

Research on the Construction of Peer Support Networks and Precise Intervention Models for the Mental Health of Vocational College Students

Yanhua Wu¹, Chunhui Zhou¹, Xiuhua Wu²

¹Shandong Vocational College of Information Technology, Weifang, Shandong, 261000, China

²Jimo People's Hospital, Jimo, Qingdao, Shandong, 266200, China

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the mental health issues of vocational college students and explores how to enhance their mental health levels through the construction of peer support networks and precise intervention models. By conducting an in-depth analysis of the current mental health status of vocational college students, combined with the theoretical basis and practical cases of peer support, this study proposes strategies for constructing peer support networks and methods for designing and implementing precise intervention models. The results show that peer support networks can effectively strengthen the psychological support system of vocational college students, while precise intervention models can target specific psychological problems of students. The combination of both provides new ideas and practical approaches for mental health education in vocational colleges. This study not only enriches the theoretical framework of mental health education but also offers replicable models and methods for practical operations in vocational colleges.

KEYWORDS

Mental health of vocational college students; Peer support networks; Precise intervention; Psychological support

1 Analysis of the current mental health status of vocational college students

1.1 Major mental health issues among vocational college students

Academic Pressure and Career Anxiety.

Vocational college students generally face the dual pressures of further education and employment. On one hand, some students who wish to pursue further studies experience anxiety regarding the entrance examination for upgrading from a junior college to a bachelor's degree. On the other hand, many students are worried about their future employment prospects and lack clear career plans. This pressure can lead to the emergence of anxiety, which affects mental health. Some students find certain courses, especially core professional courses, difficult to handle. For example, students in science and engineering majors may feel intimidated by complex mathematics and professional theoretical courses, which in turn affects their enthusiasm for learning. The career planning awareness of vocational college students is relatively weak. Many students lack a clear understanding of their major and future career direction upon enrollment. As graduation approaches, this sense of career anxiety gradually intensifies, manifesting as uncertainty about future employment and concerns over salary expectations.

Interpersonal Relationship Troubles and Social Phobia.

Vocational college students come from diverse backgrounds, and some students experience difficulties in interacting with classmates and teachers, exhibiting social phobia or interpersonal sensitivity. For example, some students feel nervous and uneasy when speaking in class, participating in group discussions, or joining club activities, and may even avoid social situations, which affects their social skills and mental health. Some students are prone to conflicts with classmates over trivial matters and are overly sensitive to others' evaluations, easily leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. Some students experience extreme nervousness when speaking in public or participating in group activities, even manifesting physiological reactions such as palpitations, sweating, and trembling, which severely affect their self-confidence and social abilities.

Insufficient Emotional Management and Psychological Adjustment Skills.

When facing setbacks, stress, or emotional fluctuations, vocational college students often lack effective coping strategies. Some students fall into negative emotions when encountering exam failures, conflicts with classmates, or family problems, and are unable to adjust their mindset in time, which affects their mental health. Some students lose control of their emotions under stress, manifesting as irritability, anxiety, or depression. Many students lack effective problem-solving methods and often choose to avoid or suppress their emotions, leading to the accumulation of psychological problems.

1.2 Factors affecting the mental health of vocational college students

Personal Factors.

Self-awareness: Some vocational college students lack a clear understanding of their abilities, interests, and future, leading to low self-evaluation and a lack of self-confidence. For example, some students regret their major choices upon enrollment, believing they are unsuitable for their field of study, which generates negative emotions.

Growth Background: Family economic status, parental education styles, and growth environments can also impact the mental health of vocational college students. For example, students from impoverished families may feel inferior or anxious due to financial pressures.

Environmental Factors.

Campus Culture: The campus cultural atmosphere has a significant impact on students' mental health. If the campus lacks a positive and uplifting cultural environment, students may more easily develop negative emotions. For example, some vocational colleges have limited campus activities, leading to a monotonous extracurricular life for students, who may then feel lonely and bored.

Social Competition: The current intense employment competition in society makes vocational college students worry about their future career development, and this social competitive pressure indirectly affects their mental health. For example, many students feel confused about their future career development during internships after experiencing the complexities and pressures of the workplace.

1.3 Characteristics and manifestations of mental health issues among vocational college students

Differences by Grade and Major.

First-year students: Mainly face the pressure of adapting to a new environment, such as unfamiliarity with campus life, interactions with classmates, and teachers. Psychological issues often manifest as anxiety and loneliness.

Second-year students: Begin to face the pressure of professional studies and start thinking about their future careers, with psychological issues often manifesting as academic anxiety and career confusion.

Third-year students: Mainly face employment pressure, with psychological issues often manifesting as career anxiety and uncertainty about the future.

Students in science and engineering majors may focus more on technical skills learning and employment prospects, while students in humanities and social sciences may pay more attention to interpersonal interactions and career development opportunities.

Influence of Gender and Family Background.

Male students may be more inclined to relieve stress through physical activities, while female students may prefer to release emotions through communication. Males may exhibit more silence and internalized emotions when facing stress, while females may be more sensitive and more likely to experience mental health issues due to emotional problems. Students from single-parent or divorced families may lack emotional support and are more prone to psychological problems, while students from economically disadvantaged families may feel inferior or anxious due to financial pressures.

2 Theoretical basis and practice of peer support

2.1 Psychological theoretical basis of peer support

Social support theory suggests that when individuals face stress, support from others can help alleviate stress and enhance psychological resilience. Peer support, as a form of social support, can provide vocational college students with emotional, informational, and instrumental support. For example, peers can support each other by sharing experiences, providing study materials, and offering encouragement to help each other cope with academic and life difficulties. Specifically, peers can provide emotional support through listening, comforting, and encouraging each other to help alleviate emotional stress. Peers can share learning experiences and career information to help each other better cope with academic and career challenges. Peers can also assist each other in solving practical problems, such as difficulties in studies or trivial matters in daily life.

Cognitive-behavioral theory emphasizes the mutual influence between individuals' cognition and behavior. Peer support can help vocational college students change unreasonable cognitive and behavioral patterns through role modeling and cognitive restructuring. For example, peer supporters can share their successful experiences to help other students establish correct attitudes towards learning and career development, thereby improving their psychological state. Specifically, peer supporters can provide role models for learning and behavior through their own success stories. They can help students recognize their unreasonable cognitions through communication and guide them to adjust their ways of thinking.

2.2 Unique advantages of peer support in the mental health of vocational college students

Trust and Proximity among Peers.

Peers are close in age and have similar experiences, making it easier to establish trusting relationships. Students are more willing to confide in peers and accept their suggestions and support. For example, when facing academic pressure, students may prefer to discuss study tips with classmates rather than seeking help directly from teachers. Specifically, peers can easily build trust, and students are more willing to share their thoughts and feelings with peers. The interaction between peers is more natural and relaxed, and students are more likely to accept suggestions and support from peers.

Flexible and Diverse Forms of Support with High Efficiency.

Peer support can take various forms, such as face-to-face communication, online discussions, and group activities. This flexibility allows it to better meet the diverse needs of vocational college students. For example, through online support platforms, students can obtain help at any time during their spare time, while group activities can enhance students' teamwork and social skills. Specifically, peer support can be conducted in various ways, such as online communication, offline group activities, and one-on-one tutoring. Peer support can quickly respond to students' needs and provide timely support and assistance.

3 Strategies for constructing peer support networks for vocational college students

3.1 Organizational structure and personnel selection

Principles for Establishing Peer Support Teams.

Voluntary Principle: Encourage students to voluntarily join the peer support team to ensure their enthusiasm and proactivity.

Professionalism Principle: Select students with a foundation in psychology or a strong interest in mental health education to serve as peer supporters.

Diversity Principle: Team members should cover different grades, majors, and backgrounds to better meet the diverse needs of students.

Selection Criteria and Training System for Peer Supporters.

Selection Criteria: Possess good communication skills, a sense of responsibility, and teamwork spirit; have a foundation in psychology or a strong interest in mental health education; be able to actively participate in team activities and comply with team regulations.

Training System: The training content includes basic psychology knowledge, communication skills, psychological counseling techniques, and teamwork abilities. The training methods can combine online courses, offline lectures, and practical operations to ensure effective training outcomes.

3.2 Operational mechanisms and management norms

Planning and Implementation Process of Support Activities.

Needs Research: Conduct surveys and interviews to understand students' mental health needs and provide a basis for activity planning.

Activity Planning: Design a variety of support activities based on the results of needs research, such as psychological lectures, group counseling, and one-on-one counseling.

Activity Implementation: Clarify the time, location, participants, and specific procedures of the activities to ensure their smooth progress.

Effect Evaluation: Evaluate the effectiveness of the activities through surveys and interviews, collect students' feedback, and adjust and optimize the activity content in a timely manner.

Supervision and Evaluation Mechanisms.

Regular Evaluation: Regularly assess the effectiveness of peer support activities, including participation, student satisfaction, and improvement in psychological problems.

Feedback Mechanism: Establish feedback channels to collect opinions from students and peer supporters in a timely manner and make adjustments and improvements based on the feedback.

Incentive Mechanism: Recognize and reward outstanding peer supporters to encourage their active participation in activities.

3.3 Information platforms and resource sharing

Construction of Online Support Platforms.

Develop an integrated peer support network platform that includes functions such as information dissemination, online consultation, resource sharing, and activity registration. The platform can feature sections on mental health knowledge, online consultation, and activity announcements to facilitate students' access to information and participation in activities. Clarify the management rules and operational procedures of the platform to ensure its smooth operation and information security.

Integration and Dissemination of Mental Health Resources.

Integrate mental health resources from both within and outside the school, including mental health books, lecture videos, online consultation platforms, etc., to provide students with a wealth of learning resources. Regularly push relevant mental health resources based on students' psychological needs and interests to help them improve their mental health levels.

4 Design and implementation of precise intervention models

4.1 Connotation and objectives of precise intervention

Connotation of Precise Intervention.

Precise intervention refers to the development of targeted psychological intervention plans based on individual differences and specific psychological problems of students to enhance the effectiveness of intervention. Precise intervention emphasizes individualization, dynamism, and outcome orientation, aiming to provide the most suitable psychological support for students.

Objectives of Precise Intervention.

Alleviate Psychological Problems: Help students relieve anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems through precise intervention to improve their mental health levels.

Enhance Psychological Adjustment Abilities: Assist students in mastering effective psychological adjustment methods to strengthen their ability to cope with stress.

Promote Personal Growth: Through psychological intervention, promote students' self-awareness and development, and enhance their overall quality.

4.2 Implementation steps of precise intervention

Problem Identification and Assessment.

Psychological Testing: Use standardized psychological assessment tools, such as the SCL-90, Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS), and Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS), to comprehensively evaluate students' mental health status.

Interviews and Observation: Conduct one-on-one interviews with students to understand the specific manifestations and causes of their psychological problems. Observe students' behaviors in class and daily life to obtain more comprehensive information.

Development of Personalized Intervention Plans.

Goal Setting: Based on the assessment results, clarify intervention goals, such as alleviating anxiety or improving interpersonal relationships.

Method Selection: Choose appropriate intervention methods according to students' specific problems and needs, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, emotional regulation training, and group counseling.

Plan Formulation: Develop a detailed intervention plan, including specific steps, time schedules, and expected outcomes.

Monitoring and Adjustment of the Intervention Process.

Regular Monitoring: During the intervention process, regularly communicate with students to understand the implementation and effectiveness of the intervention plan.

Effect Evaluation: Assess the effectiveness of the intervention through psychological testing and interviews, and adjust the intervention plan in a timely manner.

Dynamic Adjustment: Adjust the intervention methods and plans dynamically based on students' feedback and evaluation results to ensure the effectiveness of the intervention.

4.3 Specific methods and techniques of precise intervention

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy helps students identify and change unreasonable cognitive patterns to improve emotions and behaviors. For example, through cognitive restructuring, students can recognize their negative thinking and adjust their ways of thinking. During the intervention process, peer supporters can guide students to record their thoughts and emotions, help them identify unreasonable cognitions, and establish positive cognitive patterns through discussion and practice.

Emotional Regulation Training.

Emotional regulation training teaches students effective emotional management skills to better cope with emotional fluctuations. For example, techniques such as deep breathing and relaxation exercises can help students relieve tension and anxiety. During the intervention process, peer supporters can organize emotional regulation training activities, such as emotion diaries and relaxation exercises, to help students master emotional management skills.

Group Counseling.

Group counseling enhances students' social skills and psychological support systems by organizing group activities. For example, activities such as group games and role-playing can help students improve interpersonal relationships and boost self-confidence. During the intervention process, peer supporters can organize regular group counseling activities, such as psychological team-building exercises and group discussions, to help students gain support and growth within the group.

5 Optimization suggestions for peer support networks and precise intervention in the mental health of vocational college students

5.1 Strengthening the top-level Design of mental health education

Improving the School's Mental Health Education System.

Increase the proportion of mental health education courses in the curriculum of vocational colleges and offer courses such as "Mental Health and Psychological Adjustment" and "Professional Psychological Quality" to help students systematically learn about mental health knowledge. Strengthen the construction of mental health education faculty by recruiting professional teachers and training existing teachers to enhance their capabilities in mental health education.

Position peer support networks as an important component of the school's mental health education and clarify their role within the mental health education framework. Develop a list of responsibilities for peer support networks to ensure that peer supporters can effectively carry out their duties.

5.2 Enhancing the professional abilities of peer supporters

Continuous Training and Professional Support.

Establish a regular training mechanism to conduct targeted training activities based on the actual needs of peer supporters, such as updating psychology knowledge and improving counseling skills. Provide professional psychological support and supervision for peer supporters to help them solve problems and difficulties encountered in their work.

Psychological Supervision and Experience Sharing Mechanisms.

Establish a psychological supervision mechanism to regularly guide and monitor the work of peer supporters to enhance their professional level. Organize regular experience-sharing activities among peer supporters, where they can analyze and discuss cases to improve their practical abilities.

5.3 Reinforcing campus culture and environmental support

Creating a Positive Campus Atmosphere.

Conduct mental health publicity activities and hold mental health-themed lectures to create a positive and uplifting campus cultural atmosphere. Optimize the campus environment to provide students with comfortable learning and living conditions, reducing the impact of negative environmental factors on mental health.

Promoting Students' Mental Health Awareness.

Use campus media and bulletin boards to widely disseminate mental health knowledge and raise students' awareness of mental health. Regularly hold mental health-themed activities, such as mental health months and psychological team-building exercises, to enhance students' mental health awareness and self-adjustment abilities.

5.4 Promoting collaboration among families, schools, and communities

Family Support and Integration of Social Resources.

Strengthen communication and cooperation with students' families through parent-teacher meetings and home visits to understand students' family situations and provide family support. Actively integrate social resources, such as collaborating with communities and enterprises, to offer mental health services and career development support for students.

Establishing a Comprehensive Mental Health Support System.

Develop a collaborative mechanism among families, schools, and communities, clarify the responsibilities and tasks of each party, and form a comprehensive mental health support system. Integrate resources from families, schools, and communities to achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages, providing more comprehensive mental health support for students.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Research summary

This study has provided an in-depth analysis of the current mental health status of vocational college students and proposed strategies for constructing peer support networks and methods for designing and implementing precise intervention models based on the theoretical basis and practical cases of peer support. The results indicate that peer support networks can effectively enhance the psychological support system of vocational college students, while precise intervention models can target specific psychological problems. The combination of both offers new ideas and practical approaches for mental health education in vocational colleges.

6.2 Limitations of the study and future directions

Limitations of the Study.

Sample Limitations: The sample in this study mainly comes from a single vocational college, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Short Intervention Period: Due to time constraints, the intervention activities were of short duration, making it difficult to fully assess their long-term effects.

Future Research Directions and Practical Outlook.

Expand Sample Range: Future research should cover a broader range of vocational colleges to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Long-term Tracking Studies: It is recommended to conduct long-term tracking studies to evaluate the long-term effects of peer support networks and precise intervention models.

Deepen Theoretical Research: Further deepen the theoretical research on peer support and precise intervention to provide a more solid theoretical foundation for mental health education in vocational colleges.

About the Author

Yanhua Wu, Lecturer, Master of Education, research interest : psychological problems of college students and interpersonal relationships.

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