practice across institutions.
WO2	MS2 Counselor well-being and resilience support	SS2 Establish a systematic mental health support system for counselors	Project 1. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) referral and counseling access; Project 2. Resilience and stress management programme	• EAP access pathway established (Yes/No); • ≥60% counselors participate in resilience training/year; • Burnout/stress index decreases by ≥10% from baseline	EAP service log (quarterly); training records (semester); well-being survey (annual)	HR; Student Affairs; Psychological Counseling Centre	Treat as enabling infrastructure for all strategies.

Table 4.26 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)	Data source and reporting frequency	Responsible unit(s)	Implementation notes
WO3/ ST2	MS2 Counselor well-being and resilience support	SS3 Optimise workload allocation and support mechanisms	Project 1. Workload mapping and role clarification; Project 2. Case-management and referral protocol	• Workload standard issued (Yes/No); • Counselor–student ratio improved or caseload cap implemented; • ≥90% complex cases follow protocol	Workload dashboard (quarterly); caseload records (monthly); case audits (semester)	Student Affairs; Institutional Planning Office	Addresses high workload and complexity threats.
WO1	MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	SS4 Standardise performance evaluation system	Project 1. Develop evaluation criteria and rubrics; Project 2. Pilot implementation and evaluator calibration	• Rubric approved (Yes/No); • ≥90% on-time evaluations; • Inter-rater reliability ≥0.70; • ≥80% units covered	Policy/rubric document (annual); HR evaluation system logs (semester); calibration report (annual)	HR; Quality Assurance Office; Academic Affairs	Ensure fairness, feasibility, and alignment with roles.

Table 4.26 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)	Data source and reporting frequency	Responsible unit(s)	Implementation notes
WO1	MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	SS4 Standardise performance evaluation system	Project 1. Develop evaluation criteria and rubrics; Project 2. Pilot implementation and evaluator calibration	• Rubric approved (Yes/No); • ≥90% on-time evaluations; • Inter-rater reliability ≥0.70; • ≥80% units covered	Policy/rubric document (annual); HR evaluation system logs (semester); calibration report (annual)	HR; Quality Assurance Office; Academic Affairs	Ensure fairness, feasibility, and alignment with roles.
WO1	MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	SS5 Implement recognition and incentive mechanisms	Project 1. Annual recognition scheme; Project 2. Incentives linked to contribution and professional growth	• ≥1 recognition cycle/year; • # awardees documented; • ≥70% satisfaction with fairness of incentives; • Retention rate improves by ≥5% from baseline	Award records (annual); satisfaction survey (annual); HR retention data (annual)	HR; Finance; Student Affairs	Close the incentive gap identified in PNI modified.

Table 4.26 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)	Data source and reporting frequency	Responsible unit(s)	Implementation notes
WO1/O4	MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	SS6 Establish clear career pathways	Project 1. Career pathway and promotion criteria; Project 2. Mentoring and portfolio support	• Career pathway published (Yes/No); • ≥70% counselors with updated professional portfolio; • # mentoring pairs formed	HR guidelines (annual); portfolio audit (annual); mentoring log (semester)	HR; Student Affairs	Provides progression channels and recognition.
WO3	MS4 Professional capability and research support	SS7 Strengthen structured professional training	Project 1. Annual competency-based training plan; Project 2. Certification and national training participation	• ≥2 core training programmes/year; • ≥80% participation rate; • Competency assessment mean increases by ≥0.20	Training plan and records (annual/semester); competency assessment (annual)	Staff Development Centre; Student Affairs	Direct response to high expected ratings for training.

Table 4.26 (Continued).

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)	Data source and reporting frequency	Responsible unit(s)	Implementation notes
WO3	MS4 Professional capability and research support	SS8 Build research and dissemination support structure	Project 1. Research mentorship and writing clinic; Project 2. Seed grants and publication support	• ≥1 writing clinic/semester; • # funded projects; • # publications/conference outputs increase by ≥10% from baseline	Project database (semester); publication records (annual)	Research Office; Graduate School/Academic Affairs	Addresses weakness in research support and resources.
SO2/ ST1	MS5 Collaboration and service quality enhancement	SS9 Strengthen multi-agency collaboration and internal coordination	Project 1. MoUs with external agencies and referral network; Project 2. Inter-departmental coordination protocol for special student groups	• ≥3 active MoUs; • ≥4 joint case conferences/year; • Referral completion rate ≥85%; • Stakeholder satisfaction improves by ≥0.20	MoU registry (annual); meeting minutes (semester); referral log (quarterly); satisfaction survey (annual)	Student Affairs; External Relations; Counseling Centre	Leverages communication strengths to manage complex cases.

Table 4.26 consolidates the validated strategy into five main strategies (MS1–MS5) and nine sub-strategies (SS1–SS9), with an implementation package, quantitative KPIs/targets, data sources, reporting frequency, and responsible units. Across the matrix, priority actions concentrate on counselor well-being support, structured professional training, digital management capacity, and transparent evaluation and career pathways, while sustaining existing strengths in policy-guided value integration and collaboration.

Table 4.27 Sustainable College Counselors’ Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)
SO1 /ST1	1. MS1 Ideological and value-based development	1. SS1 Strengthen value integration in counselor practice	Project 1 Values-integrated guidance toolkit and training module; Project 2 Annual thematic activities aligned with national/provincial policy	• ≥80% counselors trained annually; • ≥1 toolkit approved and deployed; • Mean item score on value integration increases by ≥0.20 within 12 months
WO2	2. MS2 counselor well-being and resilience support	2. SS2 Establish a systematic mental health support system for counselors	Project 3 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) referral and access; Project 4 Resilience and stress management programme	• EAP access pathway established (Yes/No); • ≥60% counselors participate in resilience training/year; • Burnout/stress index decreases by ≥10% from baseline

Table 4.27 (Continued)

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)
WO3 /ST2		3. SS3 Optimise workload allocation and support mechanisms	Project 5 Workload mapping and role clarification; Project 6 Case-management and referral protocol	• Workload standard issued (Yes/No); • counselor–student ratio improved or caseload cap implemented; • ≥90% complex cases follow protocol
WO1	3. MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	4. SS4 Standardise performance evaluation system	Project 7 Develop evaluation criteria and rubrics; Project 8 Pilot implementation and evaluator calibration	• Rubric approved (Yes/No); • ≥90% on-time evaluations; • Inter-rater reliability ≥0.70; • ≥80% units covered
WO1		5. SS5 Implement recognition and incentive mechanisms	Project 9 Annual recognition scheme; Project 10 Incentives linked to contribution and professional growth	• ≥1 recognition cycle/year; • # awardees documented; • ≥70% satisfaction with fairness of incentives; • Retention rate improves by ≥5% from baseline

Table 4.27 (Continued)

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)
WO1		6. SS6 Establish clear career pathways	Project 11 Career pathway and promotion criteria; Project 12 Mentoring and portfolio support	• Career pathway published (Yes/No); • ≥70% counselors with updated professional portfolio; • # mentoring pairs formed
WO3	MS4 Professional capability and research support	7. SS7 Strengthen structured professional training	Project 13 Annual competency-based training plan; Project 14 Certification and national training participation	• ≥2 core training programmes/year; • ≥80% participation rate; • Competency assessment mean increases by ≥0.20
WT1 / ST1		8. SS8 Build research and dissemination support structure	Project 15 Research mentorship and writing clinic; Project 16 Seed grants and publication support	• ≥1 writing clinic/semester; • #funded projects; • #publications/conference outputs increase by ≥10% from baseline
SO2 / ST1	MS5 Collaboration and service quality enhancement	9. SS9 Strengthen multi-agency collaboration and internal coordination mechanisms	Project 17 MoUs with external agencies and referral network; Project 18 Inter-departmental coordination protocol for special student groups	• ≥3 active MoUs; • ≥4 joint case conferences/year; • Referral completion rate ≥85%; • Stakeholder satisfaction improves by ≥0.20

Table 4.27 presents the finalised Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province, which comprises five main strategies, nine sub-strategies, and eighteen implementation projects. The strategy framework addresses key developmental dimensions, including ideological and value-based development, counselor well-being and resilience, evaluation and career development systems, professional capability and research support, and collaboration and service quality enhancement.

Each main strategy is operationalised through clearly defined sub-strategies and supported by concrete projects designed to respond directly to identified priority needs and contextual challenges. The integrated structure of the strategy ensures coherence between policy orientation, professional development, institutional management, and service delivery. Overall, the strategy provides a comprehensive and evidence-based roadmap for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province, and serves as a practical foundation for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation in subsequent stages.

The finalized Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province was developed, as illustrated in Figure 4-1

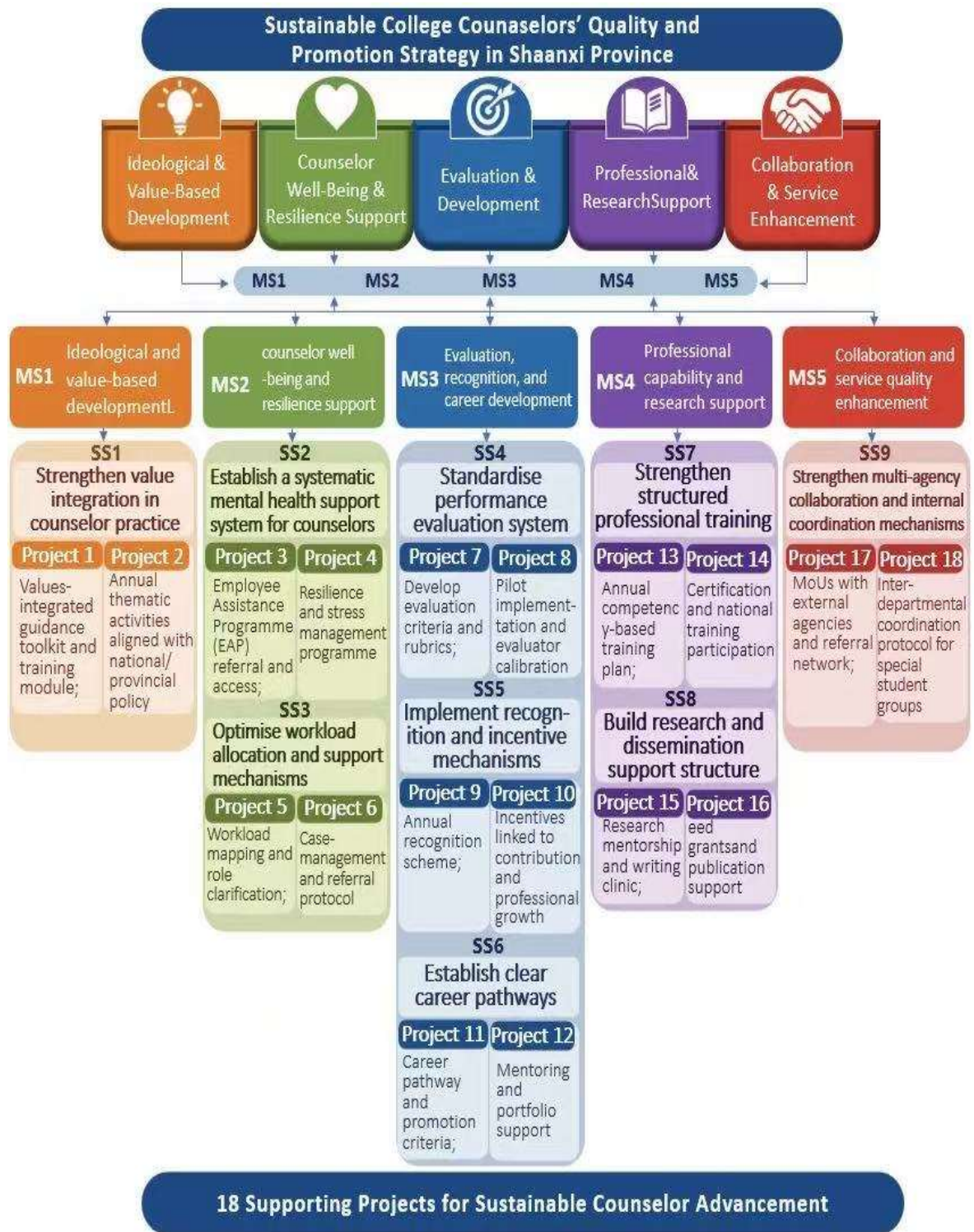


Figure 4.1 The Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province

Phase 3: To Evaluate the Feasibility and Adaptability of Strategies for Improving Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province

This phase reports the results of evaluating the feasibility and adaptability of the proposed Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategy in Shaanxi Province. The findings are presented using mean scores and standard deviations.

The population for this phase consisted of educational management experts from universities in Shaanxi Province with extensive expertise in higher education administration and counselor development. The target group comprised five experts, purposively selected to obtain informed, experience-based judgements. The selection criteria were as follows:

1. Work experience: More than 15 years of professional experience in university administration or student affairs.
2. Professional rank: Holding a senior professional title, indicating advanced academic or administrative expertise.
3. Leadership role: Serving in a senior leadership position, such as dean, department head, or director of student affairs, thereby providing practical insight into institutional management and policy implementation.

This purposive sampling approach ensured that all evaluators possessed the required academic and managerial competence to assess the proposed strategies objectively. Participation was voluntary. All experts were informed of the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality in accordance with research ethics.

A five-point rating scale was used for the assessment, comprising high, High, Average, Low, and Lowest. Each expert selected one level per item. The evaluation results are presented in Tables 4.28–4.29.

Table 4.28 Feasibility and Adaptability of Strategies for Improving Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province

Strategy	Feasibility				Adaptability			
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank
MS1: Ideological and Value-Based Development								
1. SS1 Strengthen Value Integration in Counselor Practice	4.56	0.29	Highest	4	4.60	0.21	Highest	4
Project 1 Values-integrated guidance toolkit and training module	4.54	0.30	Highest	4	4.59	0.22	Highest	4
Project 2 Annual thematic activities aligned with national/provincial policy	4.58	0.28	Highest	4	4.61	0.20	Highest	4
Overall MS1	4.58	0.28	Highest	4	4.62	0.20	Highest	4
MS2: Counselor Well-Being and Resilience Support								
2. SS2 Establish a Systematic Mental Health Support System for Counselors	4.71	0.19	Highest	1	4.69	0.18	Highest	1
Project 3 Employee assistance programme(EAP) referral and counseling access	4.72	0.18	Highest	1	4.70	0.17	Highest	1
Project 4 Resilience and stress management programme	4.70	0.20	Highest	1	4.68	0.19	Highest	1
3. SS3 Optimise Workload Allocation and Support Mechanisms	4.73	0.17	Highest	1	4.71	0.16	highest	1

Table 4.28 (Continued)

Strategy	Feasibility				Adaptability			
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank
Project 5 Workload mapping and role clarification	4.74	0.16	Highest	1	4.72	0.15	Highest	1
Project 6 Case-management and referral protocol	4.72	0.18	Highest	1	4.70	0.17	Highest	1
Overall MS2	4.72	0.18	Highest	1	4.70	0.17	Highest	1
MS3: Evaluation Recognition and Career Development								
4. SS4 Standardise Performance Evaluation System	4.60	0.23	Highest	3	4.63	0.20	Highest	3
Project 7 Develop evaluation criteria and rubrics	4.59	0.24	Highest	3	4.62	0.21	Highest	3
Project 8 Pilot implementation and evaluator calibration	4.61	0.22	Highest	3	4.64	0.19	Highest	3
5. SS5 Implement Recognition and Incentive Mechanisms	4.62	0.21	Highest	3	4.65	0.18	Highest	3
Project 9 Annual recognition scheme	4.61	0.22	Highest	3	4.64	0.19	Highest	3
Project 10 Incentives Linked to contribution and professional growth	4.63	0.20	Highest	3	4.66	0.17	Highest	3

Table 4.28 (Continued)

Strategy	Feasibility				Adaptability			
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank
6. SS6 Establish Clear Career Pathways	4.60	0.23	Highest	3	4.63	0.20	Highest	3
Project 11 Career pathway and promotion criteria	4.59	0.24	Highest	3	4.62	0.21	Highest	3
Project 12 Mentoring and portfolio support	4.61	0.22	Highest	3	4.64	0.19	Highest	3
Overall MS3	4.61	0.22	Highest	3	4.64	0.19	Highest	3
MS4: Professional Capability and Research Support								
7. SS7 Strengthen Structured Professional Training	4.64	0.21	Highest	2	4.66	0.19	Highest	2
Project 13 Annual competency-based training plan	4.63	0.22	Highest	2	4.65	0.20	Highest	2
Project 14 Certification and national training participation	4.65	0.20	Highest	2	4.67	0.18	Highest	2
8. SS8 Build Research and Dissemination Support Structure	4.66	0.19	Highest	2	4.68	0.17	Highest	2
Project 15 Research mentorship and writing clinic	4.65	0.20	Highest	2	4.67	0.18	Highest	2
Project 16 Seed grants and publication support	4.67	0.18	Highest	2	4.69	0.16	Highest	2
Overall MS4	4.65	0.20	Highest	2	4.67	0.18	Highest	2

Table 4.28 (Continued)

Strategy	Feasibility				Adaptability			
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank
MS5: Collaboration and Service Quality Enhancement								
9. SS9 Strengthen Multi-Agency Collaboration and Internal Coordination Mechanisms	4.54	0.25	Highest	5	4.57	0.22	Highest	5
Project 17 MoUs with external agencies and referral network	4.53	0.26	Highest	5	4.56	0.23	Highest	5
Project 18 Interdepartmental coordination protocol for special student groups	4.55	0.24	Highest	5	4.58	0.21	Highest	5
Overall MS5	4.55	0.24	Highest	5	4.58	0.21	Highest	5
Overall Total Results	4.63	0.21	Highest	-	4.65	0.19	Highest	-

As presented in Table 4.28, the overall feasibility of the strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province was rated at a highest level ($M=4.63$, $S.D.=0.21$). In terms of adaptability, the overall result was rated at the highest level ($M=4.65$, $S.D.=0.19$). This indicates that the proposed strategies are considered both practically implementable and highly adaptable within the institutional context.

When considering each main strategy, MS2: Counselor Well-Being and Resilience Support received the highest ranking in both feasibility ($M=4.72$, $S.D.=0.18$, Rank 1) and adaptability ($M=4.70$, $S.D.=0.17$, Rank 1). This reflects strong consensus among evaluators regarding the importance and practicality of mental health support

systems, workload optimisation, and resilience development initiatives for counselors.

MS4: Professional Capability and Research Support ranked second in both feasibility ($M=4.65$, $S.D.=0.20$) and adaptability ($M=4.67$, $S.D.=0.18$). This suggests that structured professional training, certification participation, research mentorship, and publication support are viewed as highly appropriate and implementable measures for strengthening counselors' professional competence.

MS3: Evaluation, Recognition, and Career Development was ranked third, with feasibility at a highest level ($M=4.61$, $S.D.=0.22$) and adaptability at the highest level ($M=4.64$, $S.D.=0.19$). This demonstrates that standardised evaluation systems, recognition mechanisms, and clear career pathways are perceived as realistic and well-aligned with institutional development needs.

MS1: Ideological and Value-Based Development ranked fourth in feasibility ($M=4.58$, $S.D.=0.28$) and adaptability ($M=4.62$, $S.D.=0.20$), while MS5: Collaboration and Service Quality Enhancement ranked fifth (Feasibility: $M=4.55$, $S.D.=0.24$; Adaptability: $M=4.58$, $S.D.=0.21$). Although these two strategies received comparatively lower rankings, their mean scores still fall within the highest levels, indicating strong overall agreement regarding their relevance and applicability.

In summary, all five strategies and their associated sub-strategies and projects were evaluated at highest levels in both feasibility and adaptability. The findings confirm that the developed strategic framework is systematically designed, contextually appropriate, and ready for implementation to enhance the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

The summary of the overall evaluation results regarding the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province is presented in Table 4.29.

Table 4.29 The overall evaluation results regarding the feasibility and adaptability of strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion

Strategy	Feasibility				Adaptability			
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank
MS1: Ideological and Value-based Development	4.58	0.28	highest	4	4.62	0.20	Highest	4
MS2: counselor Well-being and Resilience Support	4.72	0.18	highest	1	4.70	0.17	Highest	1
MS3: Evaluation, Recognition, and Career Development	4.61	0.22	highest	3	4.64	0.19	Highest	3
MS4: Professional Capability and Research Support	4.65	0.20	highest	2	4.67	0.18	Highest	2
MS5: Collaboration and Service Quality Enhancement	4.55	0.24	highest	5	4.58	0.21	Highest	5
Overall	4.63	0.21	highset		4.65	0.19	Highest	

According to Table 4.29, the overall evaluation results indicate that all five strategies for improving sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province were rated at the high level in terms of both feasibility and adaptability. The overall mean score for adaptability (Mean=4.65, S.D.=0.19) was slightly higher than that for feasibility (Mean=4.63, S.D.=0.21), suggesting that the

proposed strategies are not only highly feasible but also well aligned with the actual working conditions and practical needs of college counselors in Shaanxi Province.

When considered by individual strategy, MS2 counselor Well-being and Resilience Support received the highest evaluation in both feasibility (Mean=4.72, S.D.=0.18; Rank 1) and adaptability (Mean=4.70, S.D.=0.17; Rank 1). This indicates strong expert consensus that supporting counselors' mental health and resilience is the most critical and immediately actionable strategy for sustainable development. The second-highest ratings were found for MS4 Professional Capability and Research Support, which ranked second in both feasibility (Mean=4.65, S.D.=0.20) and adaptability (Mean=4.67, S.D.=0.18). These results reflect the importance of strengthening professional competencies and research capacity as key mechanisms for enhancing counselors' long-term effectiveness.

MS3 Evaluation, Recognition, and Career Development ranked third in both dimensions, with feasibility (Mean=4.61, S.D.=0.22) and adaptability (Mean=4.64, S.D.=0.19) also reaching the highest level. This finding suggests that systematic evaluation systems and clear career development pathways are regarded as highly relevant and practicable, although slightly less urgent than well-being and professional capability support. MS1 Ideological and Value-based Development was ranked fourth in both feasibility (Mean=4.58, S.D.=0.28) and adaptability (Mean=4.62, S.D.=0.20), indicating that while ideological and value-oriented development remains essential, it is perceived as comparatively less critical in terms of immediate implementation priority. Finally, MS5 Collaboration and Service Quality Enhancement received the lowest mean scores among the five strategies; however, its feasibility (Mean=4.55, S.D.=0.24) and adaptability (Mean=4.58, S.D.=0.21) were still evaluated at the highest level, demonstrating that this strategy is also considered appropriate and implementable within the institutional context.

Summary of Research Findings:

Overall, the results presented in Table 4.29 confirm that the proposed five-strategy framework is both feasible and adaptable for enhancing the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. The consistently

highest ratings across all strategies reflect a strong level of expert agreement regarding their relevance and practicality. Notably, strategies focusing on counselor well-being and resilience and professional capability and research support emerged as the highest priorities, highlighting that safeguarding mental health and strengthening professional competence constitute the core drivers of sustainable counselor development. These findings suggest that the proposed strategies provide a comprehensive and empirically supported foundation for guiding policy formulation and institutional implementation aimed at improving counselors' long-term performance, career development, and student support effectiveness.

Chapter 5

Conclusion Discussion and Recommendations

The aims of the present study were: (1) to study the current and expected Status regarding the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province; (2) to develop strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province; and (3) to evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of the strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. The summary and discussion of the findings are organized according to these research objectives. Details are presented below.

Conclusion

Phase 1: Current and Expected Status and Priority Needs

Sub-phase 1 (Document Review). Phase 1 began with a document review that synthesized relevant theories and empirical studies to establish a multidimensional framework for sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion. The framework comprised seven interrelated components: (1) ideological and political quality, (2) professional and theoretical knowledge, (3) psychological and emotional quality, (4) humanistic and cultural quality, (5) communication and interpersonal skills, (6) management and planning ability, and (7) professional evaluation. This framework served as the conceptual foundation for subsequent quantitative and qualitative inquiry.

Sub-phase 2 (Field Survey). The field survey revealed a consistent pattern across all components: the overall current situation was rated at a moderate level, whereas the overall expected situation was high, indicating a clear and systematic gap between existing practice and stakeholder expectations. Among the seven components, ideological and political quality emerged as a relative strength, with current performance rated at a high level. In contrast, psychological and emotional

quality and professional evaluation were comparatively weaker domains, reflecting unmet needs for formal well-being support and for coherent, transparent evaluation and advancement mechanisms.

Sub-phase 3 (In-depth Interviews). The in-depth interviews substantiated the survey findings and provided explanatory insight into the structural drivers of the observed gaps. The most salient issues centred on heavy workload and sustained occupational pressure, limited access to effective mental health support, and a pronounced need for stress-management and emotional regulation training. Respondents further highlighted deficiencies in systematic professional development, inadequate research support and academic resources, outdated digital management tools, imbalanced counselor–student ratios, unclear evaluation indicators, and constrained career progression opportunities. Collectively, Phase 1 converged on four priority development needs: (1) strengthened counselor well-being support, (2) structured professional development, (3) enhanced digital management capacity, and (4) clearer evaluation and career pathways.

Phase 2: Strategy Development and Validation Results

Phase 2 of the study focused on developing strategies to enhance the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. This phase was conducted in three sequential sub-phases: (1) SWOT-based diagnosis, (2) TOWS strategic synthesis, and (3) expert validation and refinement.

Sub-phase1: SWOT-based Diagnosis and Strategic Synthesis

In Sub-phase 1, a SWOT-based diagnostic analysis was undertaken to consolidate internal strengths and weaknesses together with external opportunities and threats influencing sustainable counselor development. The findings indicated a moderate-to-relatively high level of priority need overall. The most urgent strategic pressures were concentrated in three key dimensions: psychological and emotional quality, professional evaluation mechanisms, and management and planning capacity. These areas reflected significant gaps between current and expected conditions identified in Phase 1.

At the same time, several enabling conditions were identified. Strong policy alignment, established ideological foundations, and existing institutional communication and coordination mechanisms were recognised as internal strengths that could be leveraged in the strategy design process. These elements provided a supportive structural context for translating diagnostic findings into practical development strategies.

Sub-phase 2: TOWS Matrix and Development of the Strategy Package

In Sub-phase 2, the TOWS Matrix was employed to systematically translate diagnostic evidence into an operational strategy package. This synthesis resulted in a comprehensive framework comprising:

- Five main strategies (MS1–MS5)
- Nine sub-strategies (SS1–SS9)
- Eighteen implementation projects
- Clearly defined performance indicators and measurable targets

The strategic framework is summarized as follows:

MS1: Ideological and Value-Based Development

This strategy aims to institutionalise value integration in counselor practice and strengthen alignment with national and institutional educational policies.

Sub-strategy (SS1): Strengthen Value Integration in Counselor Practice

Projects:

Project 1: Values-integrated guidance toolkit and training module

Project 2: Annual thematic activities aligned with national/provincial policy

Key Performance Indicators:

- At least 80% of counselors participate in annual value-based training
- Formal approval and institutional implementation of the guidance toolkit
- Demonstrable improvement in value-integration performance within 12 months

This strategy reinforces the moral and ideological foundation of counselors, ensuring sustainable professional identity and policy alignment.

MS2: Counselor Well-Being and Resilience Support

This strategy positions counselor well-being as a foundational enabling condition for sustainable performance.

Sub-strategy (SS2): Establish a Systematic Mental Health Support System

Project 3: Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) referral and counseling access

Project 4: Resilience and stress-management programme

Sub-strategy (SS3): Optimise Workload Allocation and Support Mechanisms

Project 5: Workload mapping and role clarification

Project 6: Case-management and referral protocol

Key Performance Indicators:

- Establishment of accessible mental health support pathways
- At least 60% annual participation in resilience training
- Reduction in burnout and stress indices compared with baseline
- Improved counselor–student ratios or implementation of caseload caps
- At least 90% compliance with case-management protocols

This strategy addresses structural and psychological constraints and embeds well-being as a cross-cutting mechanism supporting all other strategic dimensions.

MS3: Evaluation, Recognition, and Career Development

This strategy strengthens institutional mechanisms for fairness, motivation, and sustainable professional growth.

Sub-strategy (SS4): Standardise Performance Evaluation System

Project 7: Develop evaluation criteria and rubrics

Project 8: Pilot implementation and evaluator calibration

Sub-strategy (SS5): Implement Recognition and Incentive Mechanisms

Project 9: Annual recognition scheme

Project 10: Incentives linked to contribution and professional growth

Sub-strategy (SS6): Establish Clear Career Pathways

Project 11: Career pathway and promotion criteria

Project 12: Mentoring and portfolio support

Key Performance Indicators:

- Formal approval of evaluation rubrics
- At least 90% on-time evaluation completion
- Inter-rater reliability of ≥ 0.70
- At least one transparent recognition cycle annually
- Improved perceived fairness and retention rates
- At least 70% counselor participation in mentoring and portfolio systems

This strategy enhances transparency, professional motivation, and long-term career sustainability.

MS4: Professional Capability and Research Support

This strategy strengthens sustainable competence through structured training and research-support mechanisms.

Sub-strategy (SS7): Strengthen Structured Professional Training

Project 13: Annual competency-based training plan

Project 14: Certification and national training participation

Sub-strategy (SS8): Build Research and Dissemination Support Structure

Project 15: Research mentorship and writing clinic

Project 16: Seed grants and publication support

Key Performance Indicators:

- At least two core training programmes annually
- At least 80% counselor participation
- Measurable improvement in competency assessments
- Semester-based implementation of writing clinics
- Increased research outputs and conference participation compared with baseline

baseline

This strategy promotes professional excellence and academic contribution, strengthening institutional credibility and counselor expertise.

MS5: Collaboration and Service Quality Enhancement

This strategy improves service coordination and response to complex student needs.

Sub-strategy (SS9): Strengthen Multi-Agency Collaboration and Internal Coordination Mechanisms

Project 17: MoUs with external agencies and referral network

Project 18: Interdepartmental coordination protocol for special student groups

Key Performance Indicators:

- At least three active MoUs maintained
- Minimum four joint case conferences annually
- Referral completion rates of at least 85%
- Demonstrable improvement in stakeholder satisfaction indicators

This strategy enhances service continuity, interdepartmental collaboration, and multi-agency coordination.

Sub-phase 3: Validation and Refinement

The strategy package was subsequently validated through expert review. Experts confirmed the overall coherence and applicability of the framework and recommended refinements to strengthen strategic identity and implementation consistency. Key refinements included clarifying operational definitions and interpretation criteria; strengthening KPI specifications by defining baselines, targets, data sources, reporting frequency, and responsible units; positioning well-being as a cross-cutting enabling mechanism; sequencing digital transformation in phases; aligning evaluation and recognition systems with professional development outcomes; and standardising collaboration and referral procedures. These refinements enhanced the operational readiness of the final strategy package.

Phase 3: Feasibility and Adaptability Evaluation

Phase 3 evaluated the feasibility and adaptability of the final strategy package.

The findings indicate that the developed strategy package is both practical and contextually appropriate for higher education institutions in Shaanxi Province. Through the application of the TOWS Matrix, diagnostic evidence was systematically transformed into a structured and operational framework comprising five main

strategies, nine sub-strategies, and eighteen implementation projects. The overall evaluation results demonstrated high recognition across both feasibility ($M=4.63$) and adaptability ($M=4.65$), confirming strong institutional readiness for implementation.

The five main strategies address core dimensions of sustainable counselor development. First, Ideological and Value-Based Development institutionalises value integration through structured toolkits and policy-aligned activities, ensuring alignment with national and institutional priorities. Second, Counselor Well-Being and Resilience Support, which received the highest ratings, establishes mental health support systems, resilience training, workload optimisation, and standardised case-management protocols, positioning well-being as a foundational enabler of sustainable performance. Third, Evaluation, Recognition, and Career Development strengthens fairness, transparency, and professional motivation through standardised evaluation criteria, incentive mechanisms, and clearly defined career pathways. Fourth, Professional Capability and Research Support enhances long-term competence by integrating competency-based training, certification participation, research mentorship, and publication support, reinforcing institutional reputation and professional excellence. Fifth, Collaboration and Service Quality Enhancement promotes multi-agency coordination, referral systems, and interdepartmental protocols to ensure service continuity, particularly for complex student cases.

All strategies were rated at high to highest levels in both feasibility and adaptability, demonstrating strong consensus regarding their structural coherence and contextual suitability. The validation and refinement process further enhanced operational clarity by specifying performance indicators, defining baselines and responsibilities, integrating well-being as a cross-cutting mechanism, aligning evaluation systems with professional development outcomes, and standardising collaboration procedures.

Overall, the final strategy package is coherent, evidence-based, and operationally viable. It provides a comprehensive and systematically designed framework for enhancing the sustainable quality and promotion of college

counselors in Shaanxi Province, with clear implementation pathways and monitoring mechanisms.

Discussion

Discussion of Phase 1 Findings: Current and Expected Status and Priority Needs

Phase 1 provided a comprehensive diagnostic understanding of the current status, expected conditions, and priority development needs related to the sustainable quality and promotion of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. By integrating document review, field survey, and in-depth interviews, the findings offer a convergent and methodologically robust basis for subsequent strategy development. This sequential integration is consistent with mixed-methods needs assessment frameworks that emphasise conceptual clarification, gap identification, and contextual explanation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995).

The discussion now turns to an in-depth analysis of the key findings from Phase 1, which not only validate existing theoretical frameworks but also reveal unique contextual nuances in Shaanxi Province. First, the data underscored a significant disparity between the current professional competencies of college counselors and the evolving demands of sustainable quality promotion. Specifically, while most counselors demonstrated proficiency in routine student management tasks, there was a marked deficiency in advanced skills such as mental health crisis intervention, career development guidance tailored to regional industries, and the application of digital tools for student data analysis. This gap aligns with broader national trends highlighting the need for counselor role transformation from "administrators" to "holistic student development facilitators" (Ministry of Education, 2020), yet the regional specificity in Shaanxi such as the concentration of energy and manufacturing industries adds layers of complexity. For instance, counselors in universities located in industrial hubs expressed a pressing need for industry-specific career counseling resources, a need not as prominently featured in studies conducted in coastal provinces with more service-oriented economies.

Second, the in-depth interviews uncovered systemic challenges that hinder sustainable quality improvement. Participants frequently cited inadequate professional development opportunities, with only 32% reporting access to regular, structured training programs beyond mandatory orientation sessions. Moreover, the workload burden emerged as a critical barrier: counselors reported an average student-to-counselor ratio of 450:1, far exceeding the recommended national standard of 200:1 (China Association for College Counselors, 2019). This imbalance not only limits the time available for skill enhancement but also compromises the quality of one-on-one student interactions, which are foundational to effective counseling. Additionally, institutional support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs and research funding for counselor-led initiatives, were found to be inconsistently implemented across universities, with top-tier institutions in Xi'an showing significantly more robust support compared to regional colleges.

Furthermore, the study identified a notable generational shift in counselor perspectives. Younger counselors (under 35 years old) displayed a stronger inclination toward innovative practices, such as integrating social media platforms into student engagement and advocating for data-driven decision-making. In contrast, senior counselors emphasized the importance of traditional values and experiential knowledge, highlighting a potential generational divide in approaches to sustainable quality promotion. This divergence presents both challenges and opportunities: while intergenerational collaboration could foster knowledge exchange, it also requires intentional strategies to align differing priorities and build a cohesive professional community.

Finally, the contextual analysis of Shaanxi Province revealed unique cultural and policy influences. The province's strong emphasis on higher education as a driver of regional economic development has led to increased pressure on counselors to contribute to student retention and employment outcomes, particularly in STEM fields. Simultaneously, the recent implementation of the "Double First-Class" university construction initiative has heightened competition among institutions, further intensifying the demand for counselors to demonstrate measurable impacts

on student success. These regional policy dynamics intersect with national-level reforms, creating a complex landscape that must be navigated in subsequent strategy development. Collectively, these findings not only confirm the utility of the mixed-methods approach in capturing multifaceted needs but also provide critical insights into the specific levers for intervention in the Shaanxi context.

Sub-phase 1: Conceptualisation of Sustainable College Counselor Quality

The document review synthesized prior scholarship into a seven-component framework encompassing ideological and political quality, professional and theoretical knowledge, psychological and emotional quality, humanistic and cultural quality, communication and interpersonal skills, management and planning ability, and professional evaluation. This multidimensional structure reflects contemporary competence-based and sustainability-oriented models, which conceptualise professional quality as an interaction between values, skills, personal attributes, and institutional systems rather than isolated competencies (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; OECD, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The prominence of ideological and political quality within the framework aligns with Chinese higher education literature that positions counselors as key agents of moral education and value transmission (Liu Fang, 2010; Liu Qi, 2015; Kong Xianghui, 2016). At the same time, the inclusion of psychological, managerial, and evaluative dimensions reflects an expansion of the counselor role in response to increasingly complex student needs, Organizational accountability requirements, and professionalisation pressures. This confirms earlier arguments that sustainable counselor quality must be grounded in ethical commitment while supported by systemic professional infrastructure (Thornton, 2006; OECD, 2020).

Sub-phase 2: Field Survey of Current and Expected Status

The survey findings revealed a consistent and significant gap between current practice and expected conditions across all seven quality components. Overall performance was rated at a moderate level, whereas expectations were uniformly high, indicating a structural rather than incidental deficit. This pattern mirrors national-level findings in China, which suggest that counselors generally demonstrate

strong ideological commitment but face constraints in professional development, evaluation systems, and workload management (Bai Zhanting, 2017; Wen Ting, 2014; Xiang Wei, 2021).

Ideological and political quality emerged as a relative strength, reflecting stable policy guidance and strong institutional emphasis on value education. However, psychological and emotional quality and professional evaluation were identified as the weakest areas. This imbalance suggests that, although counselors are expected to fulfil increasingly expanded roles, institutional support mechanisms, particularly those related to mental health protection, transparency of evaluation, and career progression, have not developed at a comparable pace. Similar gaps have been reported in previous studies, which highlight the risks of role overload and professional exhaustion in student affairs work (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Sub-phase 3: In-depth Interviews and Triangulation of Priority Needs

The qualitative findings provided explanatory depth to the survey results, revealing that heavy workload, sustained occupational pressure, and insufficient mental health support constitute the most critical stressors affecting counselor performance. These findings strongly align with burnout theory, which conceptualises burnout as a consequence of chronic workplace stress that is inadequately managed at the Organizational level (WHO, 2019; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

Interview data further indicated that deficits in professional development and research capacity were not primarily due to lack of motivation, but rather to insufficient systemic support, including limited training opportunities, mentoring, and protected time. This supports international research arguing that evidence-informed professional competence requires structured learning pathways and enabling Organizational conditions (McLeod, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Additionally, concerns regarding outdated digital management systems and imbalanced counselor–student ratios reinforce the view that technological and managerial infrastructure is a prerequisite for sustainable service quality (Selwyn, 2016; Eynon & Malmberg, 2021).

Collectively, Phase 1 findings converge on four urgent development priorities: counselor well-being support, structured professional development, strengthened digital management capacity, and transparent evaluation and career pathways. These priorities provide a strong empirical justification for system-level strategic intervention rather than isolated individual training.

Discussion of Phase 2 Findings: Strategy Development

Phase 2 translated empirically identified needs into actionable strategies through an integrated application of PNI-modified analysis, SWOT diagnosis, and TOWS Matrix formulation. This approach reflects best practices in evidence-based strategic planning, which emphasise alignment between diagnostic findings and intervention design (Bryson, 2018).

Sub-phase 1: Strategic Orientation Based on SWOT Diagnosis

The SWOT-based diagnosis revealed that the highest priority needs were concentrated in psychological and emotional quality, professional evaluation, and management and planning capacity. At the same time, strengths such as policy alignment, ideological foundations, and communication capacity provided leverage points for strategic action. This configuration is consistent with Organizational development research suggesting that sustainable improvement depends on mobilising internal strengths to address structural weaknesses while adapting to external pressures (Wehrich, 1982; Mintzberg, 2009).

The identification of counselor well-being as a strategic priority reflects growing international recognition that psychological resilience is a core condition for sustainable performance in helping professions (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; WHO, 2019). Similarly, the emphasis on evaluation and career development responds directly to evidence that unclear appraisal systems undermine motivation and professional identity (OECD, 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

Notably, the coupling of management capacity deficits with policy alignment strengths presents both challenges and opportunities. While existing policy frameworks provide institutional support for reform, the lack of systematic planning mechanisms may hinder effective implementation of initiatives targeting

psychological support or evaluation systems. This tension aligns with Kotter's (2012) change management model, which emphasizes that structural readiness including management capability is critical for translating strategic intent into tangible outcomes. Furthermore, the communication capacity identified as a strength could serve as a bridge for addressing these gaps, as effective internal communication is vital for engaging stakeholders in reform processes and fostering a shared understanding of priorities (Tourish, 2019). The interconnections between these elements—psychological well-being, professional evaluation, and management planning—highlight the need for an integrated rather than siloed approach to capacity building, ensuring that improvements in one area reinforce progress in others.

Sub-phase 2: Strategy Formulation through the TOWS Matrix

The TOWS-based synthesis resulted in five main strategies addressing value-based development, well-being and resilience, evaluation and career progression, professional capability and research support, and collaboration and service quality. This structured strategy package reflects an integrated policy-to-practice logic, ensuring that each strategic dimension is explicitly linked to identified needs and contextual constraints.

Notably, the central positioning of counselor well-being aligns with contemporary models of sustainable professional development that conceptualise well-being as an institutional responsibility rather than an individual coping task (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The inclusion of digital management and data-informed planning further reflects global trends toward accountability, coordination, and quality assurance in student support services (OECD, 2021; Selwyn, 2016).

Sub-phase 3: Validation and Strategic Refinement

Expert validation confirmed the coherence and contextual suitability of the strategy framework, while also emphasising the importance of operational clarity and implementation feasibility. Recommendations regarding KPI specification, phased digital transformation, and alignment between evaluation and professional development are consistent with participatory planning principles that enhance

stakeholder ownership and long-term sustainability (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Bryson, 2018).

Discussion of Phase 3 Findings: Feasibility and Adaptability Evaluation

Phase 3 findings demonstrated high expert consensus regarding both the feasibility and adaptability of the proposed strategies. This indicates that the strategy package is not only theoretically sound but also practically compatible with the operational realities of higher education institutions in Shaanxi Province. High adaptability scores suggest strong contextual fit, while high feasibility scores reflect realistic implementation pathways supported by clear structures and indicators.

These results reinforce the value of grounding strategy development in empirical needs assessment and stakeholder consultation, as advocated in strategic management and educational reform literature (OECD, 2019; Bryson, 2018). The strong endorsement of well-being and professional capability strategies further confirms that addressing counselors' psychological sustainability and professional growth constitutes a critical leverage point for long-term quality enhancement.

Recommendations

Implications

For University Administrators and Policymakers

1. Adopt the strategy framework as an institutional roadmap for enhancing sustainable counselor quality and promotion.
2. Establish a transparent performance appraisal system aligned with the study's multidimensional quality indicators.
3. Implement incentive and recognition mechanisms linked to measurable performance, professional development, and service outcomes.
4. Allocate resources to reduce structural constraints, particularly workload pressure, counselor–student ratio issues, and limited support systems.
5. Strengthen digital management and data-based monitoring to improve coordination, documentation, and accountability in counseling services.

For College Counselors and Student Affairs Practitioners

1. Use the proposed strategies as a structured guide for competency development, counseling skills improvement, and self-efficacy enhancement.
2. Engage in continuous professional learning through mentoring, peer learning, and targeted training aligned with identified priority needs.
3. Participate in institutional well-being and resilience initiatives to sustain performance and reduce burnout risks.
4. Utilise clearer evaluation criteria to strengthen professional identity, motivation, and job satisfaction.

For Training Institutions and Education Authorities

1. Design competency-based training programs and professional development workshops that address the priority gaps identified in the study.
2. Develop scientific evaluation tools and standardised indicators to ensure consistent counselor development across institutions.
3. Provide policy guidance and funding support for systematic training, supervision, and digital transformation in student affairs services.

For Higher Education Institutions in Shaanxi Province

1. Implement the proposed strategies to counseling service quality and strengthen student support systems.
2. Promote innovation in student affairs management through digital systems, internal coordination, and external collaboration.
3. Use monitoring indicators to track implementation progress and continuously improve service effectiveness in line with educational sustainability goals.

Future Research

1. Replicate the study in other provinces or institutional contexts to test generalisability and identify contextual differences.
2. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine sustainability and long-term outcomes of strategy implementation.

3. Use quasi-experimental or experimental designs to evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategy components (e.g., well-being programs, digital management tools, evaluation systems).

4. Include additional stakeholder groups (students, faculty, external partners) to triangulate perceptions of counseling quality and outcomes.

5. Investigate the role of emerging technologies (e.g., AI, learning analytics, digital counseling platforms) in improving service delivery, workload management, and decision-making.

References

- An, X. (2022). *Study on the psychological quality and cultivation of college counselors in Shaanxi Province*. Shaanxi Education Press.
- Andrews, K. R. (1971). *The concept of corporate strategy*. Irwin.
- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2023). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice (16th ed.)*. Kogan Page.
- Bai, Y. (2021). The role of college counselors in ideological and political education in the new era. *Higher Education Research*, 42(3), 56–62.
- Bai, Z. (2017). An investigation into the professional quality of college counselors in China. *Higher Education Research Journal*, 38(4), 52–60.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056>
- Best, J. W. (1977). *Research in Education (3rd ed.)*. Prentice-Hall.
- Beth, S. (2018). *Standards for professional practice of school counselors in the United States*. American School counselor Association.
- Bland, C. J., Center, B. A., Finstad, D. A., Risbey, K. R., & Staples, J. G. (2005). A theoretical, practical, predictive model of faculty and department research productivity. *Academic Medicine*, 80(3), 225–237.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/00001888-200503000-00006>
- Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain*. *Educational Researcher*, 33(8), 3–15.
- Brundtland Commission. (1987). *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. Oxford University Press.
- Bryson, J. M. (2018). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations (5th ed.)*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Cao, J., Abu Mansor, N. N., & Li, J. (2024). Impact of work competencies on job performance among university counselors. *PLoS ONE*, 19(12), e0315494. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0315494>
- Chai, X. (2022). Enhancing the professional qualities and abilities of college counselors in the new era. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 38(4), 102–109.
- Chen, G. (2024). Comprehensive SWOT analysis of university counselors' ideological and political education work. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 42(2), 56–63.
- Chen, J. (2024). Enhancing professional performance of counselors in Chinese universities through SWOT analysis. *Journal of Ideological Education*, 45(3), 98–105.
- Chen, J., & Wang, Z. (2009). *Research on the professional qualities of university counselors*. Higher Education Press.
- Chen, J., & Wang, Z. (2009). Research on the quality structure of college counselors from a human resource management perspective. *Higher Education Research Journal*, 32(4), 45–52.
- Chen, M. (2021). Heart-to-heart counseling and professional competence among university counselors. *Journal of Higher Education Psychology*, 39(2), 88–95.
- CPC Central Committee & State Council. (2017). *Opinions on strengthening and improving ideological and political work in colleges and universities under the new situation*.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Cui, Y. (2015). Practice and theory integration. *Journal of Ideological Education*, 29(4), 11–18.
- Danielson, C. (2013). **The framework for teaching evaluation instrument**. The Danielson Group.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). **Empowered educators: How high-performing systems shape teaching quality around the world**. Jossey-Bass.

- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.
- Davis, J., & Summers, M. (2021). *Learning, teaching, and researching in higher education*. Routledge.
- Dimitris, F., Petrakos, G., & Vavouras, I. (2014). A Bayesian hierarchical model for comparative evaluation of teaching quality indicators in higher education. *Education Economics*, 22(5), 420–438.
- Dong, J. (2017). Challenges to the comprehensive quality of college counselors in the new media era. *Journal of Ideological Education*, 33(5), 67–73.
- Eynon, R., & Malmberg, L.-E. (2021). Lifelong learning and the digital divide. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(3), 989–1003.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13079>
- Fang, X. (2017). A four-stage career life cycle model for sustainable counselor development. *Journal of Educational Management*, 33(5), 72–80.
- Fang, X. (2017). Challenges in implementing counselor professionalisation policies in Chinese universities. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 38(4), 45–52.
- Fang, Y. (2017). Research on the sustainable development model of college counselors based on career life cycle theory. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 38(4), 112–120.
- Feng, G. (2012). Study on ideological and political education and management ability of university counselors. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 33(2), 45–50.
- Feng, G., & Zheng, Y. (2014). A macro-level study on the quality of college counselors in China. *Journal of Higher Education Studies*, 36(5), 88–95.
- Feng, J. (2020). Mental health education and the professional competence of college counselors. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 14(2), 72–80.
- Feng, Y. (2020). Professional competency development of college counselors in the new era. *Chinese Journal of Ideological Education*, 12, 78–84.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. Jossey-Bass.

- Gu, X. (2023). Promoting high-quality construction of college counselors as a guarantee for sustainable higher education development. *Journal of Ideological Education*, 45(6), 22–28.
- Guo, S. (2014). Enhancing professional identity for the sustainable development of university counselor teams. *Education and Management Review*, 31(5), 47–53.
- Gürel, E., & Tat, M. (2017). A theoretical review. *Journal of International Social Research*, 10(51), 994–1006.
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Theory and Practice*, 8(3), 381–391.
- Han, Y. (2008). Psychological quality and occupational stress of college counselors. *Chinese Journal of Mental Health Education*, 24(6), 45–48.
- Hao, J. (2019). Governmental support and policy mechanisms for sustainable development of counselors. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 8(2), 91–102.
- Helms, M. M., & Nixon, J. (2010). Where are we now? *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 3(3), 215–251.
- Henderson, D. (2010). counseling competencies in managing social issues in schools. *Educational Psychology Review*, 22(3), 341–357.
- Henderson, P. (2010). *counseling skills in action (3rd ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Henderson, S. (2010). School counselors and social challenges in education. *Journal of Counseling Practice*, 18(3), 233–241.
- Hua, X. (2014). A survey on the quality of college counselors in Anhui Province. *Education and Management Review*, 26(2), 102–108.
- Huang, G. (2024). Challenges and countermeasures. *Vocational Education Studies*, 12(1), 55–63.
- Jin, Y. (2018). Investigation and analysis of the ideological and political quality of college counselors. *Modern University Education*, 30(4), 88–94.
- Jinjing. (2024). A precise empowerment framework for counselor development. *Higher Education Forum*, 15(2), 55–63.

- Killion, J., & Hirsh, S. (2012). *Taking the lead: New roles for teacher leaders*. Learning Forward.
- Kong, X. (2016). Ideological and political education functions of college counselors. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 32(2), 72–76.
- Kong, X. (2019). Identity construction and professional development of college counselors. *China Higher Education Research*, 29(6), 44–50.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *An Introduction to Its Methodology (4th ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Li, H. (2017). counselor professionalism and student support in vocational colleges. *Vocational Education Forum*, 16(4), 25–33.
- Li, H. (2024). The role of college counselors in enhancing ideological and political education quality in the new era. *Shaanxi Higher Education Research*, 48(3), 66–74.
- Li, H., & Wang, J. (2021). Mental health challenges among Chinese university students and implications for counselors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 679–688.
- Li, T. (2024). SWOT analysis of career growth among new vocational college counselors. *Vocational Education Review*, 40(4), 49–57.
- Liang, C. (2021). Development of a professional competence model for college counselors. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 27(2), 101–110.
- Liang, C. (2022). Innovation and standardisation in university student management. *University Management Review*, 18(5), 48–55.
- Lin, C. (2023). Application of information technology in the implementation of the dual-line promotion system for college counselors. *Modern Education Informatics*, 19(3), 44–50.
- Lin, K. (2023). Integrating information technology in the dual-track promotion system for counselors. *Journal of Modern Education Management*, 32(5), 49–57.
- Liu, F. (2010). *Role positioning and professional development of college counselors*. China Higher Education Research, 5, 61–64.
- Liu, F. (2018). Professional development and sustainable education for college counselors. *Beijing Education Review*, 24(4), 61–70.

- Liu, N. (2018). Challenges and strategies for the sustainable professional development of university counselors. *Chinese Education Journal*, 26(3), 18–23.
- Liu, Q. (2015). *Four-dimensional structure of counselor professional quality*. China Higher Education Studies, 9, 56–62.
- Liu, Q. (2020). Multidimensional competence requirements for college counselors in contemporary China. *Educational Management Review*, 6(2), 33–40.
- Liu, X. (2020). Professional ability development and sustainable quality of college counselors. *Higher Education Exploration*, 12(4), 65–74.
- Liu, Y. (2023). SWOT analysis of counselors' self-capacity building in higher education. *Modern counseling Studies*, 37(1), 15–22.
- Lu, S. (2024). Factors influencing the professional development of college counselors in Guangxi. *Journal of Ideological Education*, 40(1), 121–128.
- Mark, E. W. (2000). A framework for student support. *Journal of Counselor Education*, 20(2), 131–147.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Recent research and its implications. *World Psychiatry*, 15(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>
- McCarthy, J. (2016). Counseling challenges in modern higher education management. *Journal of Student Affairs Administration*, 12(4), 14–22.
- McCarthy, M. (2016). Student affairs and the evolving role of counselors in higher education. *Educational Leadership Quarterly*, 30(2), 22–30.
- McLeod, J. (2013). *An introduction to counseling (5th ed.)*. Open University Press.
- Ministry of Education of the PRC (MOE). (2021). *Guidelines for improving counselor development and evaluation system*. Education Press.
- Ministry of Education. (2014). *Professional ability standards for college counselors (Provisional)*.
- Ministry of Education. (2020). *Guidelines on strengthening the professional development and promotion system of college counselors*.
- Mintzberg, H. (2009). *Managing*. Berrett-Koehler.
- Morse, G., Salyers, M. P., Rollins, A. L., Monroe-DeVita, M., & Pfahler, C. (2012). A review of the problem and its remediation. *Administration and Policy in*

- Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 39(5), 341–352.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-011-0352-1>
- Mullen, P. R., & Lambie, G. W. (2016). The contribution of school counselor self-efficacy to student outcomes. *Professional School Counseling*, 20(1), 1096–1107.
- Ning, L. (2021). Strategic measures for the sustainable development of counselors in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Studies*, 18(1), 21–30.
- Ning, Z. (2021). Professional identity and career development dilemmas of college counselors. *Higher Education Forum*, 5, 92–98.
- OECD. (2019). *OECD skills strategy 2019: Skills to shape a better future*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en>
- OECD. (2020). *Performance management in the public sector*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2021). *Education at a glance 2021: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en>
- Ommani, A. R. (2011). Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis for farming system businesses management: Case of wheat farmers of Shadervan district, Shoushtar Township, Iran. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(22), 9448–9454.
- Paisley, P. O., & MacMahon, G. (2012). Historical development and professional standards. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 90(4), 450–457.
- Paisley, P. O., & MacMahon, H. G. (2012). *An overview of practice and trends*. American Counseling Association.
- Panagiotou, G. (2003). Bringing SWOT into focus. *Business Strategy Review*, 14(2), 8–10.
- Qu, X. (2024). SWOT analysis on part-time graduate counselors at China University of Geosciences (Wuhan). *Higher Education Studies*, 38(2), 33–41.
- Samiya, K., & Mansaf, A. (2017). Outcome-based quality assessment framework for higher education. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, 8(3), 110–118.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Taris, T. W. (2014). *A critical review of the job demands–resources model*. In G. F. Bauer & O. Hämmig (Eds.), *Bridging occupational, organizational and public health* (pp. 43–68). Springer.

- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Van Rhenen, W. (2009). How changes in job demands and resources predict burnout, work engagement, and sickness absenteeism. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 30*(7), 893–917.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.595>
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.
- Selwyn, N. (2016). *Key issues and debates (2nd ed.)*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Song, Y. (2024). Problems and solutions. *Higher Education Development Research, 41*(1), 58–65.
- Spencer, L. M., & Spencer, S. M. (1993). *Models for superior performance*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sterling, S. (2016). Lessons from a decade of learning. *Environmental Education Research, 22*(7), 937–946.
- Su, Y. (2019). Knowledge anxiety and ability reconstruction of college counselors in the knowledge-economy era. *Contemporary Education Forum, 41*(1), 59–65.
- Sun, D. (2024). SWOT analysis of post-90s vocational college counselor teams and targeted training strategies. *Vocational Education Research, 39*(1), 60–68.
- Sun, L. (2018). Strategies for sustainable professional development of university counselors. *Journal of Higher Education Policy, 37*(6), 118–124.
- Sun, L. (2024). SWOT-based analysis of counselor competencies in vocational colleges. *Education Research Frontier, 40*(2), 75–84.
- Sun, Y. (2018). Countermeasures for the sustainable development of counselors' professional competence. *Modern Education Science, 34*(9), 88–94.
- Thornton, G. C. (2006). *Assessment centers in human resource management*. Addison-Wesley.
- Thornton, H. (2006). Teacher quality: Attitudes, values, and actions in educational practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*(7), 683–701.
- Thornton, P. (2006). Teacher quality and professional attitudes. *Education Today, 56*(1), 14–22.

- Tight, M. (2012). *Researching higher education (2nd ed.)*. Open University Press.
- Tilbury, D., & Wortman, D. (2004). *Engaging people in sustainability*. IUCN Commission on Education and Communication.
- Trey, J. (2004). Role transformation of school counselors in Kentucky state colleges. *American School Counselor Journal*, 58(2), 85–93.
- UNESCO. (2017). *Education for sustainable development goals: Learning objectives*. UNESCO Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2017). *Learning objectives*. UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2020). *A roadmap*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Wals, A. E. J. (2010). Mirroring, gestaltswitching and transformative social learning: Stepping stones for developing sustainability competence. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 11(4), 380–390.
- Wang, C. (2024). Enhancing the quality and ability of college counselors in the new era. *Journal of Ideological and Political Education*, 50(4), 92–101.
- Wang, P. (2022). History and trends. *Moral Education Research*, 27(6), 61–68.
- Wang, X. (2021). The dual role of university counselors as managers and coordinators in student development. *Chinese Higher Education Journal*, 35(3), 78–86.
- Wang, Y. (2017). Research on the double promotion status of university counselors. *Journal of College Student Affairs*, 28(4), 77–84.
- Wang, Y., & Chen, Q. (2021). Policy coordination and resource allocation for counselor quality improvement. *Educational Management Review*, 31(4), 44–52.
- Wang, Z. (2009). A study on quality dimensions of counselors in Chinese universities. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 31(2), 59–63.
- Wehrich, H. (1982). The TOWS matrix—A tool for situational analysis. *Long Range Planning*, 15(2), 54–66. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-6301\(82\)90120-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-6301(82)90120-0)
- Wen, T. (2014). An analysis of professional competence of university counselors. *Journal of Modern Education*, 20(3), 41–48.
- Wernick, L. (2000). counselor professional competence and ethical practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 78(3), 321–328.

- Wernick, M. E. (2000). Core professional qualities required for university counselors. *Journal of Counseling Development*, 78(2), 150–158.
- Witkin, B. R., & Altschuld, J. W. (1995). *A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Wongwanich, S., & Viratchai, N. (2005). *Needs Assessment Research* [งานวิจัยการประเมินความต้องการจำเป็น]. Chulalongkorn University Press.
- World Health Organization. (2019). *Burn-out an occupational phenomenon: International classification of diseases (11th revision)*.
https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/burn-out/en/
- Wu, X. (2009). An empirical study of college counselors' quality in Guangzhou. *Journal of Higher Education*, 20(2), 55–62.
- Xi, J. (2016). Speech at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities. Beijing.
- Xiang, W. (2021). An evaluation of counselor quality and development in 21 universities in China. *Journal of Higher Education Studies*, 19(4), 56–63.
- Xiang, W. (2021). Evaluation and analysis of the current quality of college counselors in China. *Educational Science*, 37(2), 33–41.
- Xie, X. (2011). Research on the current situation and countermeasures of core qualities of college counselors under the background of professional development. *Higher Education Studies*, 19(4), 75–81.
- Yang, X. (2014). The five roles of university counselors in ideological education. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 28(5), 70–78.
- Yao, N. (2014). Deep counseling as a means of improving ideological and political education quality. *Journal of Educational Practice*, 15(5), 102–108.
- Ye, Q. (2007). Evidence from behavioural interviews. *Journal of Education Science*, 15(3), 84–92.
- Yu, W. (2023). Improving counselors' comprehensive quality and ability under changing educational environments. *Education and Development Review*, 39(1), 45–54.
- Zeng, J. (2024). The five-micro digital model for modernising counselor studios. *Journal of Digital Higher Education*, 12(2), 37–46.

- Zeng, T. (2024). Digital empowerment of counselor studios through the Five-Micro model. *Education Modernisation Review*, 29(2), 36–42.
- Zhang, L. (2005). A comparative study of counselor quality at Tsinghua University. *Higher Education Forum*, 14(3), 57–63.
- Zhang, L. (2006). *Comparative study of excellent and ordinary counselors at Tsinghua University*. Chinese University Education, 10, 75–82.
- Zhang, L., & Chen, J. (2018). Moral education and professional identity of college counselors. *Higher Education Development Studies*, 36(1), 44–50.
- Zhang, Q. (2013). The construction and sustainable development of the college counselor team. *Higher Education Forum*, 27(2), 95–101.
- Zhang, R. (2022). Improving the quality and competence of college counselors within the ten-dimensional education framework. *Journal of Modern Education Reform*, 11(4), 59–67.
- Zhang, Y. (2012). Workload distribution and professional awareness of college counselors. *Education and Management*, 9(6), 47–53.
- Zhao, M. (2024). High-quality development of graduate counselors and its impact on ideological and political education. *Higher Education Management*, 40(3), 55–62.
- Zhao, R. (2012). Traditional approaches and their limitations in ideological and political education. *Modern Education Forum*, 7(1), 13–19.
- Zhao, W., & Jiang, Y. (2023). Construction of competency model for college counselors in Hainan Province, China. *Journal of Harbin Engineering University*, 44(10), 112–118.
- Zhao, Y. (2022). *Sustainable thinking and educational transformation*. Shanghai Education Press.
- Zhao, Y. (2022). Sustainable thinking and the transformation of educational function in the new era. *Contemporary Education and Culture*, 14(2), 56–62.
- Zhao, Y. (2024). The professional value of graduate counselors in ideological education. *Journal of Higher Education Reform*, 43(2), 83–91.

- Zhaoweiyu, & Jiangyongzhi. (2023). Construction of competency model for college counselors in Hainan Province, China. *Journal of Harbin Engineering University*, 44(10).
- Zheng, D. (2016). Research on the current state of counselor quality from multiple perspectives. *University Ideological and Political Education Research*, 22(5), 56–62.
- Zheng, Y. (2013). Empirical analysis of counselor qualities and political literacy. *Higher Education Forum*, 29(6), 33–39

Appendices

Appendix A

List of Specialists and Letters of Specialists Invitation
for IOC Verification

List of Specialists Invitation for IOC Verification

NO.	Name	Position
1	Assistant Professor Dr. Luxana Keyuraphan	Ph.D. Development Education of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University
2	Assistant Professor Dr. Sahapat Insee	Ph.D. Development Education of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University
3	Assistant Professor Dr. Chollada Pongpattanayothin	Ph.D. Technology Management of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University
4	Li Shengce	Professor of Yan'an University
5	Wu Lingyun	Professor of Shaanxi University of Technology

List of Interview Experts Invitation

NO	Workplace	Name	Education and work background
1	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Nan Yajuan	Position: Deputy Director of Research Department Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 16 Years
2	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Li Yujing	Position: Secretary of the Youth League Working Committee of the Aerospace and Astronautics Institute Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 15 Years
3	Shaanxi University of Technology	Chen Wei	Position: School of Education Science Counselor Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 10 Years
4	Shaanxi University of Technology	Ma Xiao	Position: School of Education Counselor Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 8 Years
5	Xianyang Normal University	Wang Wei	Position: Director of the Sociology Teaching and Research Office Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 12 Years

NO	Workplace	Name	Education and work background
6	Xianyang Normal University	Sun Yuanyuan	Position: Vice Dean of the School of Economics and Management Title: Associate Professor Education: Doctor Work Experience: 15 Years
7	Yan'an University	Zhao Hailong	Position: Director of the Practice Section of the Academic Affairs Office Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Years of work experience: 16 Years
8	Yan'an University	Dong Qinglai	Position: Deputy Director of the Academic Affairs Office Title: Associate Professor Education: Doctor Years of work experience: 12 Years
9	Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College	Chen Mingli	Position: Faculty of Management Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Years of work experience: 33 Years
10	Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College	Zhang Yuan	Position: Secretary of the Faculty Branch Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Years of work experience: 16 Years

List of Focus Group Interviewees

NO	Workplace	Name	Education and work background
1	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Zhang Chi	Position: Secretary of the Youth League Committee of the School of Artificial Intelligence Title: Associate Professor Education: Doctor Work Experience: 8 Years
2	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Gao Qiong	Position: Counselor of Zhongying College Title: Associate Professor Education: Doctor Work Experience: 19 Years
3	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Yin Fan	Position: Secretary of the Youth League Committee of the School of Telecommunications Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 8 years
4	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Wang Jing	Position: Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee of the School of Artificial Intelligence Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 9 Years
5	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Lou JianYong	Position: Vice Dean of the School of Electrical Engineering Title: Professor Education: Doctor Work Experience: 25 Years

NO	Workplace	Name	Education and work background
6	Xianyang Normal University	Li GuiMei	Position: Vice Dean of the School of Educational Sciences Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 14 years
7	Xianyang Normal University	Huang Bo	Position: Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee of the Basic Department Title: Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 18 Years
8	Yan'an University	Yang Chunming	Position: Director of School of Chemical Engineering Title: Associate Professor Education: Doctor Work Experience: 9 Years
9	Yan'an University	Hou Yezhi	Position: Director of the Academic Affairs Office Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work experience: 12 years
10	Shanwei Vocational and Technical College	Ye Feifei	Position: Director of the Practice Section of the Academic Affairs Office Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Years of work experience: 15 years
11	Shaanxi University of Technology	Luo Yuhuan	Position: Counselor of the School of Literature and Media Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Years of work experience: 31 years

NO	Workplace	Name	Education and work background
12	Shaanxi University of Technology	Zhou Hui	Position: Director of the Academic Affairs Office of the School of Educational Sciences Title: Associate Professor Education: Master Work Experience: 21 years

List of Specialists Invitation for Strategies Evaluation

The following list was invited as evaluation experts to evaluate the adaptability and feasibility of the educational management strategies for improving students' sustainable learning ability in higher vocational colleges in Guangdong Province.

NO.	Name	Position
1	Associate Professor Yang Wenjun	Yan'an University
2	Assistant Professor Zhou Zhijun	Shaanxi University of Technology
3	Associate Professor Kang Yuming	Xi'an Jiaotong University
4	Associate Professor Li Xia	Xianyang Normal University
5	Associate Professor Jia Junxi	Tongchuan Vocational and Technical College

Appendix B

Official Letter

MHESI 0643.14/ ๐. ๒๙๓๐



Bansomdejchaopraya
Rajabhat University
1061 Soi Itsaraphap 15,
Itsaraphap Road, Hiranruchi,
Thonburi, Bangkok, Thailand
10600

15 October 2024

Subject: Invitation to validate research instrument

Dear

Attachment List of experts who validated the research instrument

Ms.Sun Li is a graduate student in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Educational Management for Sustainable Development program of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University. She is conducting research entitled "Development of Sustainable College Counselor's Quality and Promoting Strategy in Shaanxi Province ." under the supervision of the following thesis advisory committee:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Associate Professor Dr. Touchakorn Suwancharas | Major Advisor |
| 2. Assistant Professor Dr.Luxana Keyuraphan | Co-Advisor |
| 3.Assistant Professor Dr. Areeya Juichamlong | Co-Advisor |

The thesis advisory committee recognizes your expertise in formulating sustainable development and promotion strategies for enhancing the professional quality of college counselors in Shaanxi Province and believes that your recommendations would be invaluable for the further refinement of this research instrument.

With your specialized knowledge, we kindly request your assistance in validating the attached research instrument. In this regard, we would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation for your support.

Yours faithfully

(Asst. Prof. Dr.Tanaput Chanchaen)

Vice Dean of Graduate School for Dean of Graduate School

Tel.+662-473-7000

www.bsru.ac.th

E-mail: academic.grad@bsru.ac.th

MHESI 0643.14/132730



Bansomdejchaopraya
Rajabhat University
1061 Soi Itsaraphap 15,
Itsaraphap Road, Hiranruchi,
Thonburi, Bangkok, Thailand
10600

15 October, 2024

Subject Invitation to join an interview as an expert

Dear

Attachment List of experts who for interview

Ms. Sun Li is a graduate student in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Educational Management for Sustainable Development program of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University. She is conducting research entitled "Development of Sustainable College Counselor's Quality and Promoting Strategy in Shaanxi Province." under the supervision of the following thesis advisory committee:

1. Associate Professor Dr. Touchakorn Suwancharas Major Advisor
2. Assistant Professor Dr. Sunate thaveethavornsawat Co-Advisor
3. Assistant Professor Dr. Areeya juichaml Co-Advisor

The thesis advisory committee, along with the student, recognizes your expertise in promoting the sustainable development and enhancement strategies for college counselors' professional quality in Shaanxi Province. As such, the graduate school would like to formally invite you to participate in an interview as an expert, where your insights and suggestions will greatly contribute to the advancement of the student's research.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Yours faithfully

(Asst. Prof. Dr. Tanaput Chanchaen)

Vice Dean of Graduate School for Dean of Graduate School

Tel. +662-473-7000

www.bsru.ac.th

E-mail: academic.grad@bsru.ac.th

MHESI 0643.14/Q. ๒๗๓๐



Bansomdejchaopraya
Rajabhat University
1061 Soi Itsaraphap 15,
Itsaraphap Road, Hiranruchi,
Thonburi, Bangkok, Thailand
10600

15 October, 2024

Subject Invitation to join a focus group discussion as an expert

Dear

Attachment List of experts for Focus Group Interviewees

Ms.Sun Li is a graduate student in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Educational Management for Sustainable Development program of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University. She is conducting research entitled "Development of Sustainable College Counselor's Quality and Promoting Strategy in Shaanxi Province." under the supervision of the following thesis advisory committee:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1.Associate Professor Dr. Touchakorn Suwancharas | Major Advisor |
| 2. Assistant Professor Dr. Sunate thaveethavornsawat | Co-Advisor |
| 3.Assistant Professor Dr. Areeya juichamlong | Co-Advisor |

The thesis advisory committee, along with the student, recognizes your expertise in promoting sustainable development strategies for enhancing the professional quality of college counselors in Shaanxi Province. As such, the graduate school would like to formally invite you to join a focus group discussion as an expert, where your insights and suggestions will greatly contribute to the advancement of the student's research.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Yours faithfully

(Asst. Prof. Dr.Tanaput Chanchaen)

Vice Dean of Graduate School for Dean of Graduate School

Tel.+662-473-7000

www.bsru.ac.th

E-mail: academic.grad@bsru.ac.th

MHESI 0643.14/๑. ๒๖๓๐



Bansomdejchaopraya
Rajabhat University
1061 Soi Itsaraphap 15,
Itsaraphap Road, Hiranruchi,
Thonburi, Bangkok, Thailand
10600

15 October, 2024

Subject Invitation to participate in the strategic assessment as an expert

Dear

Attachment list of Specialists for Strategies Evaluation

Ms. Sun Li is a graduate student in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Educational Management for Sustainable Development program of Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University. She is conducting research entitled "Development of Sustainable College Counselor's Quality and Promoting Strategy in Shaanxi Province." under the supervision of the following thesis advisory committee:

1. Associate Professor Dr. Touchakorn Suwancharas Major Advisor
2. Assistant Professor Dr. Sunate thaveethavornsawat Co-Advisor
3. Assistant Professor Dr. Areeya juichamlong Co-Advisor

The primary focus of this research is to formulate sustainable development strategies of physical education in private colleges in Shaanxi Province. In light of your expertise in this area, the Graduate School cordially invites you to serve as an expert reviewer for the in-depth examination of the strategies under consideration and to provide feedback on these strategies. Your insights will be instrumental in promoting sustainable development and enhancement strategies for college counselors' professional quality in Shaanxi Province. We sincerely value your time and consideration of this request.

Thank you for your kind considerations.

Yours faithfully

(Asst. Prof. Dr. Tanaput Chanchaen)
Vice Dean of Graduate School for Dean of Graduate School

Tel. +662-473-7000
www.bsru.ac.th
E-mail: academic.grad@bsru.ac.th

Appendix C

Research Instrument

Dear Respondent,

You are kindly invited to participate in this research entitled “Development of Sustainable College counselors’ Quality and Promoting Strategy in Shaanxi Province.”

The main purpose of this study is to examine the current and expected Status of college counselors’ professional quality, identify developmental gaps, and propose sustainable strategies to enhance counseling quality in higher education institutions across Shaanxi Province.

Your participation in completing this questionnaire will provide valuable insights into counselors’ professional competencies, institutional support systems, and policy-related factors affecting sustainable development. The information you provide will be used solely for academic research purposes, and all responses will be kept strictly confidential and reported in aggregate form only, without identifying any individual or institution.

The questionnaire consists of two main parts:

Part 1: General Information of Respondents

Part 2: Sustainable College counselors’ Quality and Promotion (seven dimensions)

Please read each statement carefully and rate it according to your personal experience and expectations. There are no right or wrong answers—only your honest opinions are important for this research.

Your kind cooperation and valuable time in completing this questionnaire are greatly appreciated.

Thank you very much for your contribution to the improvement of counselor development in Shaanxi Province.

Warm regards,

Sun Li

Doctoral Candidate,

Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University (BSRU), Thailand

Email: _____ Date: _____

Part 1: General Information of Respondents

Please fill in or tick (✓) the appropriate answer. All information will be kept strictly confidential and used for research purposes only.

No.	Item	Response Format / Example Choices
1	University Name	☐ Xi'an Jiaotong University ☐ Xianyang Normal University ☐ Yan'an University ☐ Tongchuan Vocational & Technical College ☐ Hanzhong University
2	Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other / Prefer not to say
3	Age	☐ Below 30 ☐ 31–40 ☐ 41–50 ☐ Above 50
4	Highest Educational Qualification	☐ Bachelor's degree ☐ Master's degree ☐ Doctoral degree ☐ Other (please specify): _____
5	Academic / Professional Title	☐ Assistant counselor ☐ Lecturer ☐ Associate Professor ☐ Professor ☐ Administrative Staff ☐ Other: _____
6	Years of counseling Experience	☐ Less than 3 years ☐ 3–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ More than 10 years
7	Employment Type	☐ Full-time counselor ☐ Part-time counselor ☐ Administrative staff with counseling duties

No.	Item	Response Format / Example Choices
8	Faculty or Department Assigned	_____
9	Average Number of Students under Your Supervision	☐ Less than 300 ☐ 301–600 ☐ 601–900 ☐ Over 900
10	Have you received professional training for college counselors?	☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, please specify the type or duration: _____
11	Frequency of Training Participation (per year)	☐ None ☐ 1–2 times ☐ 3–4 times ☐ More than 4 times
12	Level of Training Attended	☐ University-level ☐ Provincial-level ☐ National-level ☐ International-level
13	Main Source of Job Motivation	☐ Salary and welfare ☐ Career development ☐ Academic recognition ☐ Student success ☐ Institutional support ☐ Other: _____
14	Perceived Workload	☐ Very low ☐ Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High ☐ Very high
15	Job Satisfaction Level	☐ Very dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Satisfied ☐ Very satisfied

Note

This section helps classify respondents and identify institutional differences across the five representative universities. Items 1–8 capture demographic and professional background, while items 9–15 measure organizational and motivational aspects, which can be correlated with counselor quality dimensions such as workload, training, and satisfaction.

Part 2: Questionnaire: Sustainable College counselors' Quality and Promotion in Shaanxi Province

Item	Current Situation					Expected Situation				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
management.										
30. Provincial policy ensures equitable allocation of counseling staff across universities.										
7. Professional Evaluation Dimensions	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
31. I have published research or academic papers on counseling or student development.										
32. I have completed applied research projects that contribute to university practice.										
33. My research performance is evaluated based on completion and practical outcomes.										
34. I am invited to share expertise at academic conferences or professional networks.										
35. I mentor junior counselors or supervise student research and internships.										
36. I participate in activities promoting public understanding of counseling (seminars, outreach).										

Structured Interview Form for In-depth Interviews

Research Topic: Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategies in Shaanxi Province

Interview Sample: 10 full-time college counselors from 5 higher education institutions in Shaanxi Province (2 counselors per institution)

Interview Duration: Approximately 30–45 minutes

Section	Core Dimension of Sustainable Counselor Quality	Open-ended Interview Questions
Part 1	Personal and Professional Background	1. What is your coded name (for confidentiality)? 2. What is your gender? 3. What is your highest educational qualification? 4. How many years of experience do you have in college counselor and student affairs work? 5. Which university and department do you affiliate with?
Part 2	1. Ideological and Political Quality	1. What are the current practices of integrating ideological and political education into your daily counseling work? 2. What key challenges do you face in carrying out ideological and political guidance for students? 3. What suggestions do you have for enhancing the ideological and political quality of college counselors and promoting its sustainable development?
Part 2	2. Professional and Theoretical Knowledge	1. What professional and theoretical knowledge do you think is the most important for college counselors' work at present? 2. What difficulties do you encounter in acquiring and updating professional and

Section	Core Dimension of Sustainable Counselor Quality	Open-ended Interview Questions
		theoretical knowledge? 3. How can universities and relevant departments support counselors to improve their professional and theoretical knowledge sustainably?
Part 2	3. Psychological and Emotional Quality	1. What is your current psychological and emotional state in the face of counselor work pressure? 2. What factors affect the psychological and emotional well-being of college counselors in your daily work? 3. What measures do you think are needed to enhance counselors' psychological resilience and emotional regulation ability for sustainable development?
Part 2	4. Humanistic and Cultural Quality	1. How do you integrate humanistic and cultural concepts into student counseling and guidance work? 2. What challenges exist in the cultivation and improvement of college counselors' humanistic and cultural quality? 3. What suggestions do you have for promoting the sustainable

Section	Core Dimension of Sustainable Counselor Quality	Open-ended Interview Questions
		development of counselors' humanistic and cultural quality?
Part 2	5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills	1. What communication methods and skills do you commonly use in communicating with students from diverse backgrounds? 2. What difficulties do you face in communicating and collaborating with students, academic departments, and other relevant parties? 3. How can college counselors improve their communication and interpersonal skills for more effective sustainable work?
Part 2	6. Management and Planning Ability	1. How do you currently plan and manage your daily counseling work and student development programs? 2. What problems do you encounter in the management and planning of counselor work (e.g., digital tools, workload allocation)? 3. What support is needed to enhance college counselors' management and planning ability for sustainable work efficiency?

Section	Core Dimension of Sustainable Counselor Quality	Open-ended Interview Questions
Part 2	7. Professional Evaluation Dimensions	1. What is your perception of the current professional evaluation system for college counselors in your institution? 2. What difficulties do you face in meeting the requirements of professional evaluation and achieving professional promotion? 3. How can the professional evaluation system be optimized to promote the sustainable career development of college counselors?

Appendix D

The Results of the Quality Analysis of Research Instruments

Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) Rating Table for the Questionnaire

Note: IOC refers to the consistency between questionnaire items and the research objectives. The rating criteria are as follows:

1: The item is fully consistent with the research objectives and can effectively measure the core dimensions

0: The item has weak relevance to the research objectives, or its expression is ambiguous with unclear measurement targets

-1: The item is irrelevant to the research objectives or deviates from the core research content

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
1. Ideological & Political Quality	1	My institution organizes regular training on political literacy and counselor ethics	1	Directly related to the core ideological and political quality of counselors, in line with the research objective of "sustainable quality development"
	2	I incorporate moral and civic values in student counseling and leadership programs	1	Reflects the practical application of ideological and political quality, meeting the requirements of the research dimension
	3	Provincial or national education policies guide	1	Related to policy support factors, which is a core part of the "sustainable

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
		counselor development goals		development strategy"
	4	I receive recognition or incentives for promoting ideological and moral education	1	Reflects the incentive mechanism for ideological and political quality, highly correlated with the research objectives
	5	There is an established system linking counselor evaluation with moral and ideological performance	1	Involves the evaluation system, directly serving the research on "quality improvement strategies"
2. Professional & Theoretical Knowledge	6	I attend at least two professional development workshops each academic year	1	Reflects the channels for improving professional knowledge, meeting the measurement needs of the "professional quality" dimension
	7	My university encourages counselors to engage in research and publication	1	Related to the professional development support system, which is a core research content
	8	I have opportunities to join funded projects or apply for	1	Directly measures the resources for professional growth, in line with the

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
		national-level counselor training		"sustainable development" goal
	9	The university evaluates counselor performance based on scientific and transparent indicators	1	Involves the professional evaluation mechanism, highly correlated with the research objectives
	10	Government programs support continuous professional growth of counselors	1	Related to policy support factors, which is an important part of the "improvement strategy"
3. Psychological & Emotional Quality	11	I receive psychological resilience or stress management training annually	1	Directly measures the channels for improving psychological and emotional quality, meeting the requirements of the dimension
	12	My university has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for mental well-being	1	Reflects the psychological support system, closely related to the sustainable development of counselors
	13	I can access professional counseling services during high-stress	1	Related to psychological support resources, in line with the research dimension of "emotional

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
		periods		quality"
	14	National and local policies include mental health support for counselor staff	1	Involves policy guarantee, which is a core element of the "sustainable strategy"
	15	The work environment encourages emotional expression and peer support	1	Reflects the environmental factors affecting psychological and emotional quality, consistent with the research objectives
4. Humanistic & Cultural Quality	16	I promote cross-cultural understanding and tolerance in student guidance	1	Directly reflects the practical application of humanistic and cultural quality, meeting the requirements of the dimension
	17	The university offers programs that combine humanistic values with modern innovation	1	Related to the channels for cultivating humanistic quality, in line with the research objectives
	18	Counselors are encouraged to participate in community outreach or volunteer work	1	Reflects the practical carrier of humanistic quality, related to the research content

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
	19	Government projects support cultural and moral education among university staff	1	Related to policy support, which falls into the category of "quality improvement strategies"
	20	Physical wellness programs are available to improve counselor health and morale	1	Weak direct relevance to "humanistic and cultural quality", more inclined to logistical support
5. Communication & Interpersonal Skills	21	I can effectively communicate with students of diverse academic and cultural backgrounds	1	Directly measures the core elements of communication skills, meeting the requirements of the dimension
	22	The institution offers leadership and communication training for counselors	1	Reflects the channels for ability improvement, in line with the goal of "sustainable quality development"
	23	Counselors regularly collaborate with academic departments and student organizations	1	Reflects the practical application of interpersonal skills, consistent with the research objectives
	24	There are external collaborations with	1	Related to the external resources for

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
		government or social agencies to support counseling work		communication and collaboration, which is a core research content
	25	I have a feedback system to evaluate my communication performance with students	1	Involves ability evaluation and improvement, meeting the research needs of "improvement strategies"
6. Management & Planning Ability	26	I design and assess student development programs using data-based approaches	1	Directly measures management and planning ability, meeting the requirements of the dimension
	27	Digital systems are used for counseling management, record keeping, and student tracking	1	Reflects the tool application of management ability, in line with the research objectives
	28	Workload is adjusted to maintain an effective counselor–student ratio	1	Related to the core elements of management and planning, closely related to "sustainable development"
	29	Institutional funding supports technological tools for counseling	1	Involves resource guarantee for management ability, which falls into the scope

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
		management		of research content
	30	Provincial policy ensures equitable allocation of counseling staff across universities	1	Related to policy support for management and planning, meeting the research needs of "improvement strategies"
7. Professional Evaluation Dimensions	31	I have published research or academic papers on counseling or student development	1	Directly reflects professional research ability, meeting the requirements of the evaluation dimension
	32	I have completed applied research projects that contribute to university practice	1	Reflects professional practical achievements, highly correlated with the research objectives
	33	My research performance is evaluated based on completion and practical outcomes	1	Involves the professional evaluation mechanism, in line with the research goal of "sustainable development"
	34	I am invited to share expertise at academic conferences or professional networks	1	Reflects professional influence, meeting the core requirements of the evaluation dimension

Dimension Classification	Item No.	Questionnaire Item Content	IOC Rating (1/0/-1)	Rating Basis
	35	I mentor junior counselors or supervise student research and internships	1	Reflects professional inheritance ability, related to the research content
	36	I participate in activities promoting public understanding of counseling (seminars, outreach)	1	Reflects professional promotion ability, meeting the research needs of the evaluation dimension

Appendix E

Certificate of English



This is to certify that

Mrs.Sun Li

Achieved BSRU English Proficiency Test (BSRU-TEP) level

C1

Given on 15th August 2025o

Assistant Professor Dr Kulsirin Aphiratvoradej

Director

Appendix F

The Document for Acceptance Research

The Editorial Board of Higher Education Studies

Canadian Center of Science and Education

1595 Sixteenth Ave, Suite 301, Richmond Hill, Ontario, L4B 3N9, Canada

Tel: 86-1-539-923-7170

Fax: 1416-642-2608

E-mail: hes@ccsenet.org

Website: <http://hes.ccsenet.org>

January 14, 2026

Dear: Sun Li

Thanks for your submission to *Higher Education Studies*.

We have the pleasure to inform you that your manuscript has been accepted for publication. It will be published in the issue of Vol. 16, No. 1, in March 2026.

Title: Development of Sustainable College Counselor's Quality and Promoting Strategy in Shaanxi Province

Authors: Sun Li ; Touchakom Suwancharas ; Sunate thaveethavomsawat ; Areeya juichamlong

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact with us.

Sincerely,

Sherry Lin



**CANADIAN CENTER
OF SCIENCE AND
EDUCATION**

On behalf of,
The Editorial Board of *Higher Education Studies*
Canadian Center of Science and Education

Development of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategies in Shaanxi Province

Sun Li¹, Touchakorn Suwancharas², Sunate Thaveethavornsawat³ & Areeya Juichamlong⁴

¹ Doctoral Student, PhD in Educational Management for Sustainable Development, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok 10600, Thailand.

² The Graduate School, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok 10600, Thailand.

³ Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok 10600, Thailand.

⁴ Faculty of Management Science, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok 10600, Thailand.

Correspondence: Sun Li, School of Haojing College of Shaanxi University of Science and Technology, Tongyi Road, Xixian New District, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China. Tel: 86-1-539-923-7170. E-mail: 799282323@qq.com

Received: December 1, 2025

Accepted: December 27, 2025

Online Published: February 10, 2026

doi:10.5539/hes.v16n1p414

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v16n1p414>

Abstract

This mixed-methods study aimed (1) to study the current and expected situations of sustainable college Counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province, (2) to develop strategies for enhancing sustainable college Counselors' quality and promotion, and (3) to evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of the proposed strategies. A multi-stage sampling approach was employed: five universities were purposively selected to represent regional and institutional diversity, followed by stratified random sampling of 341 Counselors to ensure proportional representation. The primary instrument was a five-point rating-scale questionnaire with strong content validity (IOC = 0.80–1.00) and high reliability ($\alpha = 0.94$). Additional tools included interview and focus-group protocols and feasibility/adaptability evaluation forms. Quantitative data were analysed using percentages, M, SD, and PNI_{modified}, while qualitative data were analysed using content analysis; strategy formulation applied SWOT and the TOWS Matrix with focus-group validation.

Findings indicated that the overall current situation was moderate (M = 3.18, SD = 0.22), whereas the expected situation was high (M = 4.00, SD = 0.07), demonstrating a consistent gap across dimensions. Ideological and political quality was a relative strength (current: M = 3.56, SD = 0.83; expected: M = 4.50, SD = 0.55), whereas professional evaluation and assessment (current: M = 3.15, SD = 0.58; expected: M = 4.42, SD = 0.58) and psychological and emotional quality (current: M = 2.97, SD = 0.99; expected: M = 4.44, SD = 0.57) were the weakest areas. Interviews with 10 informants corroborated excessive workload, high stress, limited mental-health support, insufficient professional development and research support, inadequate digital management tools, and unclear promotion criteria. The developed framework proposed one vision and five main strategies, supported by nine sub-strategies and 18 projects. Expert evaluation rated the strategies at the highest levels of feasibility (M = 4.63, SD = 0.21), and adaptability (M = 4.65, SD = 0.19).

Keywords: Sustainable development, college counselors, quality and promotion, strategy development, SWOT/TOWS, Shaanxi Province.

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

College Counselors play a pivotal role in Chinese higher education, operating not only as student-affairs coordinators but also as frontline educators responsible for ideological and political education, psychological guidance, and holistic student development. National discourse has repeatedly stressed that ideological and political work in universities is fundamental to talent cultivation, and it has called for strengthened capacity building and improved institutional mechanisms for student work (Xinhua, 2016; Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2017). In parallel, China has promoted professionalisation through national

standards for Counselors' professional abilities, signalling that counselor competence is a strategic lever in higher-education reform (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2014).

Despite these policy directions, persistent implementation challenges remain. In many institutions, Counselors face heavy administrative workloads, blurred role boundaries, limited professional development, and weak promotion mechanisms, which may erode professional identity and constrain sustainable quality development. These issues are particularly salient in Shaanxi Province, where institutional diversity and uneven resourcing can intensify counselor burden and amplify gaps between expected and actual practice. This creates an applied urgency: without systematic support, counselor development may not keep pace with students' increasingly complex needs, including mental health, value formation, and career development.

This problem warrants new research for both theoretical and practical reasons. Practically, evidence is needed to translate national policy expectations into feasible, context-responsive strategies at the provincial and institutional levels. Theoretically, the field still lacks robust, strategy-oriented models that connect "sustainable quality" with promotion mechanisms and organisational systems, rather than treating counselor quality as a static attribute set. Moreover, aligning local strategies with international sustainability agendas strengthens the rationale for system-level improvement, as UNESCO frames Education for Sustainable Development as enabling the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours needed for a more just and sustainable future (UNESCO, 2020). Accordingly, this study examines current and expected situations of sustainable college Counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province, develops evidence-based strategies grounded in local realities, and evaluates their feasibility and adaptability.

1.2 Describe Relevant Scholarship

This section reviews key theoretical perspectives and empirical studies that underpin sustainable education and the quality development of college Counselors. It establishes the conceptual foundation for this study by linking sustainability-oriented higher education with counselor professionalism, quality components, and strategic approaches for enhancing sustainable quality and promotion.

1) Sustainable education and the role of Counselors

Scholarship on sustainable education positions higher education as a critical driver of sustainable development through the cultivation of ethical reasoning, critical awareness, and global responsibility (Brundtland Commission, 1987; Wals, 2010). Sustainability-oriented education emphasises systems thinking and participatory learning that connect academic knowledge to social challenges and long-term well-being (Davis & Summers, 2021). Within this framework, student support systems and educator roles are central to creating inclusive, supportive, and resilient learning environments.

2) College Counselors' quality and current challenges

In Chinese higher education, college Counselors are widely conceptualised as multi-role professionals who integrate student-affairs coordination with frontline educational functions, including ideological and moral guidance, psychological support, and holistic student development (Yang, 2014). However, empirical studies consistently report gaps between policy expectations and daily practice. Common challenges include role overload, heavy workload, uneven professional development opportunities, insufficient institutional and mental-health support, and emerging demands related to digital governance and new media contexts (Dong, 2017; Hua, 2014). These conditions weaken professional effectiveness and highlight that sustainability is not merely an individual issue but a systemic concern.

3) Counselor quality components as a multidimensional construct

The literature converges on a multidimensional and developable view of counselor quality, synthesised in seven interrelated components that function as a coherent system. These include ideological and political quality (Kong, 2016), professional and theoretical knowledge (Feng, 2012), psychological and emotional quality (Han, 2008; Henderson, 2010), humanistic and cultural quality (Han, 2008; Thornton, 2006), communication and interpersonal skills (Chen & Wang, 2009; Zhang, 2006), management and planning ability (Feng, 2012; Trey, 2004), and professional evaluation and assessment (Guskey, 2002; McCarthy, 2016; OECD, 2019). Prior studies emphasise that weaknesses in any single dimension, particularly evaluation and support systems, can undermine sustainable performance across the whole framework.

4) Strategies for improving sustainable quality and promotion

Research further suggests that improving counselor quality requires integrated strategies that combine individual competence development with institutional system reform. Effective approaches include values-based and professional training, structured career pathways, transparent evaluation and promotion mechanisms, and organisational support for long-term professional growth and retention (Guo, 2014; Zhang, 2013; Gu, 2023; Zhao, 2024). Methodologically, SWOT analysis and the TOWS matrix are widely

recognised as effective tools for translating internal and external analyses into context-responsive and actionable strategies (Gürel & Tat, 2017; Helms & Nixon, 2010).

5) Synthesis

Overall, the reviewed scholarship indicates that sustainable higher education depends on values-based and wellbeing-oriented institutional practices, in which college Counselors play a central multi-role function. Persistent gaps between policy expectations and practice underscore the need to conceptualise counselor quality as a multidimensional and developable construct and to design integrated strategies that strengthen both individual competencies and institutional mechanisms. This body of literature provides a clear rationale for employing the seven quality components as the core research variable and for using SWOT and the TOWS matrix to develop sustainable quality and promotion strategies.

1.3 State Hypotheses and Their Correspondence to Research Design

Guided by the reviewed literature and policy context, this study was designed around three central research objectives: (1) to study the current and expected situation of sustainable college Counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province; (2) to develop strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province; and (3) to evaluate the feasibility and adaptability of the strategies for enhancing the sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province. Rather than testing causal hypotheses, the study adopts a mixed-methods, convergent parallel design to generate robust descriptive, developmental, and evaluative evidence. Quantitative survey data provide systematic estimates of current and expected conditions, while qualitative interviews and expert evaluations enable in-depth interpretation and strategic refinement. This design permits triangulation and supports valid inferences regarding both practical feasibility and contextual relevance.

2. Method

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design to examine the current and expected situations of sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion, develop context-responsive strategies, and evaluate their feasibility and adaptability.

2.1 Research procedure (by phases)

Phase 1: Field survey of current and expected situations.

A questionnaire survey was conducted to measure counselors' perceptions of the current and expected situations of sustainable quality and promotion using a five-point rating scale (1 = the lowest level to 5 = the highest level).

Phase 2: Strategy drafting and validation.

Priority needs were identified using the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}) (Wongwanich & Viratchai, 2005), which was then used to classify SWOT factors and synthesise strategic issues. Strategies were formulated through the TOWS Matrix (Wehrich, 1982) into SO, ST, WO, and WT strategy types. Draft strategies were refined through a focus group with exemplary counselors and advisor review.

Phase 3: Feasibility and adaptability evaluation.

A panel of experts evaluated the final strategies using a five-point Likert scale, supported by descriptive analysis (M and SD).

2.2 Population, target groups, and sampling

For the survey phase, the population comprised college counselors in Shaanxi Province (98 universities; 6,605 counselors). A multi-stage sampling approach was applied: five universities were purposively selected to represent regional and institutional diversity, then 341 counselors were selected via stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation. The sample size decision followed Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

For strategy validation, 12 exemplary counselors from the five institutions were purposively selected based on experience and professional role. For feasibility and adaptability evaluation, five experts were purposively selected (e.g., >15 years' experience; senior titles; leadership roles).

2.3 Instruments and quality of instruments

Questionnaire (main instrument).

The questionnaire included: (a) respondent information, (b) professional competency and development (checklist format), (c) current and expected situations measured on a five-point rating scale, and (d) open-ended responses. The instrument was developed based on a review of relevant literature and research methodology guidance

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018).

Content validity: Five experts evaluated item relevance using the IOC approach (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977), with acceptance criteria aligned with Polit and Beck (2006). Reported IOC values ranged from 0.80 to 1.00.

Reliability: A pilot test with 30 counselors was conducted, and internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), yielding an overall reliability coefficient of 0.94.

Qualitative and evaluation tools.

Focus-group procedures and content-analysis protocols were used to refine strategies. A feasibility/adaptability questionnaire (two parts: respondent information and strategy ratings) was used for expert evaluation.

2.4 Data collection and analysis

Data collection (survey): Data collection was coordinated through formal institutional communication and multiple distribution channels (post, email, and WeChat), with follow-up to maximise returns.

Quantitative analysis: Survey data were analysed using frequency/percentage, M, SD, and PNI_{modified} to prioritise needs and support strategic diagnosis.

Qualitative analysis: Focus-group data and expert feedback were analysed using content analysis to achieve consensus and refine the final framework.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Participants were informed of the study purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, with the right to withdraw.

Summary.

Overall, the study combined a province-wide survey with systematic needs analysis (PNI_{modified}), strategic synthesis (SWOT and TOWS), and expert validation to produce and verify an actionable strategy package for sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion in Shaanxi Province.

3. Results

This section presents the findings derived from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the research objectives. Results are reported in sufficient detail to justify the conclusions, including findings that reveal limitations or gaps between current practice and expected conditions. Descriptive statistics are used to summarise survey data, while thematic analysis is applied to interview data. No individual scores or raw data are reported.

3.1 Recruitment

Participants were recruited from five representative universities in Shaanxi Province using a multi-stage sampling approach. In Phase 1, 341 full-time college Counselors completed the questionnaire survey. In parallel, 10 Counselors (two per institution) were purposively selected for in-depth interviews to triangulate survey findings and provide contextual explanations for quantitative patterns.

3.2 Statistics and Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed in SPSS (version 26.0) using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation). Priority needs were quantified using the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}), calculated as (Expected – Current)/Current for each dimension to identify areas with the largest development gaps. Qualitative interview transcripts were analysed using content analysis, and themes were compared with survey results to strengthen interpretive validity through convergence and complementarity.

3.3 Ancillary Analyses

Ancillary analyses comprised (i) PNI_{modified}-based ranking of dimensions and selected indicators to determine intervention priorities; and (ii) SWOT–TOWS synthesis, in which high-priority needs (internal weaknesses) were mapped against external opportunities and threats to generate actionable strategic directions. This analytic pathway supported the translation of empirical gaps into a coherent, implementation-oriented strategy framework.

3.4 Participant Flow

All distributed questionnaires were returned and deemed valid; therefore, no cases were excluded from the quantitative analysis. For the qualitative component, all 10 invited Counselors completed interviews and verified their transcripts, yielding complete datasets for integration.

3.5 Intervention or Manipulation Fidelity

Because the study employed a descriptive and developmental mixed-methods design rather than an experimental intervention, intervention fidelity was not applicable. Methodological rigour was supported through standardised administration of survey instruments, consistent interview protocols, transcript verification by participants, and systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative results prior to strategy formulation.

3.6 Baseline Data

Baseline findings (Phase 1) indicated a clear discrepancy between current and expected conditions across the seven dimensions of sustainable counselor quality and promotion. Overall, the current status was moderate (Current Mean = 3.18), whereas expectations were substantially higher (Expected Mean = 4.00), signalling system-level development needs. The largest priority gaps (highest $PNI_{modified}$) were observed in Psychological and Emotional Quality ($PNI_{modified}$ = 0.49; Rank 1), Professional Evaluation Dimensions (0.45; Rank 2), and Management and Planning Ability (0.44; Rank 3). Conversely, Ideological and Political Quality demonstrated the smallest gap (0.26; Rank 7), reflecting a comparatively stable foundation.

3.6.1 Statistics and Data Analysis

Baseline comparisons focused on the magnitude and ordering of development gaps by contrasting current and expected mean scores for each dimension and computing $PNI_{modified}$. In addition to dimension-level indices, item-level means were examined to identify specific institutional leverage points (e.g., well-being supports, evaluation mechanisms, workload management, and research/professional development resources).

3.6.2 Adverse Events

No adverse events were identified or reported during data collection. Participation was voluntary and conducted in accordance with standard ethical safeguards, including informed consent and confidentiality.

3.7 Summary of Results Across Dimensions

Integrated results across the three phases demonstrate a consistent needs-to-solutions trajectory: Phase 1 quantified the magnitude and structure of development gaps; Phase 2 translated these gaps into a structured strategy architecture; and Phase 3 confirmed that the resulting strategy set is judged implementable by senior experts.

Phase 1 (status diagnosis) revealed that Counselors reported moderate current performance across all seven dimensions. The overall current situation was moderate ($M = 3.18$), whereas the expected situation was high ($M = 4.00$). Current mean scores ranged from 2.96 to 3.56, while expected mean scores were consistently high, ranging from 4.29 to 4.50. The most salient gaps concerned counselor well-being and resilience (psychological and emotional quality), the lack of transparent professional evaluation and career progression mechanisms, and limited management capacity related to workload planning and digital support. The interview findings corroborated these patterns, with all interviewees reporting heavy workloads and high pressure, alongside frequent references to limited training, insufficient research support, and unclear career pathways, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Overall Current and Expected Situation of Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion

Sustainable college counselors' quality and promotion	Current Situation			Expected Situation		
	Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level
1. Ideological & Political Quality	3.56	0.83	High	4.50	0.55	Highest
2. Professional and theoretical knowledge	3.15	0.58	Moderate	4.42	0.58	High
3. Psychological and emotional quality	2.97	0.99	Moderate	4.44	0.57	High
4. Humanistic and cultural quality	3.22	0.91	Moderate	4.33	0.62	High
5. Communication and interpersonal skills	3.37	0.87	Moderate	4.40	0.59	High
6. Management and planning ability	3.06	0.95	Moderate	4.42	0.58	High
7. Professional evaluation dimensions	2.96	1.00	Moderate	4.29	0.63	High
Overall	3.18	0.22	Moderate	4.00	0.07	High

Note. 1.00–1.49 = Lowest, 1.50–2.49 = Low, 2.50–3.49 = Moderate, 3.50–4.49 = High, 4.50–5.00 = Highest.

Phase 2 developed evidence-based strategies to enhance the sustainable quality and promotion of college

Counselors in Shaanxi Province by integrating PNI_{modified} priority-need analysis, SWOT contextual assessment, and TOWS strategic synthesis. The overall priority-need level was moderate to relatively high (PNI_{modified} = 0.38), indicating substantive system-level gaps, with three dominant priorities: counselor well-being and resilience, transparent professional evaluation and career advancement, and strengthened managerial and planning capacity, particularly workload regulation and digital support. These results were operationalised into a finalised strategy framework comprising five main strategies, nine sub-strategies, and eighteen implementation projects, each linked to measurable key performance indicators to ensure feasibility, accountability, and continuous improvement. The strategy set focuses on value-based ideological development, well-being and workload optimization, evaluation/recognition and career systems, professional capability and research support, and multi-agency collaboration to enhance service quality, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Sustainable College Counselors' Quality and Promotion Strategies in Shaanxi Province

TOWS link	Main strategy (MS)	Sub-strategy (SS)	Key projects (implementation package)	Final KPIs/targets (quantitative)
SO1 /ST1	1. MS1 Ideological and value-based development	1. SS1 Strengthen value integration in counselor practice	Project 1. Values-integrated guidance toolkit and training module; Project 2. Annual thematic activities aligned with national/provincial policy	• ≥80% Counselors trained annually; • ≥1 toolkit approved and deployed; • Mean item score on value integration increases by ≥0.20 within 12 months
WO2	2. MS2 Counselor well-being and resilience support	2. SS2 Establish a systematic mental health support system for Counselors	Project 1. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) referral and counselling access; Project 2. Resilience and stress management programme	• EAP access pathway established (Yes/No); • ≥60% Counselors participate in resilience training/year; • Burnout/stress index decreases by ≥10% from baseline
WO3 /ST2		3. SS3 Optimise workload allocation and support mechanisms	Project 1. Workload mapping and role clarification; Project 2. Case-management and referral protocol	• Workload standard issued (Yes/No); • Counsellor–student ratio improved or caseload cap implemented; • ≥90% complex cases follow protocol
WO1	3. MS3 Evaluation, recognition, and career development	4. SS4 Standardise performance evaluation system	Project 1. Develop evaluation criteria and rubrics; Project 2. Pilot implementation and evaluator calibration	• Rubric approved (Yes/No); • ≥90% on-time evaluations; • Inter-rater reliability ≥0.70; • ≥80% units covered
WO1		5. SS5 Implement recognition and incentive mechanisms	Project 1. Annual recognition scheme; Project 2. Incentives linked to contribution and professional growth	• ≥1 recognition cycle/year; • # awardees documented; • ≥70% satisfaction with fairness of incentives; • Retention rate improves by ≥5% from baseline
WO1		6. SS6 Establish clear career pathways	Project 1. Career pathway and promotion criteria; Project 2. Mentoring and portfolio support	• Career pathway published (Yes/No); • ≥70% Counselors with updated professional portfolio; • # mentoring pairs formed
WO3	MS4 Professional capability and research support	7. SS7 Strengthen structured professional training	Project 1. Annual competency-based training plan; Project 2. Certification and national training participation	• ≥2 core training programmes/year; • ≥80% participation rate; • Competency assessment mean increases by ≥0.20
WT1 /ST1		8. SS8 Build research and dissemination support structure	Project 1. Research mentorship and writing clinic; Project 2. Seed grants and publication support	• ≥1 writing clinic/semester; • # funded projects; • # publications/conference outputs increase by ≥10% from baseline
SO2 /ST1	MS5 Collaboration and service quality	9. SS9 Strengthen multi-agency collaboration and	Project 1. MoUs with external agencies and referral network; Project 2. Inter-departmental coordination protocol for	• ≥3 active MoUs; • ≥4 joint case conferences/year; • Referral completion rate ≥85%;

enhancement	internal coordination mechanisms	special student groups	• Stakeholder satisfaction improves by ≥ 0.20
-------------	--	------------------------	---

Phase 3 (expert appraisal) indicated strong agreement on the framework's practicality, with overall feasibility rated at the highest level ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 0.21$) and adaptability also rated at the highest level ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.19$). The highest feasibility and adaptability ratings were concentrated on the counselor well-being and resilience strategy.

Table 3. Strategy Feasibility and Adaptability Evaluation

Strategy	Feasibility				Adaptability			
	Mean	SD	level	Rank	Mean	SD	level	Rank
MS1: Ideological and Value-based Development	4.58	0.28	Highest	4	4.62	0.20	Highest	4
MS2: Counselor Well-being and Resilience Support	4.72	0.18	Highest	1	4.70	0.17	Highest	1
MS3: Evaluation, Recognition, and Career Development	4.61	0.22	Highest	3	4.64	0.19	Highest	3
MS4: Professional Capability and Research Support	4.65	0.20	Highest	2	4.67	0.18	Highest	2
MS5: Collaboration and Service Quality Enhancement	4.55	0.24	Highest	5	4.58	0.21	Highest	5
Overall	4.63	0.21	Highest		4.65	0.19	Highest	

Note. 1.00–1.49 = Lowest, 1.50–2.49 = Low, 2.50–3.49 = Moderate, 3.50–4.49 = High, 4.50–5.00 = Highest.

Experts particularly recognized the priority of well-being support strategies, noting their foundational role in sustaining counselor effectiveness. Digital management and evaluation system standardization were also highlighted as critical for addressing structural constraints.

4. Discussion

Discussion of Phase 1 Findings

Phase 1 provides an evidence-based diagnosis of the gap between current practices and expected standards of sustainable college counselor quality in Shaanxi Province. While ideological and political quality appeared as a relative strength, overall current performance across the seven dimensions remained moderate, whereas expectations were consistently high. The most pronounced gaps concerned psychological and emotional quality, professional evaluation, and management and planning ability, indicating that sustainability constraints are primarily structural rather than individual. This pattern is consistent with burnout and job-demands research showing that excessive workload, chronic stress, and limited organisational resources undermine professional efficacy and service quality (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2009; WHO, 2019). In addition, weak professional evaluation aligns with evidence that unclear appraisal and promotion systems reduce motivation and career commitment in expanding student-affairs roles (OECD, 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Bland et al., 2005). The convergence of survey and interview findings strengthens credibility and provides a clear empirical basis for Phase 2 strategy development, consistent with established needs assessment principles (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Discussion of Phase 2 Findings

Phase 2 converted Phase 1 priorities into an actionable strategy framework by integrating PNI_{modified}, SWOT, and TOWS. The overall priority-need level (PNI_{modified} = 0.38) indicates material system-level gaps that require coordinated institutional intervention. The strategy focus includes counselor well-being, transparent evaluation and career advancement, and strengthened managerial and planning capacity, particularly workload regulation and digital support. This focus aligns with the literature on sustainable professional development, which

highlights well-being, fair evaluation, and organisational capacity as core enabling conditions (OECD, 2019; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The SWOT and TOWS process also enhanced contextual fit by aligning internal capacities with external opportunities and constraints, consistent with strategic planning approaches (Wehrich, 1982; Bryson, 2018; Mintzberg, 2009). The resulting package, comprising five main strategies, nine sub-strategies, and operational projects with KPIs, strengthens implementation clarity and supports monitoring and continuous improvement, including digital management and data-informed planning. These elements are essential requirements in contemporary higher education governance (Selwyn, 2016; OECD, 2021; OECD, 2020).

Discussion of Phase 3 Findings

Phase 3 confirmed the framework's practicality, with expert ratings indicating the highest levels of feasibility and adaptability, and the strongest support concentrated on the counselor well-being and resilience strategy. This finding is consistent with evidence that resilience-building, supervision, and organisational well-being supports reduce burnout risk and sustain professional functioning in helping professions (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Morse et al., 2012; WHO, 2019). Experts also highlighted the need to strengthen KPI specificity and standardise digital and evaluation systems, reinforcing research that digital infrastructure and data governance improve coordination, reduce administrative burden, and enhance accountability in student support services (Selwyn, 2016; Eynon & Malmberg, 2021; OECD, 2021). Overall, Phase 3 strengthens the framework's readiness for implementation by improving measurability, role assignment, and system alignment.

4.1 Interpretation of Key Findings

The findings indicate a clear mismatch between current practice and expected standards of sustainable counselor quality. While value-based foundations are relatively strong, systemic support mechanisms remain insufficient, particularly in well-being, evaluation, and management domains. Sustainable quality therefore depends on institutional reform rather than individual effort alone.

4.2 Comparison With Previous Studies

The results corroborate prior studies reporting heavy workload, emotional strain, and underdeveloped evaluation systems among college Counselors (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; OECD, 2020; Dong, 2017). This study extends existing literature by empirically linking these challenges to a structured, strategy-oriented development framework.

4.3 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the study supports a systems-based conceptualisation of counselor quality as a dynamic interaction between individual competence and institutional conditions. Practically, it offers a validated strategy package that institutions can adopt to enhance well-being, evaluation transparency, digital management, and collaborative service delivery.

4.4 Limitations and Generalisability

The study relies on self-reported data and focuses on one province, which may limit generalisability. Nevertheless, the mixed-methods design and convergence of findings enhance credibility and suggest transferability to similar higher education contexts.

4.5 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that sustainable improvement in college counselor quality requires coordinated institutional strategies addressing well-being, evaluation systems, managerial capacity, and digital infrastructure. The validated framework provides a practical roadmap for strengthening counselor effectiveness and supporting sustainable higher education development.

Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the participating Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand, college Counselors, and experts in Shaanxi Province for their valuable contributions to this study.

References

- CPC Central Committee, & State Council of the People's Republic of China. (2017). Opinions on strengthening and improving ideological and political work in colleges and universities under the new situation. UNESCO
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2014). Professional Ability Standards for College Counselors (Provisional). en.moe.gov.cn

- UNESCO. (2017). Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning objectives. UNESCO Documentation
- Xinhua. (2016). Xi Jinping remarks at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities (news report).
- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2023). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (16th ed.). Kogan Page.
- Bland, C. J., Center, B. A., Finstad, D. A., Risbey, K. R., & Staples, J. (2005). A theoretical, practical, predictive model of faculty and department research productivity. *Academic Medicine*, 80(3), 225–237.
- Bryson, J. M. (2018). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations* (5th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications. *World Psychiatry*, 15(2), 103–111.
- OECD. (2019). *OECD skills outlook 2019: Thriving in a digital world*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2020). *Education policy outlook 2020*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2021). *Digital education outlook 2021*. OECD Publishing.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *Career Development International*, 14(3), 204–220.
- Selwyn, N. (2016). *Education and technology: Key issues and debates* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury.
- Wehrich, H. (1982). The TOWS matrix—A tool for situational analysis. *Long Range Planning*, 15(2), 54–66.
- Witkin, B. R., & Altschuld, J. W. (1995). *Planning and conducting needs assessments*. SAGE.
- WHO. (2019). Burn-out an occupational phenomenon: International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). World Health Organization.
- Davis, J., & Summers, M. (2021). Education for sustainable development and systems thinking. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13042134>
- Dong, J. (2017). Challenges to the professional quality of college Counselors in the new media era. *Journal of Ideological Education*, 33(5), 67–73.
- Feng, G. (2012). Professional competence and management ability of college Counselors. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 33(2), 45–50.
- Gu, X. (2023). Promoting high-quality development of college counsellor teams. *Journal of Ideological Education*, 45(6), 22–28.
- Guo, S. (2014). Professional identity and sustainable development of college Counselors. *Education and Management Review*, 31(5), 47–53.
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching*, 8(3), 381–391.
- Gürel, E., & Tat, M. (2017). SWOT analysis: A theoretical review. *Journal of International Social Research*, 10(51), 994–1006.
- Han, Y. (2008). Psychological quality and occupational stress of college Counselors. *Chinese Journal of Mental Health Education*, 24(6), 45–48.
- Helms, M. M., & Nixon, J. (2010). Exploring SWOT analysis. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 3(3), 215–251.
- Henderson, D. (2010). Counselling competencies in educational settings. *Educational Psychology Review*, 22(3), 341–357.
- Hua, X. (2014). A survey of college counsellor quality in Anhui Province. *Education and Management Review*, 26(2), 102–108.
- Kong, X. (2016). Ideological and political education functions of college Counselors. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 32(2), 72–76.

- McCarthy, P. (2016). Evaluation and professional development in education. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(1), 56–72.
- OECD. (2019). *Education at a glance 2019*. OECD Publishing.
- Thornton, S. (2006). Humanistic education and cultural competence. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 40(2), 189–203.
- Trey, L. (2004). Planning and coordination skills in student affairs. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 41(3), 411–425.
- Wals, A. E. J. (2010). Mirroring, gestaltswitching and transformative social learning. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 11(4), 380–390.
- Yang, X. (2014). Role orientation of college Counselors in China. *China Higher Education Research*, 8, 56–61.
- Zhang, L. (2006). Interpersonal communication skills of university Counselors. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 22(3), 63–68.
- Zhang, Y. (2013). Career development mechanisms for college Counselors. *Higher Education Development Research*, 29(4), 41–46.
- Zhao, H. (2024). Sustainable promotion strategies for college Counselors. *Journal of Educational Management*, 40(1), 18–27.

Researcher Profile

Name: Sun Li

Gender: Female

Date of birth: October 25, 1987

Employer: Shaanxi Fashion Engineering University

Mailing address: Tongyi Road, Xixian New Area District, Xi'an City,
Shaanxi Province.

Position: Director of the Teaching and Research Office of the Basic
Department of Shaanxi Institute of Fashion Engineering

Work experience:
Teacher of the Basic Department of Shaanxi Institute
of Fashion Engineering

Education background:

- **September 2008 – July 2012**
Haojing College of Shaanxi University of Science and
Technology
Major: Human Resources Management Major
Degree: Bachelor's Degree
- **September 2016 – July 2019**
Xi'an Polytechnic University
Major: Project Management Major
Degree: Master's Degree
- **January 2023 – January 2026**
Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University
Major: Educational Management
Degree: Doctoral Candidate