

Research on the Pathways for Cultivating Positive Psychological Qualities among College Students in the New Era

Zhenlei Zhang, Guanghua Tian

Central University of Finance and Economics, Beijing 100081, China

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Abstract: In the new era, the goal of higher education has shifted from knowledge imparting to all-round development, and the focus of mental health education has also shifted from problem correction to quality cultivation. The cultivation of positive psychological qualities among college students is an important part of implementing the fundamental task of moral education and promoting the all-round development of students. Based on the theory of positive psychology, this study systematically analyzes and studies the current situation and dilemma of positive psychological qualities among college students, and proposes constructing the cultivation path of positive psychological qualities among college students in the new era from the four dimensions of curriculum teaching, practical experience, cultural infiltration, and support guarantee. The concept of positive psychology is integrated into the whole process of talent training, forming a cultivation pattern of classroom and extracurricular complementarity, online and offline integration, school-family-social coordination, and improving the pertinence and effectiveness of positive psychological qualities among college students' cultivation.

Keywords: College students; Positive psychological qualities; Cultivation pathways

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1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the economy and society and the deepening of the reform of higher education, contemporary college students are facing multiple challenges such as academic competition, interpersonal adaptation, and employment pressure. The mental health of college students has attracted more and more attention from all walks of life. The traditional mental health education model focuses more on problem correction and crisis intervention, but there are deficiencies in stimulating students' inner potential and cultivating positive psychological qualities. As a new branch of psychology, positive psychology advocates paying attention to positive emotions, meaning construction, and the well-being of individuals, and provides a new theoretical perspective and practical path for the transformation of mental health education in colleges

and universities from “correcting problems” to “stimulating potential.” It is of great theoretical value and practical significance to systematically study the cultivation path of positive psychological qualities among college students for improving the quality of college education and promoting the all-round development of college students.

2. The connotation and theoretical foundation of positive psychological qualities

Positive psychology originated in the 1990s and was promoted by American psychologists Martin Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi. In 2000, the two published “Introduction to Positive Psychology” in the journal “American Psychologist,” marking the formal recognition of the subject by the academic community^[1]. As the core concept of positive psychology, positive psychological quality refers to the relatively stable positive psychological traits formed by individuals through acquired cultivation, which can help individuals adapt to the environment, stimulate potential, realize self-worth, and obtain subjective well-being. Different from the traditional concept of mental health focusing on disease correction and defect repair, positive psychological quality pays more attention to the development of individual advantages and potential stimulation, emphasizing the active cultivation of positive emotions, positive cognition, and good character.

At the theoretical basis level, Seligman’s PERMA happiness model provides a core framework for the dimensional division of positive psychological quality. The model holds that individual happiness is composed of five interrelated core elements: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, each of which corresponds to a positive psychological quality that can be cultivated^[2]. In addition, the VIA character advantage and virtue classification system jointly developed by Seligman and Peterson divides the positive character generally recognized by human beings into six core virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, benevolence, justice, moderation, and transcendence, and has 24 measurable character advantages, which provides a standardized tool reference for the evaluation and cultivation of positive psychological quality^[3].

College students are in the critical period of self-identity establishment and personality perfection in early adulthood. Their positive psychological qualities are mainly reflected in learning engagement, interpersonal adaptation, emotional regulation, self-identity, goal planning, and other aspects, which are embodied in curiosity and exploration of new knowledge, resilience and optimism in the face of setbacks, empathy and tolerance in interpersonal communication, and clear cognition of their own advantages and clear planning for future development. The university stage is a period of strong plasticity of positive psychological qualities, and it is also a golden window period for systematic cultivation. Carrying out positive psychological quality cultivation at this stage can not only help college students effectively cope with multiple pressures such as academic, interpersonal, and employment, reduce the occurrence of psychological problems, but also lay a solid psychological foundation for their long-term development, help them give full play to their potential in their future work and life, and realize the unity of life value and social value.

3. The current status and cultivation challenges of positive psychological qualities among college students

The research shows that the current positive psychological qualities among college students present the characteristics of ‘overall medium, uneven structure, and significant individual differences,’ which do not

reach the ideal state. In terms of specific dimensions, college students score relatively high in interpersonal and justice dimensions, while in cognition (such as creativity, curiosity), moderation (such as self-control, prudence), and transcendence (such as hope and belief). The dimensions of performance are relatively general, and there is an uneven development phenomenon. Demographic variables have a significant impact on the positive psychological quality of college students. Major, grade, family economic status, academic performance, student cadre experience, and attitude towards sports activities are the key factors affecting their development level. For example, students with better family economic conditions may have lower scores in the dimensions of moderation and fairness and actively participate in sports activities. As student cadres, their psychological quality is more positive ^[4]. At present, there is still a certain proportion of psychological distress in college students, such as self-cognition ambiguity (inferiority or conceit), weak anti-frustration ability, more negative emotions in daily life, and indifference and avoidance tendency in interpersonal communication. These negative psychological states need to be dredged up and transformed through the cultivation of positive psychological qualities ^[5].

At present, the cultivation of positive psychological qualities among college students still faces many difficulties. First of all, there is a cognitive bias at the conceptual level, and there is insufficient understanding of the value orientation of positive psychological quality cultivation. Most colleges and universities still equate mental health education with problem handling and crisis intervention. In the top-level design, there is a lack of overall planning for the systematic cultivation of positive psychological quality, which makes it difficult for the concept of positive psychology to be deeply integrated into the whole process of educating people. Secondly, there is a lack of effective carrier support at the practical level, and it is difficult to transform the cultivation work. The formation of positive psychological quality depends on continuous practice and internalization in real situations. However, at present, colleges and universities generally pay insufficient attention to practical education, with limited investment and a lack of stable practice platforms and activity carriers, which makes the cultivation of positive psychological quality mostly stay at the theoretical level, and students lack the opportunity to transform cognition into behavioral habits. The third is the lack of development of implicit education resources at the environmental level, and the function of cultural infiltration is not smooth. The cultivation of positive psychological quality is inseparable from the subtle influence of a good environment. However, at present, colleges and universities pay more attention to the construction of explicit courses, and the excavation and integration of hidden educational resources such as campus culture and cyberspace are not enough, failing to form a cultural ecology that nourishes positive psychological quality in an all-round way. The fourth is the lack of systematic institutional arrangements at the security level, and it is difficult to form a joint education force. The cultivation of positive psychological quality is a systematic project that requires multi-sectoral coordination and stable resource input. However, most colleges and universities lack a perfect system design and organizational guarantee, and the work promotion is fragmented. The team construction cannot keep up with the actual needs, professional ability needs to be improved, the cross-departmental coordination mechanism is not perfect, the pattern of home-school-community collaborative education has not yet been formed, the resources are scattered, and the integration is insufficient, which restricts the overall effectiveness of the cultivation work.

4. Construction of pathways for the cultivation of positive psychological qualities among college students

In view of the practical difficulties in the cultivation of positive psychological qualities among college students, combined with the requirements of the goal of educating people in the new era, an all-round and multi-level cultivation system can be constructed from the four dimensions of curriculum teaching, practical experience, cultural infiltration, and support and guarantee, so as to effectively improve the effectiveness of educating people.

4.1. Course teaching path: From knowledge transfer to quality cultivation

Classroom teaching is the main channel for the cultivation of positive psychological quality, and its functional orientation needs to be shifted from single knowledge transfer to comprehensive quality cultivation. On the one hand, it is necessary to optimize the content structure of the mental health education curriculum, systematically introduce the core themes of positive psychology, such as character advantage recognition, positive emotion cultivation, sense of meaning construction, and interpersonal relationship optimization, and adopt participatory teaching methods such as case discussion, role playing, and advantageous action, so that students can complete the internalization of positive psychological processes in interactive experience, rather than just staying in concept memorization. On the other hand, it is necessary to promote the extension of positive psychological education to the professional teaching level, explore the exploration spirit and rational thinking in natural science, the value of care and social responsibility in humanities and social sciences, the aesthetic experience and emotional resonance in art education, and other subject education resources, so as to realize the deep integration of curriculum ideological and political education and psychological education, embed the goal of positive psychological cultivation into the teaching design of each course, and form a comprehensive and all-round education pattern with wide coverage and continuous penetration^[6].

4.2. Practice experience path: From passive acceptance to active construction

The formation of positive psychological qualities is highly dependent on practical experience in real situations. Colleges and universities need to build a multi-level practical experience system to provide students with scene support for quality development. One is to carry out volunteer service, social research, and other public welfare practice activities in a normal way, guide students to obtain a sense of meaning and value in the process of serving others, and cultivate empathy and social responsibility^[7]; the second is to encourage students to participate in challenging tasks such as innovation and entrepreneurship, academic competitions, and exercise core psychological qualities such as courage, resilience, and creativity in the process of coping with difficulties; the third is to promote the structured group counseling and workshop mode, carry out miniaturized and experiential group activities on the themes of advantage exploration, mindfulness decompression, gratitude practice, etc. Relying on peer feedback and mutual support in the group situation enhances the intervention effect and makes up for the limitations of large class courses.

4.3. Cultural infiltration path: From explicit education to implicit edification

As a hidden educational force, campus culture has a lasting and profound impact on the shaping of students' psychological quality. At the level of value guidance, it is necessary to convey positive values such as pursuing excellence, friendship, and mutual assistance, and perseverance through the inheritance of the school motto spirit, the excavation of the school's historical tradition, and the selection of role models. At

the same time, it is necessary to promote the creative integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into the construction of campus culture, and provide local cultural nourishment for students' psychological growth^[8]. At the level of environmental construction, on the one hand, it is necessary to optimize the micro-interpersonal environment, such as classrooms and dormitories, build an inclusive and supportive campus interpersonal atmosphere, reduce competitive anxiety and interpersonal alienation, and enhance students' sense of belonging and security; on the other hand, it is necessary to promote the humanized design of campus physical space, increase open communication space and natural landscape elements, and support the generation of positive psychological experiences from the perspective of environmental psychology. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of network cultural positions, develop high-quality positive psychological science content and online self-help training tools, and expand the space-time boundary of the cultivation path.

4.4. Support guarantee path: From single-point service to system support

The landing of positive psychological quality cultivation needs a perfect support and guarantee system as the basis. At the level of institutional guarantee, it is necessary to incorporate positive psychological cultivation into the overall plan of talent training, clarify its positioning in the education system, establish a cross-departmental collaborative work mechanism, clarify the division of responsibilities of the main bodies such as the psychological center, the Ministry of Education, the Office of Academic Affairs, and various colleges, and avoid resource dispersion and repeated construction. At the same time, the corresponding incentive mechanism should be matched to fully mobilize the enthusiasm of faculty and staff to participate in psychological education. At the level of team building, it is necessary to carry out special training on positive psychology for full-time and part-time teachers in view of the current situation that the number of full-time teachers in mental health education is insufficient, and the professional ability in positive psychology needs to be improved. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the popularization training of psychological education ability of counselors, class teachers, and professional teachers, and to build a team of full-time and part-time teachers with full participation^[9]. In addition, it is necessary to establish a normalized home-school coordination mechanism, guide parents to establish positive education concepts through parent meetings, parent classrooms, etc., form a joint force of home-school co-education, and provide systematic support for the cultivation of positive psychological quality^[10].

5. Conclusion

Based on the perspective of positive psychology theory, this study systematically combs the realistic characteristics and dilemmas of current positive psychological qualities among college students, constructs a systematic cultivation framework of four-dimensional coordination of curriculum teaching, practical experience, cultural infiltration, support and guarantee, breaks through the limitations of traditional problem-oriented education, penetrates the concept of positive psychological quality cultivation throughout the whole process of talent training, and builds a psychological foundation for the lifelong development of college students. This study has both theoretical rationality and practical operability. Future research can develop targeted assessment tools in combination with local cultural situations, explore differentiated cultivation paths for different grades and different professional groups, carry out long-term follow-up studies to

verify the sustainability of cultivation effects, and continuously improve the accuracy and effectiveness of psychological education, so as to provide strong support for cultivating new people in the era of national rejuvenation.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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