PSYCHOLOGY-BASED INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Currently, mental health education is based on classroom teaching in most colleges of China. The classroom-based mode cannot satisfy the psychological demand of college students. This paper aims to develop innovative methods for mental health education of college students. Based on the relevant theories of psychology, a questionnaire survey was designed and conducted in Wuhan University. Then, the existing problems of mental health education were identified, and several innovative methods were proposed to solve these problems. The results show that the psychological problems of college students arise from interpersonal relationships, school work, employment, and love; however, the textbook of mental health education mainly focuses on emotional control, self-awareness, love, and psychological counseling of college students; there is an obvious gap between the education mode and the actual psychological problems of college students; the college students are relatively satisfied after receiving the innovative methods for mental health education, indicating that our methods can effectively solve their psychological problems. The research findings provide a good reference for improving the mental health of college students.

Key words: Psychology, College Students, Mental Health Education, Innovation.

INTRODUCTION

With the continuous development of social economy and the increasingly fierce competition, the requirements for the college students with comprehensive ability have been becoming higher. Such requirements are not only reflected in personal qualities, but also in mental health (Hinkelman & Luzzo, 2007). The improvement of college students’ comprehensive quality is inseparable from the mental health. However, the overall mental health of college students in China is not optimistic, and it has become a focus of attention for families, schools and the whole society (Flood, McDevitt-Murphy, Weathers et al., 2009). At present, the colleges and universities mostly use the theory-based classroom teaching modes such as the instilled education method for the college students' mental health education. However, under the background of modern society, these education methods have been unable to adapt to modern times. Therefore, it’s urgently required to innovate the mental health education of college students, for continuously improving the education level of schools and promoting the comprehensive quality of college students (Knowlden, Hackman, & Sharma, 2016).

At present, many experts and scholars at home and abroad have done a lot of research on the psychological health education of college students, and achieved abundant results. Some scholars have studied the connotation of mental health education (Knowlden, Sharma, Kanekar et al., 2013); some have explored how to improve the quality of mental health education in colleges and universities (Del Pilar, 2009); other scholars conducted in-depth research on the causes of mental health problems among college students.
students (Labrie, Kenney, & Lac, 2010). From the existing literatures, the current status of mental health education for college students has been mostly studied, but lack of theoretical research and strong data support. Therefore, it’s especially necessary to study the innovation of college students’ mental health education from the perspective of psychology.

Based on psychology, this paper attempts to promote the mental health level of college students. For this, it selects some students from Wuhan University as the survey respondents, and analyses the current status of the psychological health education. Then, it proposes innovative methods of mental health education for college students. This study provides important theoretical guidance and practical reference for the improvement and innovation of college mental health education.

**BASIC THEORY**

**Basic theories of psychology**

Psychology is the science of behaviour and mind. It mainly studies the human psychological phenomena and mental states. In terms of both theoretical analysis and practical application, psychology can be divided into two different research areas: basic psychology and applied psychology (Kemp, 2002). The study of psychology involves many aspects related to people’s psychology, emotions, social relationships, behaviours, etc., which has a close relationship with an individual’s family, education, and society. The research content of psychology includes not only the entire psychological process of individuals, but also personality characteristics, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Main contents of psychological research**

Mental health education for college students

Mental health education is mainly a series of educational activities around mental health problems, with the main purpose of solving mental health problems and improving mental quality. The mental health education of college students starts with the stage characteristics of college students’ psychological development and strengthen the learning of mental health, in order to effectively solve various mental health problems of college students, and promote the formation of healthy personality and good psychological morality. Thus, it will enhance their ability to adapt to various environments, and comprehensively improve students’ comprehensive quality and the ability to cope with external pressures (Hope, 2016).

**ANALYSIS FOR SURVEY ON MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**Research methods and research objects**

In order to better understand the current mental health education of college students, this paper selects the students of Wuhan University students as the research objects, and uses the questionnaires survey. A total of 700 questionnaires were distributed and 680 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective rate of 97.14%. Table 1 lists the basic information of the research objects.

**Table 1. Basic information of the subject**

| Classification     | Quantity | Proportion/% |
|--------------------|----------|--------------|
| Gender             |          |              |
| Male               | 362      | 53.24%       |
| Female             | 318      | 46.76%       |
| Freshman           | 132      | 19.41%       |
| Sophomore          | 188      | 27.65%       |
| Junior             | 164      | 24.12%       |
| Senior             | 122      | 17.94%       |
| Graduate student   | 74       | 10.88%       |
| Biogenic land      |          |              |
| Urban              | 383      | 56.32%       |
| Rural              | 297      | 43.68%       |
| Major              |          |              |
| Science and engineering | 278    | 40.88%       |
| Liberal arts       | 402      | 59.12%       |

From Table 1, it can be seen that among the respondents, the proportion of male students was slightly higher than that of females, that of sophomores and juniors was higher than that of freshmen, seniors and graduate students, that of students from urban areas was higher than that...
of students from rural areas, and that of liberal arts students was higher than that of science and engineering.

3.2 Analysis of survey results
(1) Psychological problems of college students
The investigation and analysis were conducted on the main aspects of the psychological problems that the respondents may have. The specific results are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The main aspects of College Students' psychological confusion

As shown in Figure 2, the college students were prone to psychological problems mainly in the aspect of interpersonal relationships, school work, employment, and love, mainly because the interaction between college students is an important part of college students’ life, and the pressure faced by college students mainly comes from school work and employment, which are the main factors affecting their mental health (Sharp, Hargrove, Johnson et al., 2006). Therefore, these aspects should be the focus of attention in college students’ mental health education.

(2) Design of teaching content for mental health education
All the textbooks used in the mental health education courses of Wuhan University were selected, and then the total number of pages was added up, to obtain a total of 8,671 pages. The details involved are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Analysis results of textbook content

| Content                        | Number of page | Proportion |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Emotional control              | 1675           | 19.3%      |
| Self cognition                 | 1248           | 14.4%      |
| Love and sex                   | 987            | 11.4%      |
| Interpersonal relationship     | 728            | 8.4%       |
| Career                         | 526            | 6.1%       |
| Psychological consultation and psychotherapy | 497 | 5.7% |
| Mental health education        | 406            | 4.7%       |
| Environmental adaptation and frustration response | 321 | 3.7% |
| Learning psychology            | 319            | 3.6%       |
| Career                         | 526            | 6.1%       |

(3) Analysis for college students’ willingness to participate in mental health education
A survey was conducted on the willingness of college students to participate in relevant courses or activities of mental health education. The specific results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Willingness of college students to participate in relevant courses or activities of mental health education

It can be seen from Figure 3 that most students were still willing to participate in courses or activities related to mental health education, and only 12% were unwilling to participate. This shows that the mental health education is relatively popular among students.
(4) Analysis for the role of college mental health education
A survey was conducted on the effects of mental health education courses offered on college students, as shown in Figure 4.
It can be seen from Figure 4 that after the mental health education for college students, most believed that they can effectively solve some of their psychological problems, and some thought that their personal happiness could be improved to a certain extent. This indicates that college students hold a satisfactory attitude towards the overall situation of college mental health education.

Figure 4. An analysis of the function of mental health education for college students

(5) Problems in mental health education for college students
Finally, a survey was conducted on the main problems of current mental health education for college students. The specific results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. An analysis of the problems in mental health education of college students

| Content                                      | Number | Proportion |
|----------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Theoretical content, lack of interest        | 628    | 92.3%      |
| Too many content types and too much capacity | 562    | 82.6%      |
| Same content                                 | 309    | 45.5%      |
| Content does not meet the actual needs of students | 299    | 43.9%      |
| Ignore students' interests and needs         | 271    | 39.8%      |
| Too much consideration of the development of disciplines | 241    | 35.4%      |
| The content fails to better reflect the curriculum objectives | 220    | 32.4%      |
| Others                                       | 106    | 15.6%      |

From the data in Table 3, it can be seen that college students believe that the current content of college mental health education is overly focused on theoretical aspects, and the content types are mostly similar, which cannot meet the actual needs of students to a certain extent and not truly reflect some common problems existing in college students (Hilgard, 1993). Although students are relatively satisfied with the school's mental health education, there is still a large degree of improvement in mental health education for colleges and universities.

COLLEGE STUDENTS’ MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION INNOVATION
(1) Attaching more importance to mental health education
In order to improve the mental health education of college students, an important prerequisite is that the colleges and universities should continuously attach more importance to mental health education. Only by continuously increasing the degree of emphasis can the mental health education can be improved and innovated in a targeted manner (Boothby, 1992). This requires a full and correct understanding of mental health education. Thus, the school leaders, teachers, and students themselves, should continue to increase the awareness of mental health education.

(2) Strengthening the combination of education theory and practice
At present, mental health education in colleges and universities places over-emphasis on the theoretical teaching, but ignoring the practical application of knowledge; also, there is a certain deviation between the teaching content and the actual needs of students. Therefore, schools should fully understand the actual psychological needs of college students, and provide targeted education and guidance according to their actual needs (Staats, 1993). Meanwhile, mental health education can’t just rest on the knowledge in books, but needs to be combined with practice for effectively solving the real problems of college students.

(3) Enriching the content and methods of mental health education
It is necessary to continuously update and enrich the content of mental health education according to the psychological needs of students, so that the students can take the initiative to learn the related knowledge of mental health education. In addition, with the
continuous advancement of modern teaching technology, schools can apply multimedia and network technologies to actual teaching, enriching teaching methods, or use the "classroom teaching + extracurricular practice" teaching mode to improve the quality of teaching (Green, 2009).

(4) Increasing the investment in faculty team. It requires a large number of professional teachers to improve the quality and level of psychological health education in colleges and universities effectively. Therefore, in terms of the teaching staff, schools should increase the investment of resources and introduce a large number of teachers with high teaching levels and rich teaching experience. Besides, while improving the treatment of teachers, it is also necessary to increase investment in teachers' scientific research funds, accelerate the transformation of scientific research results, and fully stimulate the entrepreneurship spirit of teachers. This can effectively improve the quality of mental health education and the level of teaching (Humphreys & Revelle, 1984).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the relevant theories of psychology, this paper studies innovative methods of mental health education for college students by taking the students from Wuhan University as the research objects. The specific conclusions are as follows:

(1) College students are prone to psychological problems mainly in interpersonal relationships, school work, employment, love, etc., while the textbooks of mental health education in colleges and universities mainly focus on emotional control, self-awareness, love, and psychological counselling etc. This indicates that there exist differences between college mental health education and the actual problems of college students.

(2) After receiving mental health education, most students believed that they can effectively solve some of their psychological problems, and some thought that their happiness can be improved to a certain extent, indicating that college students are relatively satisfied with the current mental health education.

(3) The content of mental health education for college students excessively focuses on the teaching of theory, but ignoring the practical application, so that it cannot fully reflect the current needs and problems of college students. There is still much room for improvement in mental health education for college students.

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