

A Study on the Evaluation System of Mental Health Education Curriculum for Chinese College Students

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Abstract: The present study aims at investigating the effectiveness of mental health education courses on college students. Accordingly, the existing problems in teaching the courses were detected, and consequently, the necessary schemes and measurements to meet the needs of college students' psychological development were proposed. The subjects of the study were junior students in North China University of Science and Technology. To achieve the goals, questionnaire was distributed to the subjects to evaluate their knowledge competency as well as their satisfaction towards the mental health education course. Five aspects, namely, teaching objectives, teaching methods, teaching effect, course evaluation and harvest were examined. The obtained results from the survey corroborated the benefits of the course on the students' personal, physical and mental developments. Moreover, 65.4% of students found the course 'very helpful.' Furthermore, the content of the course was found to have a deep influence on students regarding interpersonal communication, life education, psychological crisis response, and psychological counseling. Additionally, the students established a correct mental health perception (72.9%). Likewise, 63.8% of the students developed a correct counseling concept and self-help awareness. In general, it can be argued that not only the significance of the curriculum was confirmed, but the course was found to be considered as a reference for improving the sustainable impact of the curriculum on the physical and mental development of the students.

1. Introduction

Mental health education has experienced a boom for college students in China since the 90s to the present [1-2]. Colleges and universities in China incorporated mental health education into their curriculum since the General Office of the Ministry of Education issued the notice of 'Basic Construction Standards for Students' Mental Health Education in General Institutions of Higher Learning (for trial implementation)' (Education, Ideological and Political Office [2011] No.1). The notice also contains important ideological and political contents for the colleges and universities.[3] While educational institutions have included the courses in their curriculum as compulsory credits, most of them merely offer mental health education in the first year, and

continue with the traditional methods of teaching. Therefore, as a problem to be solved, colleges and universities need to find the ways to improve the effect of mental health courses in the limited teaching time and make the courses meet the requirements for the mental and physical development of their students.

Mental health education is expected to create ‘satisfaction’ and ‘happiness’ in the college students and to focus on the optimization of their psychological quality; a fact which has become a consensus in China [4]. The term ‘satisfaction’ refers to the comparison of the inner experience of the students, as customers who receive educational services of the course, with their expectations. It can also be defined as the students’ measurement of their inner standards towards whether the service offered by the course meets their needs for development. Therefore, among others, satisfaction includes such aspects as teaching objectives, teaching methods, course content, classroom effect, curriculum assessment and evaluation, teacher factors, etc. Moreover, it is to make the curriculum design more standard and reasonable and improve the teaching methods of mental health education courses, the teaching quality and level as well as the quality of the questionnaire. In addition, the curriculum system is investigated and the effectiveness of the course on the students is further improved, promoting the all-round development.

2. Research Objects and Methods

2.1. Subjects of the Study

According to the course plan of ‘Navigating the Mind —— College Students’ Mental Health Education’ at North China University of Science and Technology, the subjects of the present study were junior students at North China University of Science and Technology.

2.2. Research Tools

As a survey study, the data was collected through sending out questionnaires. The questionnaire was developed based on the authentic conditions of the students’ course titled ‘Navigating the Mind.’ The questionnaire was divided into two parts of the objective questions, which itself included the teaching objectives, teaching methods, teaching effect, course evaluation, and harvest factors and the subjective questions, including opinions and suggestions given by the subjects about the course.

2.3. Research Methods

Junior students from the North China University of Science and Technology who had completed the course ‘Navigating the Mind’ were selected for responding to an online questionnaire. A total number of 4304 students completed the survey. After removing the invalid responses, a total number of 4174 valid questionnaires (with an effective rate of 97.0%) were obtained.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1. Understanding and Perception of “The Navigating the Mind”

As can be seen in Table 1, while 65.4% and 22.6% of the students considered the course ‘very helpful’ and ‘helpful, respectively, only 2% of the respondents selected the ‘not helpful’ option. Therefore, it can be argued that the course has been helpful to most students, which is probably due to the number of teaching hours as well as the large number of participants. This is to say that since

the teachers were unable to consider all students' performance, the students internalized the teaching content to different degrees. Moreover, such factors as the difference in the students' cognitive level, accepted knowledge level, and individual comprehensive quality can also be mentioned as the other possible factors, i.e., the course 'Navigating the Mind' influence different individuals differently.

Table 1: Was this course helpful to you?

| option | number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Very helpful | 2814 | 65.4 |
| helpful | 971 | 22.6 |
| Rather helpful | 400 | 9.3 |
| No helpful | 118 | 2.7 |

3.2. The Evaluation of Teaching Content

Table 2: Cognitive content of the course

| option | number of people | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| emotion management | 3152 | 73.3 |
| interpersonal interaction | 2928 | 68.1 |
| Mental health overview | 2930 | 68.1 |
| Life education and psychological crisis response | 1957 | 45.5 |
| Personality Development and Mental Health | 1955 | 45.4 |
| psychological consultation | 1924 | 44.7 |
| Sexual psychology and love psychology | 1885 | 43.8 |
| Self-awareness and cultivation | 1862 | 43.3 |
| Psychological confusion and abnormal psychology | 1829 | 42.5 |
| Stress management and frustration response | 1541 | 35.8 |
| others | 26 | 0.6 |

Based on the obtained results, as can be seen in Table 2, responses of the students who completed the compulsory courses in 'Navigating the Mind,' are as follows: emotional management (73.3%), interpersonal communication (68.1%), mental health overview (68.1%), life education, and psychological crisis response (45.5%), personality development and mental health (45.4%), psychological counseling (44.7%), sexual psychology and love psychology (43.8%), self-awareness and cultivation (43.3%), psychological confusion and abnormal psychology (42.5%), stress management and frustration (35.8%), others (0.6%). As can be seen in the table, such aspects as emotional management, interpersonal relationship, mental health, life education and love psychology were rated higher by the participants. Interestingly, the five aspects are also the most common psychological problems of college students which is an indication of the significance of incorporating these aspects in the teaching content and helping more students to deal with their psychological problems.

3.3. The Cognition of the Effectiveness of Course Teaching Methods

As is demonstrated in Table 3, the findings of the study show that the more effective teaching methods were found by the students to be classroom teaching (76.0%), interactive teaching (70.3%), experiential psychological practice (56.8%), psychological reading (33.4%), peer support group (34.2%), individual counseling and group counseling (28.7%), group mental training (24.9%), and Psychological essay contest (21.9%). Moreover, the students expected to adopt various forms of

teaching methods in the spiritual navigation course. Therefore, the teachers were able to make full use of the existing environmental advantages and equipment conditions for presenting the teaching content. Hence, while the teachers were considered as the guides for the students, the students were the main body of experiential teaching.

Table 3: The effectiveness of the course teaching methods

| option | number of people | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Classroom teaching | 3272 | 76.0 |
| Interactive teaching | 3023 | 70.1 |
| Experiential psychological practice | 2246 | 56.8 |
| Psychological reading club | 1437 | 33.4 |
| Peer age mutual support group | 1472 | 34.2 |
| Individual counseling, group psychological counseling | 1234 | 28.7 |
| Group mental development training | 1070 | 24.9 |
| Psychological essay contest / psychological drama exhibition / campus radio station | 945 | 21.9 |

3.4. The Influence and Harvest of the Spiritual Navigation Course

Survey results also revealed that the students who participated in the course ‘Navigating the Mind,’ harvested and established a more profound perception of the theoretical knowledge of mental health (81.3%) and the correct concept of mental health (72.9%). Furthermore, while 63.8% of the respondents established a correct consulting concept and self-consciousness, 57.5% of them developed the correct self-consciousness, higher level of self-acceptance, learning mind navigation course and learned to establish a good interpersonal relationship with others. In addition, as it is shown in Table 4, 51.9% and 51.3% of the subjects build good interpersonal relationships and used the course to actively mediate their emotions, respectively. In general, it can be suggested that while the majority of the respondents learned from “Navigating the Mind —— College Students”, i.e., improved their mental health, the sustainability of their psychological development was less affected which could be due to the number of class hours.

3.5. Cognition of the Teaching Situation of the Spiritual Navigation Course

As can be observed in Table 5, 83.1% of the respondents found the course content reasonable and highly connected with the mental health needs of college students. Moreover, 74.2% of the respondents believed that the teaching method was appropriate and both teachers and students were interested. Furthermore, while 61.6% of them found the teachers to have high professional ethics, professional knowledge, and teaching competencies, 47.4% of the respondents stated that the course evaluation method was scientific and reasonable. The results indicate that while most of the students were significantly satisfied with the teaching content, teaching methods and teaching competencies of the teachers, this was not the case for the course evaluation method as the satisfaction rate was rather low. The evaluation criteria included process evaluation and final evaluation, take the normal attendance, course participation, homework, and final homework completion.

Table 4: Course impact and percentage of cognitive cognition

| option | number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Understand and memorize theoretical knowledge about mental health | 3496 | 81.3 |
| Set up the correct concept of mental health | 3135 | 72.9 |
| Establish a correct view of psychological counseling | 2744 | 63.8 |
| Set up the right self-consciousness and more self-acceptance | 2474 | 57.5 |
| Learn to build good interpersonal relationships | 2233 | 51.9 |
| Can carry out positive and effective personal emotional management, reasonable expression, guidance, and regulate emotions | 2208 | 51.3 |
| Establish a healthy view of love | 2024 | 47.0 |
| Deal with love psychological and sexual problems correctly | | |
| Fully understand their learning status quo; Learning motivation and psychology is more positive | 1728 | 40.2 |
| Learn to manage and respond to setbacks actively and effectively | 1581 | 36.7 |
| Have a greater sense of responsibility to the country and society | 1487 | 34.6 |

Table 5: Cognition for course teaching conditions

| option | number of people | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Teaching content is reasonable and has a high connection with the mental health needs of college students | 3576 | 83.1 |
| Teaching methods are properly selected, teachers and students interact well, and students have a strong interest | 3191 | 74.2 |
| Teachers have high professional ethics, professional knowledge, teaching ability and high teaching investment | 2652 | 61.6 |
| The course assessment and evaluation method is scientific and reasonable | 2039 | 47.4 |

4. Discussion

4.1. Improving the Students' Mental Health Quality

Mental health education is expected to put more emphasis on students' 'autonomy' and self-improvement to make them responsible for their mental health. The traditional method of mental health education adopts the 'teachers speak, students listen' approach, in which since teachers are in a dominant position hierarchically, students are only accepted passively, and accordingly, their differences are ignored. The analysis of the first question of the survey suggests that to make the students benefit more from the spiritual navigation course, teachers are required to act as a guide during the teaching process, i.e., to guide them to self-growth, and to be enthusiastic and initiative in classroom learning and to place the students in the main position. This is to say that in order for the students to apply and enhance the effectiveness of the Courses, they should be able to participate in the classroom, follow the rules of physical and mental development and harvest positive psychological experience. Likewise, they need to experience their growth, become their spiritual growth 'promoter,' and improve their psychological quality.

4.2. Building a Comprehensive Curriculum System

In order for the curriculum of 'Navigating the Mind' to be constantly improving, it needs to be oriented to all college students. Therefore, not only the course can contain a systematic explanation of theoretical knowledge, but more importantly, it can enable the students to practically apply their theoretical knowledge of psychology to improve their mental health level. Moreover, to adjust the teaching content appropriately, both aspects are required to be taken into account, the application and feasibility of spiritual navigation courses need to be improved, and the courses content coverage should be increased.

Furthermore, based on the obtained results, emotional management and interpersonal communication are the two major problems of confusion for the students. Therefore, it can be argued that in order to empower the student to regulate themselves and deal with the problems, the teachers are required to focus on these two aspects in the course content design and explain the adjustment methods and skills for the students. Moreover, the results revealed that less attention was paid by junior students to such aspects as life education and psychological crisis response, personality development and mental health, sexual psychology and love psychology, self-awareness and training, stress management and frustration response and learning. This can be due to the junior students just entering the college. They more need to know how to adjust to their college life, how to make new friends and low attention to graduation and employment.

Accordingly, the teaching content of mental health courses should be focused on students at different grades and levels. Furthermore, the teaching of the thematic modules needs to be classified and improved in details like the content of interpersonal interaction and Mental health overview. Reintegrate contents with a relatively low impression ratio like graduation and employment.

4.3. Using Several teaching Methods Reasonably

The analysis of the survey results obtained from the third question demonstrated that most teachers and students were still accustomed and inclined towards the traditional teaching methods. However, such methods might be constrained by such objective factors as environmental conditions and student capacities. According to Lin Wanqing, research studies on the domestic mental health education curriculum focus mainly on the reforms implemented on university psychological education curriculum in three aspects, i.e., the positive psychological orientation, the flipped learning of mental health education, and the experiential teaching with group counselling [5].

Moreover, based on the obtained results from the questionnaire and the current status of teaching, the majority of the students less class engagement. Accordingly, to improve the classroom teaching effect, the teachers were able to apply and benefit from flipped classrooms and group discussions and learning. Additionally, they also managed to develop mutual teaching methods, experiential psychological practice, and psychological reading. Furthermore, the content of the course was enriched and the rational behavior factors were integrated. Yet, group psychological counseling as well as other group activities can be discussed to be held as irregular as possible under the existing conditions. This is to enable the students to gain and increase their understanding of psychological knowledge as well as to learn from a variety of teaching methods.

4.4. Improving the Constant impact of Mental Health Education Courses

The analysis of the fourth question of the survey revealed that most of the students were able to develop an understanding of the theoretical knowledge of mental health. Similarly, they could established correct perception of mental health, psychological counseling and self-help consciousness. Therefore, it can be argued that the curriculum design of mental health education in

colleges and universities need to establish the idea of developmental counseling. Moreover, teachers need to shift and regulate their teaching focus according to their professional knowledge. Multiple methods should also be combined to instruct and convey expertise. Moreover, the curriculum needs to modify its focus on conveying the correct psychological concepts and promoting the daily development of good behaviors and habits. Likewise, the course is required to focus on tapping students' potential and optimizing their psychological quality. However, the ultimate and fundamental goal is developing a good self-awareness in more students. The students are also required to promote all-round development and quality improvement and to be able to self-regulate and effectively respond to setbacks. Hence, it can be stated that the curriculum is expected to be developmental and preventive.

Promoting the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents can be mentioned as the purpose of mental health education at schools. Not only such method of education follows the ideological and political considerations in education as well as the psychological laws in developing students in different grades, but also it acts as a guide for the students to practice the correct world view. They can also construct their attitudes and values in life and cultivate rational and peaceful, self-acceptance. Moreover, their emotional optimism, healthy personality as well as their psychological qualities can be fully developed. Furthermore, the improvement of their health potentials, social adaptability, resistance to difficulties and setbacks, and self-emotional adjustment abilities as well as the enhancement of their psychological quality can be mentioned. To this list, the promotion of their physical and mental harmony, creative and sustainable development, and building a solid foundation for growth and happiness can be added [6]. Therefore, it can be emphasized that offering the course 'Navigating the Mind' for different grades is highly recommended for schools. Most students face different psychological problems in different grades. The reason lies on different factors such as their age, life background, family education, learning experience, etc. which make each student's psychological quality different from others. Accordingly, different needs can be defined and determined for mental health education [7]. In this regard, in order to meet the different mental health needs of different students, a diversified curriculum system is required to be designed by schools. Concurrently, teachers need to set the content of the mental health education curriculum in accordance with the main problems of students at different grades. Consequently, this is expected to produce a sustainable developmental influence on the students and accordingly, fulfil the goal of the curriculum, i.e., improving college students' mental health quality.

4.5. Strengthening the Training of Psychological Teachers and Mental Health Education Classroom

4.5.1. Teachers' Self-Improvement of Their Qualities

The analysis of the fifth question indicates that the level of the students' passion and appreciation is closely related to the classroom teaching effect. This is to say that the majority of the respondents preferred such characteristics of the teachers as being positive and humorous, understanding the students, showing affinity and being able to interact with them. Furthermore, the teacher's positive personality was also found to have a positive influence on classroom teaching. However, lack of teachers who were specialized in mental health education for college students, as well as the different competencies of the teachers can be mentioned as two problems to be solved. Therefore, strengthening the pre-employment training for the teachers and ensuring that psychological teacher hold a certificate in mental health education is of high significance [8-9]. Hence, teachers should be required to study psychology and the related theories in depth to improve their general competencies as well as their professional theoretical knowledge in psychology.

Furthermore, to optimize the content of the course, teachers are also required to make full use of the available resources and equipment. In addition, to avoid a single approach, a variety of teaching methods are recommended to be adopted. Teachers are also suggested to actively pay attention to students, strengthen their interaction with students, arouse the students' interest in learning, and maintain an open, inclusive and modest attitude. What is more, when utilizing modern information technology in teaching mental health, a new mode of 'Internet + mental health education' is established which can enhance the students' distinct experience of mental health education courses [8].

At the same time, a mental health education teacher is expected to be widely knowledgeable in other related subject areas including philosophy and humanities. This is to say that since these areas of knowledge are closely related to psychology, they have an important role in learning psychology. This is particularly the case for certain mental illnesses, symptoms, etc. for which the teachers need to have a more professional medical background and knowledge. In short, teachers specialized in mental health education are expected and required to always maintain lifelong learning and constantly improve their self-cultivation.

4.5.2. Flexible and Diverse Assessment and Evaluation Methods

The main significance of the course 'Navigating the Mind' is to enable the students to learn the relevant mental health knowledge, master the methods and skills of psychological adjustment, and solve practical psychological problems. Accordingly, the same aspects are considered as the main criteria for the assessment of the students' performance. The evaluation of the students' performance in the course should focus more on their self-psychological growth, including such activities as providing course learning and self-growth reports, or experiencing psychological changes. In addition, students can be encouraged to participate in extracurricular psychological activities and group auxiliary activities. Accordingly, their performance and attendance in these activities combined with their classroom performance can be considered as a comprehensive criteria for the examination [10]. No matter whether any assessment method is adopted, the establishment of a scientific, standardized and operational evaluation index system is an important aspect of the assessment of the future mental health education curriculum.

5. Conclusions

Apparently, college students' mental health education aims at promoting the mental health and enhance the psychological competencies of all students. According the obtained result by the survey, it can be concluded that the students pay more attention to emotional management, interpersonal relationship, mental health, life education, love psychology in their college life. They want to learn from the course of mental health education and adjust to college life. Moreover, the students found the course 'Navigating the Mind' very effective in guiding them to improve their social adaptability, as well as to cultivate self-acceptance and self-emotional adjustment abilities. Hence, mental health education is recommended to be oriented to all students. However, to observe the rules of psychological development for students in different grades, the curriculum and the contents need to vary accordingly. Teachers should also always maintain the concept of lifelong learning and constantly improve their self-cultivation and their teaching abilities by using modern information technology.

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