

CURRENT STATUS AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES OF MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF TECHNICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the current status and improvement strategies of the mental health education management system for students in technical colleges in Guangdong Province. Using a mixed-method approach including questionnaire survey and in-depth interview, data were collected from 242 teachers and 5 key teachers at Guangzhou Light Industry Technician College. Results show that the overall system level is high (Mean=3.70), with policy and institutional system scoring highest (Mean=3.86) and professional support configuration as the weakest link (Mean=3.55). Main problems include unclear cross-departmental responsibilities, insufficient system evaluation, mental health stigma among students, shortage of full-time psychological professionals, and inadequate teacher training. Based on educational administration and mental health theories, six improvement strategies are proposed. This study provides empirical references for optimizing mental health education management in Guangdong's technical colleges.

Keywords: Technical Colleges, Mental Health Education Management System, Professional Support Configuration, Management Operational Efficiency, Student Participation and Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Research Background

With the advancement of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) globally, mental health issues among technical students have emerged as a critical focus in international educational research. Studies reveal that technical students commonly face psychological challenges related to academic pressure, career identity, and social adaptation. However, current mental health support primarily remains at the project or intervention level, with insufficient systematic management mechanisms. Reviews indicate that school support environments, teacher-student relationships, and institutional safeguards are key factors influencing the mental health of technical students. Nevertheless, the overall development of mental health management systems remains underdeveloped.

In China, with the continuous expansion of technical education, students' psychological pressure and risks have become increasingly prominent. Existing research has found that there are imperfections in the management system, professional faculty allocation, and implementation paths of mental health education in technical colleges. The integration of psychological education with the student management system is insufficient. From a management perspective, mental health education in technical colleges has yet to establish standardized, coordinated, and sustainable operational mechanisms.

With the advancement of educational modernization and the goal of students' all-round development, the Chinese government attaches great importance to students' mental health education and has gradually established an institutionalized policy framework. The Ministry of Education has successively issued the "Guidelines for Mental Health Education of Students in Secondary Technical Schools" and other policy documents, explicitly incorporating mental health education into the school education system. Schools are required to improve psychological education courses, counseling services, and psychological crisis intervention mechanisms, and equip them with corresponding professional teachers. On this basis, the state has further implemented the Special Action Plan for Student Mental Health, emphasizing the comprehensive coverage of mental health education in vocational and technical colleges, and clearly proposing to establish a school-based mental health service system by 2025.

As a major province of vocational education in China, Guangdong Province has a large number of technical colleges, undertaking the important task of cultivating technical and skilled talents for regional industrial development. The students in technical colleges have the characteristics of focusing on practical operation, diverse academic foundations, and prominent employment pressure. Their mental health status is directly related to the quality of talent training and social stability. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a systematic analysis of the current status and challenges in the mental health education management system in Guangdong Province, and propose targeted improvement strategies to enhance the scientific rigor and practical effectiveness of mental health education management.

Research Significance

Theoretically, this study constructs a four-dimensional analysis framework of "policy system-operational efficiency-participation satisfaction-professional support" for the mental health education management system of technical colleges, which enriches the theoretical research on mental health education in the field of vocational education, and verifies the applicability of educational administration theory and mental health theory in the context of Chinese vocational education.

Practically, this study takes Guangzhou Light Industry Technician College as a typical case, finds out the key problems existing in the current system, and puts forward operable improvement strategies, which can provide replicable experience and path support for other technical colleges in Guangdong Province to construct and improve the mental health education management system, help narrow the inter-school differences, and improve the overall quality and stability of mental health services in the regional technical education field. At the same time, it can also provide a reference for education administrative departments to formulate regional mental health education policies for technical colleges.

Research Questions

What is the current status of the mental health education management system of technical college students in Guangdong Province from the four dimensions of institutional construction, professional support allocation, management operational efficiency, and students' participation and satisfaction?

What are the main problems and restrictive factors existing in the operation of the mental health education management system of technical colleges in Guangdong Province?

What targeted improvement strategies can be proposed to optimize the mental health education management system of technical colleges in Guangdong Province combined with theoretical support and practical experience?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed research method combining quantitative questionnaire survey and qualitative in-depth interview. Quantitative research can obtain large-scale data to reflect the overall status of the management system, while qualitative research can dig deep into the underlying reasons and practical problems, and the combination of the two can make the research results more comprehensive and in-depth.

Population and Sample

The research population of this study is 635 teachers from Guangzhou Light Industry Technician College, including professional teachers, student management teachers and administrative staff. According to Krejcie & Morgan sampling method, 242 teachers were selected as the survey sample, which is scientifically representative.

In terms of qualitative research, 5 key professional teachers were selected by purposive sampling for in-depth interviews. All interviewees have at least 5 years of teaching experience in the college, are familiar with the mental health education management system, and have rich experience in student management or psychological counseling, which can provide in-depth and effective interview information.

RESEARCH TOOLS

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed based on literature research and research variables, with a total of 40 items, divided into four dimensions: mental health education management system (10 items), student participation and satisfaction of mental health service (10 items), management operational efficiency (10 items), and professional support configuration status (10 items). The questionnaire adopts a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 representing the highest level and 1 representing the lowest level.

Before the formal survey, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. The Item Objective Congruence (IOC) of all items is ≥ 0.67 , which meets the validity standard; the Cronbach's α coefficient of the total scale is 0.912, indicating that the questionnaire has high internal consistency and good reliability.

Semi-structured Interview Outline

The interview outline is designed around the four core dimensions of the research, focusing on the existing problems, root causes and improvement suggestions of the mental health education management system. The interview content includes the division of cross-departmental responsibilities, the allocation of professional resources, the form of mental health services, and the effect of management operation, etc.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed and collected through online and offline channels, and 242 valid questionnaires were recovered with an effective recovery rate of 100%. The in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the interviewees were informed of the purpose and confidentiality of the research in advance. The interview process was recorded and sorted out in time.

Quantitative data were input into statistical software for analysis, mainly using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to reflect the current status level of each dimension and item. Qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis method, summarizing the key points and common views of the interviewees, and forming a systematic problem summary and strategy suggestion.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Among the 242 questionnaire respondents, female teachers accounted for 61.98% and male teachers accounted for 38.02%; the age was mainly concentrated in 29-38 years old, accounting for 49.59%, which is the core teaching force of the college; the educational background was mainly bachelor's degree (51.65%) and master's degree (44.63%), with an overall high educational level; teachers with 5-15 years of working experience accounted for 57.85%, who have a long-term understanding of the school's management system; 81.82% of the teachers have participated in the mental health education activities organized by the school, which ensures the validity of the questionnaire answers.

Overall Status of Mental Health Education Management System

The overall mean score of the mental health education management system is 3.70 (S.D=0.55), which is at a high level. The scores of each dimension from high to low are: mental health education policy and institutional system (Mean=3.86, S.D=0.52), management operational efficiency (Mean=3.78, S.D=0.49), student participation and satisfaction (Mean=3.62, S.D=0.61), professional support configuration status (Mean=3.55, S.D=0.58). It shows that the four dimensions of the system are unbalanced, and professional support is the biggest shortcoming.

Status of Each Dimension

1. Mental Health Education Policy and Institutional System

The overall score of this dimension is the highest, with a mean of 3.86. The items with the highest scores are "the college has clear policies for mental health education management" (Mean=4.12), "mental health education is included in the overall management system of the college" (Mean=4.08), and "mental health education management receives sufficient attention from the school administration" (Mean=4.05). The items with relatively low scores are "the responsibilities

of departments related to mental health education are clearly defined" (Mean=3.76) and "the college regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the mental health education management system" (Mean=3.68).

2. Student Participation and Satisfaction of Mental Health Service

The mean score of this dimension is 3.62. Students have high awareness of psychological counseling services (Mean=3.98) and high accessibility of services (Mean=3.86), but the items with low scores are "students feel comfortable seeking psychological help when needed" (Mean=3.36) and "students actively participate in mental health education activities" (Mean=3.45), indicating that mental health stigma has a significant impact on students' help-seeking behavior.

3. Management Operational Efficiency

The mean score of this dimension is 3.78. The college performs well in responding to students' psychological problems (Mean=3.95) and carrying out regular mental health activities (Mean=3.92), but the item "communication between departments improves the efficiency of mental health management" has the lowest score (Mean=3.65), reflecting the problem of insufficient inter-departmental collaboration.

4. Professional Support Configuration Status

This is the weakest dimension with a mean score of 3.55. The items with the lowest scores are "the number of mental health professionals in the college is sufficient" (Mean=3.38) and "teachers receive training related to student mental health" (Mean=3.42), indicating that the allocation of professional personnel and teacher training are the key problems to be solved urgently.

Main Problems Summarized from Interviews

1. Institutional level: The cross-departmental responsibility division is not clear, and the psychological crisis intervention is prone to buck-passing; the system effectiveness evaluation mechanism is not perfect, and it is difficult to form a closed-loop management.

2. Student level: Mental health stigma is prominent, students are resistant to taking the initiative to seek help; the form of mental health activities is single, and the integration with professional education is insufficient.

3. Operation level: The inter-departmental information is not shared, and the human, material and financial resources are not integrated efficiently; there is no special coordination mechanism, and the overall operation efficiency is restricted.

4. Professional level: The number of full-time psychological counselors is insufficient; the teacher mental health training system is not systematic, and the full-staff education pattern has not been formed.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Overall Status of the System

The overall high level of the mental health education management system indicates that under the guidance of national and local policies, technical colleges in Guangdong Province have attached great importance to mental health education, built a basic institutional framework, and carried out standardized daily work. This is consistent with the global development trend of systematic mental health education in vocational education, and also reflects the effective connection between national policies and local implementation in the field of vocational education.

However, the unbalanced development of the four dimensions shows that the current system is still in the stage of "framework construction" rather than "quality optimization". The policy system is relatively sound, but the implementation, professional support and student participation are

relatively lagging behind, which is a common problem in the mental health education management of domestic vocational colleges.

Analysis of Dimension Differences and Causes

1. Policy and Institutional System

The high score of this dimension benefits from the high attention of school leaders and the implementation of national policies. The school has formulated clear policies and incorporated mental health education into the overall management. However, the low scores of responsibility division and evaluation reflect that under the hierarchical administrative structure of vocational colleges, the institutional design has the phenomenon of "emphasizing formulation but neglecting implementation", and the closed-loop management mechanism of "formulation-implementation-evaluation-feedback" has not been fully formed.

2. Student Participation and Satisfaction

The high awareness and accessibility of services indicate that the school's mental health service coverage is wide, but the low willingness to take the initiative to seek help is affected by mental health stigma. Technical college students pay more attention to practical skills and have a weak awareness of psychological adjustment. In addition, the single lecture-based activity form cannot meet the needs of students' experiential and scenario-based psychological development, resulting in low participation enthusiasm.

3. Management Operational Efficiency

The school has a fast response speed to psychological crises and regular activities, which reflects the effectiveness of the integrated management model. However, the lack of cross-departmental communication is due to the fact that mental health education is mostly undertaken by the student affairs office and psychological counseling center, and the teaching and training departments lack a normalized collaboration mechanism, resulting in information isolation and resource fragmentation.

4. Professional Support Configuration

This is the core bottleneck of the system. The shortage of full-time psychological professionals is a common problem in vocational colleges, which cannot meet the daily counseling and crisis intervention needs of a large number of students. At the same time, the mental health training for all teachers is not in place, and most professional teachers lack the ability to identify and initially intervene students' psychological problems, making it impossible to form a full-staff education pattern.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study constructs a four-dimensional analysis framework suitable for the mental health education management system of technical colleges, and verifies the applicability of open system theory, distributed leadership theory and dual-factor model of mental health in the context of Chinese vocational education, which enriches the empirical research of educational administration theory.

Practically, this study clarifies the priority of system optimization: first, strengthen professional support allocation, second, clarify cross-departmental responsibilities and evaluation mechanisms, third, innovate service forms to reduce stigma, and finally promote digital construction and home-school-community collaboration, which provides a clear and operable path for the practical improvement of the system.

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Improve the Policy and Institutional System and Build a Closed-Loop Governance Mechanism

Formulate a standardized mental health education management manual for technical colleges, clarify the main and auxiliary responsibilities of student affairs offices, psychological counseling centers, teaching departments and training departments in different scenarios such as daily education and crisis intervention, and establish a "first responsible person" system to avoid buck-passing. Establish a regular evaluation mechanism combining quantitative and qualitative indicators, with students' psychological resilience, service satisfaction and crisis intervention effectiveness as the core contents, and adopt the combination of internal self-evaluation and third-party evaluation to conduct annual system effectiveness evaluation. Incorporate mental health education into the school's annual development plan and talent training program, and link the implementation of mental health work with the annual assessment of departments and individuals to enhance the binding force of the system.

Optimize Management Operations and Enhance Inter-Departmental Collaboration Efficiency

Build a unified student psychological information management platform, open different operation permissions to each department, realize the real-time recording, sharing and tracking of students' psychological status, screening results and intervention records, and break information barriers. Set up a cross-departmental mental health work leading group with college leaders as the group leader, hold monthly special coordination meetings, uniformly dispatch personnel, venues, funds and external resources, and solve cross-departmental problems in a timely manner. Simplify the psychological counseling and crisis intervention process, clarify the response time limit for students' psychological problems, and improve the timeliness and convenience of services.

Innovate Service Forms and Reduce Students' Help-Seeking Stigma

Integrate mental health education into professional courses and practical training links, design scenario-based psychological guidance activities combined with skill learning, employment pressure and career identity, and enhance the relevance of services. Carry out experiential mental health activities such as psychological quality development, sand table games and group counseling, and reduce students' resistance to psychological help-seeking in a relaxed and interactive way. Strengthen normalized mental health publicity through short videos, dormitory publicity boards, campus radio and peer counselors, and create an inclusive campus atmosphere that eliminates stigma.

Strengthen Professional Support Allocation and Build a Full-Staff Education Pattern

Equip full-time psychological counselors in strict accordance with the national teacher-student ratio standard, and hire part-time experts from hospitals and universities to supplement the professional team. Establish a hierarchical training system for teachers: carry out basic mental health literacy training for all teachers, and provide in-depth professional training for counselors and student management backbones. Set up special funds for the professional development of mental health teachers, support regular training, academic exchanges and case supervision, and improve the professional competence of the team. Incorporate mental health education work into teachers' professional title evaluation and performance assessment indicators to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm for participation.

Promote School-Family-Community Collaboration and Expand Support Resources

Carry out regular mental health lectures and online counseling for parents, guide parents to pay attention to students' psychological status, master scientific family education methods, and form a

family-school joint education force. Establish cooperative relations with community health service centers, psychological institutions and professional hospitals, open a green channel for the referral and intervention of serious psychological problems, and make up for the shortage of school professional resources. Integrate social resources to carry out career psychology, stress management and other themed activities, enrich the content of mental health services, and meet the diversified needs of students.

Accelerate Digital Construction and Improve the Modernization Level of Management

Build an online mental health service platform, provide online counseling, psychological testing, appointment registration and resource push services, break through time and space restrictions, and improve service accessibility. Use big data technology to analyze students' psychological development rules and hot issues, form a psychological portrait of students, provide data support for precise intervention and policy adjustment, and realize early warning of psychological crises. Establish a digital file of students' mental health, realize dynamic tracking and whole-process management, and improve the scientificity and standardization of mental health education management.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically investigates the current status of the mental health education management system of technical college students in Guangdong Province by using a mixed research method of questionnaire survey and in-depth interview. The research results show that the overall level of the system is at a high level, but there are obvious problems such as unbalanced development of each dimension, unclear cross-departmental responsibilities, insufficient professional support allocation, prominent mental health stigma of students and low active participation.

Based on educational administration theory and mental health theory, this study puts forward six targeted improvement strategies from the aspects of policy system, management operation, service form, professional support, collaborative education and digital construction. These strategies are closely combined with the characteristics of vocational education and the actual situation of Guangdong Province, with strong operability and practicality, which can provide an important reference for technical colleges in Guangdong Province to optimize the mental health education management system and promote the healthy growth of students.

This study has certain limitations. The research takes a single college as a case, and the sample scope is limited; the research respondents are mainly teachers, lacking direct data from students. In the future, the research scope can be expanded to cover technical colleges in different regions and levels of Guangdong Province, adopt a mixed research method of teacher evaluation and student self-evaluation, and carry out longitudinal tracking research on the implementation effect of improvement strategies to further improve the comprehensiveness and sustainability of the research.

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