

Research on the Integration of Confucian Benevolence into Mental Health Education for Middle School Students

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Abstract: The mental health of adolescents is an indispensable part of school work. In response to the national cultural confidence concept and to improve the quality of mental health education, while exploring the value of China's outstanding traditional culture, mental health education workers can start with Confucian benevolence. By delving into the value of Confucian benevolence and integrating it with mental health education, they can develop localized mental health education teaching resources. This article first explains the importance of incorporating Confucian benevolence into mental health education, as well as its shortcomings. Finally, it analyzes relevant integration pathways, aiming to provide insights for incorporating Confucian benevolence into secondary school mental health education and promote the mental health level of students.

Keywords: Confucianism's Doctrine of Benevolence; Middle School Student; Psychological Health Education.

1. Introduction

The work of mental health for primary and secondary school students is related to moral education, national development, and national rejuvenation. Therefore, China attaches great importance to the mental health of young people. In recent years, there has been an increasing trend of psychological problems and "risk situations" among adolescents. Many schools have made efforts in mental health education, offering activities such as school psychological counseling and lectures. But this remedial educational approach cannot truly solve the problem. Some schools, even if they offer mental health courses, still have problems such as limited class hours, outdated content, serious problem orientation, and a focus on theory over experience. [1]

General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized cultural confidence, insisting on the creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional culture. During multiple visits to Confucian holy sites for investigation and research, it was emphasized that "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation requires the development and prosperity of Chinese culture as a condition," highlighting the value of excellent traditional Chinese culture with Confucian culture as its backbone. Confucian culture is the mainstream culture of Chinese culture, subtly influencing the spirit and character of the Chinese people. Confucian benevolence is a universal humanitarian concern and sincere goodwill that comes from the heart and extends to others. Confucianism emphasizes self-cultivation and advocates strengthening and stabilizing one's inner self through self-cultivation, thereby forming good character. Integrating Confucian benevolence into middle school students' mental health education is not only a creative transformation of traditional Chinese culture. It is also an exploration of localizing mental health education.

2. The Importance of Integrating Confucian Benevolence into Middle School Students' Mental Health Education

Teenagers are in the early stages of adolescence and face various mental health challenges such as self-identity, significant emotional changes, interpersonal communication, and academic pressure. According to the psychological development characteristics of adolescents, this period is not only a "high-risk period" for psychological problems, but also a critical period for cultivating positive personality and promoting mental health. However, traditional mental health education often focuses on "problem orientation", and there are still shortcomings in cultivating positive qualities and developing personal potential. And teenagers have the ability to stimulate their own potential, so it is necessary to constantly guide them to regulate themselves, cultivate positive psychological qualities, thereby enhancing their sense of happiness and laying a solid foundation for a thriving life. The current mental health education for middle school students is based on Western psychology theory, mainly using technical means such as scale screening, cognitive correction, and behavioral training. Although it has a relieving effect on some symptoms, Chinese middle school students are rooted in the soil of Chinese culture and need to explore and utilize local mental health education resources in order to be closer to the lives of middle school students and meet their deeper psychological needs. The Confucian philosophy of benevolence contains concepts such as "the benevolent do not worry" and "self-cultivation is the foundation", which is a wisdom that cultivates the mind and nature from the "root". Integrating the concept of benevolence into education is not about replacing professional treatment with moral preaching, but rather about building a psychological defense line for young people based on cultural background, and striving to explore Chinese style mental health education. [2]

3. The Inadequacy of Integrating Confucian Benevolence into Middle School Students' Mental Health Education

(1) Insufficient resources for mental health education

The current mental health education in primary and secondary schools often draws on the theoretical system of Western psychology, but lacks effective integration with Chinese local cultural resources in terms of curriculum content and teaching methods. And currently, the development of psychology is relatively prosperous, but the theory and technology that can be applied to middle school students' mental health education have not yet formed a connection, and there has not been a certain degree of achievement transformation. The theories used in psychological health education for middle school students are relatively outdated. At present, there is a lack of unified mental health textbooks, which requires mental health educators to explore local mental health education resources to support the development needs of middle school students' mental health. The excellent traditional culture of China has a long history, but educators have not yet deeply explored and excavated the psychological health education resources and values of traditional culture. The integration of traditional culture into mental health education has not yet formed a systematic and curriculum based practical system, and there is a lack of deep integration between traditional cultural education and mental health education.

(2) Emphasize problem intervention over positive quality cultivation

Current school mental health education is often problem oriented, focusing on screening, diagnosis, and intervention of psychological problems, while insufficient attention is paid to cultivating positive psychological qualities in adolescents. This post cut education model neglects the preventive function of mental health and the development of positive psychological resources. The positive qualities advocated by Confucian culture, such as benevolence, filial piety, loyalty, and forgiveness, can precisely make up for this deficiency. Positive moral qualities are the essence of Confucian culture, and the positive psychological qualities studied in Western positive psychology are highly compatible with the positive qualities advocated by Confucian culture. [3]

(3) The integration path is single and lacks systematicity

In practical research, the existing education practices on positive psychological qualities are relatively abundant, focusing on college students from the perspective of objects, while research on primary and secondary schools is relatively scarce. In terms of content, courses related to Confucian culture and positive psychology are relatively independent sections, and the teaching of Confucian culture is also simply knowledge-based. In terms of practical forms, the current exploration of practice is mostly in fragmented forms such as "classic recitation", "story explanation" or "theme class meetings". Although these activities have certain educational value, they lack systematic and standardized curriculum design. At the same time, there is a lack of a systematic path from curriculum design, campus culture, and practical activities to home school collaboration. The modern transformation of traditional cultural psychological wisdom has not been fully realized, and there is a lack of conceptual integration between classical texts and modern psychological theory at the theoretical level. There is also a lack of three-

dimensional design for theme modules and subject infiltration at the curriculum level.

(4) Insufficient teaching staff and cultural literacy

Firstly, there is a shortage of mental health teachers. Although the mental health teacher system is relatively complete in the eastern coastal areas, there is also a shortage of mental health teachers in remote western areas. Secondly, the vast majority of mental health education teachers graduated from psychology majors and have a systematic understanding of Western psychological culture, with little knowledge of Confucian classic texts and the connotation of benevolence. Even if some teachers agree with the value of traditional culture, they often do not know how to translate it into operational teaching activities, coaching discourse or activity design. The shortcomings of teacher literacy have become the most direct bottleneck in integrating practice, making it difficult to naturally integrate Confucian benevolence into mental health education practice, and easily leading to a situation where the two are simply pieced together. At the same time, there is a gap between the knowledge structure and teaching methods of teachers and the new requirements for integrating traditional culture, which restricts the depth and effectiveness of integration.

4. The Path of Integrating Confucian Benevolence into Middle School Students' Mental Health Education

(1) Developing a school-based psychological health curriculum with the theme of Confucian benevolence through classroom education.

Incorporate the core concepts of self-cultivation, benevolence, and harmony from Confucian culture into the curriculum of mental health education. Course content can be designed around the six major thematic modules of the Outline. For example, incorporating the idea of "do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself" into interpersonal themes, and incorporating the theme of "the benevolent do not worry" into the life adaptation section. Realize the conceptual integration and methodological transformation between classic texts and modern psychological theories in course design. According to the actual situation of the school, appropriate courses can also be designed based on the developmental status and psychological needs of different grades in a targeted and phased manner. For example, based on age characteristics, the design is vertically stratified by grade level. Seventh grade focuses on "benevolence and self love", which refers to self-awareness and acceptance, eighth grade focuses on "loyalty and forgiveness", which refers to interpersonal communication and empathy, and ninth grade focuses on "benevolence and ease", which refers to coping with stress and the meaning of life; Horizontally developing the school-based curriculum of "Ren Xin Run Xin", using "classic theater+psychological situational drama+life case study" as the basic teaching mode. For example, when teaching "Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself", real cases of campus interpersonal conflicts are introduced to guide students to distinguish between "psychological boundaries" and "empathy". When teaching "Ren Zhe Bu Xin", anxiety emotion management is combined to explore the cognitive reconstruction wisdom of "gentleman's honesty". At the same time, integrating disciplines such as Chinese language, history, ethics, and rule of law into the infiltration points of

humanistic and psychological education, forming an interdisciplinary teaching force. In terms of curriculum, innovative teaching methods can be adopted, such as situational analysis, life case discussions, mindfulness meditation, etc., to guide students to explore the psychological world in cultural contexts. Supporting evaluation methods: Increase observation and recording of localized psychological indicators such as students' benevolence, interpersonal harmony, and self reflection, forming an evaluation system consistent with the course objectives.

(2) Cultivate positive psychological qualities through the Confucian concept of benevolence as a cultural person

It can create a campus material culture with a theme of benevolence, such as using "benevolence" as the background of campus culture and creating an immersive campus cultural environment. Naming teaching buildings with themes such as "The Tower of Gentlemen," "The Tower of Benevolence," and "The Tower of Wisdom," and constructing benevolence themed cultural walls, benevolence cultural corridors, etc., will allow Confucian culture to be felt everywhere. Constructing a campus spiritual culture centered on benevolence, carrying out Confucian classic performance stage plays, benevolence themed class meetings, gratitude education and other activities. Integrating the cultivation of the spirit of benevolence into daily educational life.

Organize practical experience activities with the theme of benevolence, such as volunteer service, community care, filial piety and respect for the elderly, to enable students to understand the true meaning of "benevolence loves others" through the practice of "acting benevolence". Through embodied practical experience, transform abstract concepts of benevolence into concrete emotional experiences and behavioral habits.

Innovative ritual education and experiential activities strengthen students' moral emotions and psychological identification through the modern transformation of traditional rituals. Appropriate modifications to rituals such as coming of age ceremonies and apprenticeship ceremonies can enhance students' sense of responsibility and belonging. Immersive psychological growth experience activities centered on Confucian self-cultivation culture can be held, allowing students to care for their inner selves and release stress through fun interactions. [4]

(3) Innovate integration methods and form a diverse integration system.

Set up a "Renzhe Storyboard" for campus broadcasting to spread the stories of benevolence and compassion around us; Design a micro habit of "Three Provinces Every Day" at the event ceremony -3 minutes before school every day to reflect on "Have I cared for others today? Have I been tolerant? Have I made progress?", and hold the "Love Culture Festival" to select "Campus Love Star" and "Most Beautiful Forgiveness Story", making the quality of love an honor that students can perceive and pursue; Systematically incorporating "benevolence, tolerance, and self reflection" into class conventions and incorporating them into behavioral indicators for comprehensive quality evaluation, transforming the concept of benevolence from an "external requirement" to a "daily guideline". Practical experience should move from "learning by listening" to "understanding by doing". On campus, a "Role Change Day" is held to allow students to experience different positions such as class teachers and cleaners, in order to understand the concept of

"putting oneself in others' shoes". A "Benevolent Mutual Aid Group" is formed to provide both academic assistance and psychological support; Co building a 'Benevolent Volunteer Service Base' with the community outside of school, organizing regular services such as respecting the elderly, assisting the disabled, and caring for the community, allowing students to gain a sense of value and belonging through 'benevolence', and fundamentally resist the erosion of 'hollow disease'. At the same time, we can start with the collaboration between families, schools, and communities. The family portal has opened a "Love and Benevolence Parent Micro Classroom" to guide parents to rebuild intimate parent-child relationships based on filial piety and brotherly love, resolve parent-child conflicts through the "loyalty and forgiveness" approach, and create a "loving and benevolent atmosphere" in the family; In terms of social cooperation, the library, traditional Chinese culture museum, and community cultural center have launched the "Weekend Benevolence Workshop" to extend the educational radius from the campus to the society, and build an all-weather benevolent education ecology. Each path has its own focus and mutual support - campus culture creates an immersive field, practical activities promote emotional internalization, family school community collaboration extends the time and space of education, and together form a three-dimensional and sustainable systematic implementation network, completely solving the dilemma of scattered paths.

(4) Enhance the teaching staff and improve the level of teaching staff

In response to the problem of insufficient moral and ethical qualities in the teaching staff, as well as the lack of ability for teachers to transform Confucian wisdom into educational resources, it is necessary to implement a combined approach of moral and psychological education to enhance the integration of moral and ethical values into mental health education, and to provide institutional guarantees to inject momentum into the integration of moral and ethical values into mental health education. In terms of teacher training, it is possible to strengthen the Confucian concept of "benevolence" among teachers by offering a "Confucian Benevolence General Lecture" to all teachers, systematically explaining the core ideas of benevolence such as "benevolence loves others" and "loyalty and forgiveness", as well as the values of modern psychology, and breaking the notion that "traditional culture is outdated". Targeting mental health education teachers and homeroom teachers, we offer targeted courses to enhance classic psychological qualities, with a focus on training teachers to translate Confucian benevolence into specific forms of classroom activity language and curriculum resources. For example, we can transform "standing up for oneself and others" into group counseling programs to cultivate students' altruistic behavior, and "reflecting on oneself three times a day" into psychological growth tools to enhance students' self-awareness, so that teachers can both understand classics and connect with teaching. At the same time, establish an interdisciplinary teaching and research community called "Renxin Education", with the participation of psychological teachers, Chinese language teachers, moral education teachers, and class teachers. Conduct monthly collective lesson preparation and case supervision, focus on real problems in students' learning and life, and gradually accumulate localized psychological education lesson libraries and activity resources. Through the joint establishment and

development of teacher training and institutional guarantees, we provide theoretical and operational talent support for the implementation of various paths, ultimately elevating the integration of Confucian benevolence into middle school students' mental health education from individual teachers' conscious behavior to a systematic action at the school level.

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