

Discussion on the Status Quo of Vocational College Students' Self-Image and its Improvement Strategies

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Abstract: An individual's self-image is a multi-dimensional and multi-structural concept. Its internal dimensions include ability, knowledge, values, personality, and temperament, and its external dimensions are physical appearance, behavior, and clothing. A good image will have a positive impact both in life and at work. We will choose appropriate clothing and makeup to modify the external image and cultivate positive qualities such as correct values and an optimistic attitude towards life to enhance internal dimensions. Among them, "personality" and "ability" mostly belong to the research category of mental health education, and "values" fit in the research field of ideological and political education. Ideological and political education and mental health education are both important components of higher education, which show similarities between them. Ideological and political education and mental health education can complement each other in many ways to enhance students' self-image.

Keywords: Self-image; Ideological and political education; Mental health education; Multi-channel improvement

Online publication: January 18, 2024

1. Introduction

In recent years, our country has encouraged and supported the development of higher vocational colleges, aiming at cultivating higher vocational college students with strong skills, good personal civilization, and a positive self-image. This is undoubtedly a good opportunity for the development of higher vocational colleges. However, after the enrollment expansion, the number of college students has increased dramatically, and the competitive environment has become increasingly fierce. Maximizing the advantages of higher vocational students in the competition among colleges at the same level, even undergraduates and graduate students, also poses a challenge to the development of higher vocational colleges. They need to improve their competitiveness in all aspects in order to remain invincible in the competition. At present, the training mode of students in higher vocational colleges generally adopts the combination of the on-campus theory of "learning + practical training" and off-campus "post-practice" learning. When students can understand and master the knowledge, ability, and wisdom they have learned and shape a good self-image, they can gain the favor and trust of enterprises. This

enhances their competitiveness, resulting in self-confidence and happiness. Therefore, it is highly necessary to improve the self-image cognition of higher vocational students. In view of this, we surveyed the students' self-image level in three higher vocational colleges in Sichuan Province, aiming to understand the current situation of self-image cognition of higher vocational students in Sichuan Province, analyze the influencing factors of self-image cognition of higher vocational students, and explore effective ways to improve their self-image.

Our survey selected the College Students' Self-Image Cognition Questionnaire compiled by Chuanying Song. The questionnaire includes two dimensions: internal self-image and external self-image. The internal self-image includes five factors, namely, ability, personality, temperament, values, and knowledge, while the external self-image includes physical appearance, behavior, and clothing. The internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire is 0.875 and the split-half reliability coefficient is 0.832, which indicates that the questionnaire is reliable and valid. In this study, freshmen and sophomores from three vocational colleges in Sichuan Province were selected as the test subjects, and 1300 questionnaires were distributed. The number of valid questionnaires recovered was 1140, and the recovery rate reached 87%. The subjects were 18–22 years old, including 506 girls, accounting for 43.60%, and 634 boys, accounting for 55.61%.

2. Survey results

2.1. Overall self-image cognitive evaluation

Through descriptive statistical analysis, *t* test, and single-factor analysis of the survey results of students' self-image cognition in three higher vocational colleges in Sichuan Province, the score of the overall self-image is average and six of the eight factors are about 3 points. Therefore, Sichuan vocational college students' cognitive evaluation of self-image is at a general level, and their self-cognitive evaluation is highly inconsistent, thus corresponding measures should be taken to improve their self-image ^[1].

2.2. Overall self-image cognitive evaluation of vocational college students of different genders

Through the analysis of the differences in the overall self-image and various elements of the self-image of college students of different genders, it is found that there are significant differences in the cognitive evaluation of college students of different genders in five aspects: knowledge, ability, physical appearance, clothing, and overall image. Specifically, boys have higher evaluations of themselves than girls. The reasons for this difference may be related to different self-evaluation standards, physiological characteristics, educational background, family economic conditions, and different social role expectations of men and women. For example, in terms of physical appearance, girls have higher requirements for their own figure and appearance, with more serious appearance anxiety.

2.3. Overall self-image cognitive evaluation of vocational college students from different regions

By analyzing the differences in college students' cognitive evaluation of the overall self-image and various elements of self-image, we can find that there are significant differences in the evaluation of ability, knowledge, behavior, personality, physical appearance, temperament, and overall image of college students from different regions ^[2]. The results of multiple analysis show that students from villages and towns, influenced by objective environment such as themselves, family conditions, and surrounding growth environment, have higher evaluation on ability, personality, values, and overall self-image than college students from cities. Due to the underdeveloped rural economy, they are less impacted by the diversification of culture and values brought by

market economy, and their traditional cultural values are relatively strong [3]. Coupled with their parents' words and actions, they are indeed better than college students from large cities and small and medium-sized cities in many aspects [4].

3. Strategic approaches to improve self-image

Through the combination of group counseling and ideological and political education of college students, experimental intervention was carried out for students with low scores. The descriptive statistics of the self-image questionnaire of higher vocational students in the experimental group and the control group were performed before and after the intervention. All data were processed by using SPSS24.0 software. After the experimental intervention, the scores of ability, knowledge, values, behavior, personality, physical appearance, temperament, and overall image of the two groups were significantly different, except for clothing, which showed that the experimental intervention had achieved good results (Table 1). The combination of group counseling and ideological and political education courses could significantly improve the level of college students' self-image cognition [5].

Table 1. Statistical analysis of the self-image questionnaire

Variable	Experimental group	Control group	<i>t</i>
Ability	3.04 ± 0.41	4.14 ± 0.39	-8.751***
Knowledge	2.87 ± 0.52	3.81 ± 0.45	-6.311***
Values	3.24 ± 0.55	3.95 ± 0.51	-4.158***
Behavior	3.02 ± 0.48	4.17 ± 0.59	-6.328***
Personality	3.35 ± 0.50	4.38 ± 0.39	-8.929***
Physical appearance	2.88 ± 0.49	3.12 ± 0.75	-1.324***
Clothing	3.47 ± 0.46	4.30 ± 0.55	-5.225
Temperament	3.10 ± 0.55	3.94 ± 0.69	-3.625**
Overall image	3.12 ± 0.25	3.98 ± 0.28	-9.017***

3.1. Relying on the classroom to improve the cultural accomplishment of college students

First of all, teachers need to build a harmonious and interactive cultural quality training model, not only to give full play to the first lesson but also to let students improve their cultural quality in harmonious interaction. The first classroom teaching is based on professional quality, scientific and humanistic spirit, and ideological and moral education, focusing on consolidating students' professional theoretical foundation, enriching students' scientific and cultural heritage, and improving students' spiritual realm and ideal personality [6]. This requires teachers to strengthen the integration of cultural quality education content and professional education content while teaching professional courses, so that students can be influenced by humanistic spirit in a subtle way. Secondly, college students should take action to improve their cultural accomplishments. They can read more books and watch literary films to improve their cultural accomplishment [7].

3.2. Conducting etiquette courses to cultivate students' professional temperament

Individual temperament is greatly influenced by genetics and is relatively stable. Though it is flexible and not static, it changes with the development of individual cognitive level and adapts to the requirements of social environment. Professional temperament refers to the personal temperament characteristics that affect the choice

and result of professional activities ^[8]. Schools should start with professional consciousness, behavior, and external and internal images, and make a systematic curriculum arrangement for professional temperament to help students shape a clean appearance and elegant internal temperament, which will have a positive impact on students' future work and life. Professional temperament training can be added to the content of vocational skills courses. The teaching objectives of professional temperament include natural and dignified image, neat and decent personality, cordial and enthusiastic personality, self-confidence, and cheerfulness ^[9]. In skills training, it is important to emphasize these factors to students, which will bring a positive first impression. Working ability and professional ability are important goals of learning, but they are all based on ideal and positive personality, so as to actively deal with various problems in social work. Professional temperament can improve students' job adaptability and pave the way for their future career development. The cultivation of professional temperament can make up for some shortcomings in their personality, appearance, and skills, so that students can be promoted from the inside out, thus improving their self-confidence in learning and providing high-quality talents for the rapidly developing society ^[10].

3.3. Strengthening the construction of campus culture and practical activities, and cultivating correct values

The university stage is an important period for the formation of personal values. Campus culture reflects a school's educational concept and exerts a strong influence on students' ideological consciousness and behavioral habits. At present, many schools begin to focus on the construction of campus culture, and combine the construction work with other educational contents to form an educational effect that complements and promotes each other ^[11]. For higher vocational schools, campus culture should be emphasized in the process of cultivating students' life values, thus improving the effectiveness of education. Schools can publicize some advanced personal deeds of collectivism values through radio and television, campus network, publicity columns, etc., so as to create a collectivism cultural atmosphere of "I love everyone." In order to advocate and promote students to participate more in youth volunteer activities, public welfare labor, "three rural areas" activities, and activities to help the poor, the best way to integrate college students' values education with social life is to encourage college students to participate in social practice activities extensively ^[12]. On the one hand, they can learn more about society to understand themselves, find the combination point between individual and society, and gradually realize socialization; On the other hand, they can learn social norms and public ethics. Through the activities, students can strengthen the concept of labor, master labor skills, exercise the quality of will, cultivate the spirit of hardship and frugality, improve the adaptability to society, and promote the formation of core values.

3.4. Establishing professional skill associations to improve the professional ability of higher vocational students

College students should possess general skills, professional skills, and superior abilities. Generally, skills are the basic abilities we need to live, work, and study, including language expression, establishing a correct concept of time, maintaining health, self-motivation, and social skills. Professional skills are the skills required in a certain occupation, which can be divided into mechanic skills, catering skills, construction machinery skills, clothing design skills, beauty and makeup skills, automation repair skills, and so on. Community activities in campus culture should be more integrated with professional characteristics, professional skills, professional cognition, and other elements to realize the interaction and docking between campus and enterprises. Respecting the law of higher vocational students' growth and success, and constructing and developing professional skill-based associations are one of the important means to meet the actual needs of talent training in higher vocational

colleges. Professional skill-based associations are an important part of student associations in higher vocational colleges, which can effectively improve the professional quality and entrepreneurial ability of higher vocational students, promote professional development, and prosper campus culture. The cultivation of these abilities is not only a requirement for college students, but also points the way for young people to manage and develop themselves. Generally, individuals with these abilities that are better developed have a higher chance of getting recognized by society ^[13].

3.5. Shaping beautiful appearance and form

Beautiful figures include a good body proportion, moderate weight, proper muscle distribution and elasticity. College students' bodies can be easily altered in their youth. As long as they actively participate in sports and exercise, they can gain a healthy and beautiful figure, which makes people full of vigor and motivation. As the saying goes, "stand straight, sit upright, eat appropriately," which means paying attention to behavior and posture ^[14].

3.6. Practicing proper behavior

As knowledgeable and educated individuals, college students should master common-sense etiquette during certain situations, such as meeting for the first time, attending dinner and gathering, visiting friends, etc. Knowledge is necessary in these situations. For example, during the conversation, one should be natural, pleasant, and clear, listen to the other person patiently, and do not simply interrupt the other person, thus increasing one's interpersonal charm.

4. Research prospect

The research prospect includes exploring the influence mechanism of self-image and understanding how self-image affects outcome variables, such as the influence of self-image on competitiveness and the influence of self-image cognition on individual mental health. Understanding its potential influencing factors and mechanism can help to maximize its positive role on individuals.

Funding

Sichuan Provincial Key Research Base for Philosophy and Social Sciences, Mental Health Education Research Project "Research on Self-Image Cognition Improvement Strategies of Higher Vocational Students Under the Background of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities" (XLJKJY202114C)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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