The problems and causes of college students' mental health education based on new media environment

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Abstract: In the new media environment, the widespread use of intelligent smartphones, computers, and other modern technological products poses challenges to psychological health education for college students. Psychological health is the foundation for the healthy growth and successful development of college students. Therefore, timely and accurate understanding of the psychological development of college students is of great significance for effectively carrying out psychological health work and improving the psychological health level of college students. This article delves into the development of new media and its prevalence among college students, explores the various challenges that the new media environment poses to the psychological health education of college students, and proposes measures to address psychological health issues among college students to promote their psychological well-being.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, various new media industries are rapidly developing, with the usage rate of smartphones in university campuses reaching almost one hundred percent. In addition to being a basic communication tool, smartphones have become a form of entertainment for college students. Within smartphones, there are numerous social networking applications such as We Chat and QQ, which broaden and complicate the social interactions among college students. The current trend of smart phones has led many college students to become addicted to online games, impacting their mental health and posing a challenge to mental health education for college students. Therefore, mental health education for college students is an urgent social issue. Providing timely assistance to college students to overcome psychological barriers is an effective way to strengthen mental health education for college students and establish new concepts in mental health education, which is an important task for universities to fully implement the "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Further Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Education for College Students".

2. Current situation and problems

In the new media environment, the widespread use of intelligent smartphones, computers, and other modern technological products has led college students to take a negative direction in the development of network technology. This phenomenon is already very common in major universities nationwide, posing a significant challenge to the development of psychological health education for college students.

2.1 Mental awareness and emotional awareness are weak

The reality is that, whether in daily learning or life, college students use online media very frequently. Apart from necessary social communication, in the virtual world of the internet, students seem to be in frequent contact with each other, but separated by a virtual network barrier. This allows many college students to chat enthusiastically in the virtual world, but often struggle to find words in face-to-face real life interactions. This kind of online socializing gradually weakens college students' emotional awareness, leading them to become indifferent in real life. Such a phenomenon makes it difficult for college students to engage in normal emotional communication in their future social lives.

2.2 Low psychological independence

College students are currently in a crucial period transitioning from campus life to social life. The widespread use of advanced network technology has led to a significant decline in their critical thinking and practical skills. For instance, when faced with a problem, students tend to immediately turn to the internet for solutions instead of actively seeking information in libraries or other places. They rarely engage in divergent thinking or hands-on problem-solving. Even when it comes to writing papers or answering textbook questions, they often simply copy from the internet without much thought. This hampers the development of their innovative thinking and practical skills, leading to a severe dependency on technology. Without access to media technology, they feel lost, causing a loss of independence in their daily learning and life.

2.3 The value orientation is improperly guided

With the rapid development of modern internet media technology, various unregulated websites, gaming applications, and social software have become mixed, leading students to blindly use various unhealthy websites, games, and social platforms, gradually altering their values. In recent years, various online loans have trapped many college students in high-interest debts. For example, a student from a university in Hubei borrowed 30,000 yuan online to buy a new iPhone 6, but the high repayment interest forced him to borrow from multiple platforms, resulting in debts exceeding 700,000 yuan. Such cases reflect the lack of effective supervision in the development of various media software, revealing deeper issues of rapidly evolving media devices that trigger comparison or inferiority complexes among college students, leading to changes in their values. Apart from these issues, various online live streaming, social networking, and online gaming platforms have led college students to waste more time on self-enrichment, indulging in various forms of online "spiritual consumption." Intense online gaming has made students emotionally unstable, subtly restricting and altering their psychological growth, significantly impacting their values.

3. The inadequacy of mental health education

Currently, most university mental health educators have made relevant changes, but the situation is not optimistic as many issues remain unresolved. For example, when students access online information resources, they may lack a sense of identity or experience decision-making anxiety[1]. While diverse information can help students to a certain extent in forming a good cognitive perspective, it can also lead to psychological imbalance, such as getting addicted to the online world, neglecting interpersonal relationships, gradually becoming more isolated, thereby significantly impacting students' psychological well-being and hindering their future learning and development. Additionally, some educators fail to emphasize the advantages of new media technologies, resulting in a lack of improvement in university mental health education. Over time, students' physical and mental well-being are likely to deviate from the right path.

3.1 Mental health teachers in colleges and universities lack certain teaching ability

We need to understand that the new media environment is relatively complex, which in turn leads to changes in students' psychology. This signifies that reforms in mental health education must be made to benefit students' future development. In most of China's universities, many teachers fail to recognize the role and value of new media, resulting in their inability to effectively integrate their accumulated information literacy into teaching and support their teaching tasks. One of the reasons for this issue is the lack of regular professional training for teachers, leading to limited understanding of new media technology and the inability to keep up with the times, ultimately resulting in teaching capabilities falling short of practical teaching needs.

3.2 Students lack the ability of dialectical thinking

In the context of new media, the ability of dialectical thinking is one of the essential skills that university students must possess. This skill helps students to correctly distinguish various media information. However, some university mental health teachers do not focus on cultivating students' dialectical thinking abilities. They habitually teach according to the content of textbooks in a rote manner, without understanding the actual needs of students and the requirements posed by the current new media environment for mental health education in universities. Furthermore, the teaching methods adopted by teachers are often didactic, with teachers delivering colorful lectures on the podium while students in the audience feel drowsy. This approach not only fails to enhance students' initiative and enthusiasm but also hampers their dialectical thinking abilities, leading to their inability to correctly discern valuable and effective information.

3.3 Lack of effective communication with parents

In the new media environment, improving students' mental health education cannot rely solely on the efforts of teachers. It also requires the support and assistance of parents to create a comfortable and harmonious learning environment for students, thereby reducing the negative impact of the media on students. However, according to relevant survey results, there is a lack of cohesion between parents and teachers, with a weak sense of cooperation. Most teachers do not actively communicate with parents or students, nor do they inform parents about students' performance at school. As a result, parents do not know how to cooperate with teachers, leading to a failure to achieve the goal of home-school collaboration[2].

3.4 New media technology is less involved

Some mental health educators in universities have not yet delved into teaching models based on new media technologies. In this context, it is natural that the scientific and timely aspects of mental health education in universities cannot be effectively enhanced, which may also pose certain obstacles to mental health education in universities[3]. Therefore, teachers must further focus on and research new media technologies on top of their existing teaching foundation, understand their important value and role in mental health education, master their operation methods, optimize teaching models, and enable students to actively participate in teaching activities, thereby enhancing teaching standards and students' professional capabilities.

4. Countermeasures

College students are important talents in the construction of our society, and it is crucial to pay close attention to the various psychological issues that arise among college students in the new media environment.

4.1 Improve students' mental health education concept and strengthen education practice

College students from different regions typically have diverse backgrounds, and the cultural differences they bring often result in significant variations among the students themselves. With the belief that entering university equals liberation, many students lack motivation for self-improvement during their university life. In recent years, issues concerning the mental health development of college students have gained societal attention. Notable incidents such as the 2004 Yunnan University Ma Jiajue murder case and the 2018 Wuhan University graduate student Tao Chongming suicide have highlighted the ongoing challenges in the psychological well-being of college students. These incidents reflect a growing emphasis on academic pressures, making it harder for students with lower educational backgrounds to adapt to societal expectations, thus leading to psychological issues. The increasing materialization of interpersonal relationships has also contributed to the isolation of economically disadvantaged students and the distorted character development of those from unstable family backgrounds. Extreme psychological behaviors among college students are not solely attributed to one factor but rather a combination of factors including academic competition, complex social relationships, and employment pressures. It is imperative for educational institutions to prioritize mental health education as a foundational aspect of student enrollment. Emphasis should be placed on fostering open communication with students in daily educational practices to promptly identify and guide students facing psychological challenges. Additionally, schools should actively promote various club activities to encourage students to engage in real-world interactions and diversify their experiences. Encouraging students to participate in work-study programs can provide opportunities for self-realization and prevent them from falling into misguided self-perceptions. Integrating psychological education into practical experiences is crucial for its effectiveness.

4.2 Using the development of new media to guide students' psychological understanding

In recent years, the crime rate and suicide rate among university students have gradually increased. The development of modern science and technology has not only helped students adapt to social changes but has also brought about more psychological issues among them. Instances of physical fights, homicides, and suicides among university students have been on the rise. Many students face psychological problems such as depression, social anxiety, intense feelings of

loneliness, inferiority, and jealousy. Unlike physical illnesses, psychological disorders affect individuals' worldview and emotional development on a mental level. Psychologist Alport from the United States has outlined seven key points for mental health development, emphasizing the importance of healthy relationships and emotional security. Many students struggle with the proper use of new media, leading to changes in their personalities. Excessive engagement in online social interactions can result in social anxiety in real life, while addiction to online games can make students irritable and aggressive. Therefore, it is essential to guide students in integrating modern science and technology correctly. Schools can organize competitions related to internet technology or social events to help students develop healthy online habits. For students addicted to live streaming and various social platforms, schools can hold regular social events with discussion sessions. By addressing issues and encouraging student interaction, universities can enhance students' critical thinking and creativity. To assist students addicted to gaming, schools can arrange activities related to game character design, motivating students to participate actively. This approach helps students break away from meaningless social interactions and engage in valuable discussions using network technology as a medium, promoting mental health development and emotional awareness among students.

4.3 Strengthen the supervision of various social and improve the online media environment

Schools not only actively guide students in handling various online media devices correctly but also provide them with proper psychological counseling. Schools should strengthen supervision over students' use of various online devices, and call on all sectors of society to prohibit the deception of students through various online means. Additionally, schools should offer psychological health education courses or lectures, explain various real-life scenarios, help students establish the right values, affirm themselves, avoid blind self-deprecation and comparison, and cultivate a healthy awareness of online usage, consciously preventing online fraud and the use of various harmful online information.

4.4 Cultivate students' self-adjustment ability

Firstly, it is important to guide students to cultivate a scientific lifestyle, which includes living in a disciplined manner, using their brains scientifically, and balancing work and rest. Having good physical fitness is a basic requirement for possessing a healthy psychological quality. Secondly, it is essential to teach students methods and techniques for self-adjustment. College students mainly face psychological distress related to issues such as studying, living, socializing, career choices, and relationships. These issues may affect students for a day, several days, a stage, or a period. By timely and correctly adjusting and relieving these issues, psychological barriers can be avoided. Therefore, when facing setbacks and stress in daily life and studies, college students should maintain an optimistic and positive attitude. By confiding in friends, listening to soothing music to regulate emotions, engaging in moderate exercise to relieve mental and physical stress, adjusting problem-solving skills, and other methods, psychological distress can be resolved in a timely manner, ensuring mental and physical well-being anytime and anywhere in life.

4.5 Adhere to humanistic care and improve teachers' mental health education level

The President of the University of Nottingham, Yang Fukjia, stated: "Schools and teachers should firstly teach students how to be a good person, secondly teach them how to think, and finally teach specific professional knowledge."[4] Emphasizing a student-centered approach means treating students as free and autonomous individuals to achieve comprehensive development in their

thoughts, morals, knowledge structure, physical and mental qualities, and cultural cultivation. All school activities must always prioritize students, focusing on educating individuals, creating a positive, united, friendly, safe, harmonious, and healthy living and psychological environment, and fully meeting the students' needs for quality education. Leaders should lead by example, establish a good school ethos, teaching style, and learning atmosphere, creating a supportive psychological environment for staff to pursue success, excellence, and self-realization. It is essential for all teaching staff to treat students with love, as teacher love is the core of teacher ethics. When students feel this kind of emotion from their teachers, they will respect and trust their guidance, enabling students to confide in their teachers, ignite the torch of their hearts under their guidance, illuminate their life journey, and drive contemporary university students towards healthy growth[5].

5. Conclusion

Enhancing mental health education is not only a necessity for the ideological and political work of schools, but also a requirement for quality education, and most importantly, a necessity of our era. As reserves for social development, college students must possess a healthy and positive psychological quality in order to thrive in future social life, develop correct values, and contribute significantly to societal progress. Psychological education for college students is a long-term commitment for all universities. Therefore, schools should not solely pursue short-term effects but persist in their efforts. Addressing students' complex psychological issues requires continuous review of experiences in mental health education, integrating psychological counseling with social practices to promote students' comprehensive development.

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