

Research on the Practical Paths of Life Education for College Students

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Abstract: For Generation Z, the rapid development of the social economy and internet information technology has brought unprecedented challenges to the physical and mental health of college students. Proper guidance on life outlook and life values plays a crucial role in college students' personal development, mental health, and social adaptability. This paper points out the significant value of life education in enhancing the sense of life value, improving life quality, and promoting social harmony. It analyzes the practical dilemmas faced in life education practice, such as the gap between theoretical research and practical application, insufficient support for life education in the existing education system, and college students' weak awareness of life. Based on the goals and content of life education, it explores specific educational practice paths, including curriculum design, teacher team building, campus culture construction, home-school-community collaboration, and the application of modern technology, to create comprehensive and multi-dimensional life education. The aim is to help college students establish a correct outlook on life, enhance life value, lay a solid foundation for future development, and promote social harmony.

Keywords: Life education; Life values; Mental health; Practical paths

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1. The importance and necessity of life education

Life education is the foundation of traditional education, relating to personal all-around development, family happiness, and social sustainable development. Over the past three decades, incidents of suicide and homicide among college students caused by psychological problems have emerged one after another, such as the 1996 Nanjing University Corpse Dismemberment Case, the 2004 Yunnan University Ma Jiajue Case, the 2011 Central South University "5·8" Campus Love Murder Case, the 2015 Fudan University Poisoning Case, the 2023 Luoyang Institute of Technology Homicide-Suicide Case, the 2024 Xiangtan University Oatmeal Poisoning Murder Case, and the 2024 Wuxi Vocational Institute of Arts and Technology Graduate Xu Moujin's Knife Attack Case (resulting in 8 deaths and 17 injuries). Additionally, incidents such as college students' hanging, jumping off buildings, and suicide by taking drugs occur almost every year. These tragic campus incidents force us to reflect: "Who is to blame for the frequent occurrence of extreme cases?" Factors include human nature's good and evil,

external environmental influences, etc. How to avoid such incidents? How to conduct pre-intervention for college students' mental health? According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 700,000 people die by suicide worldwide every year, and suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among people aged 15–29^[1].

Data shows that the suicide rate of college students in some Chinese universities is about 2.37 per 100,000, and suicide accounts for approximately 47.2% of non-natural deaths^[2]. Facing the multiple challenges of rapid social development and personal growth, college students are encountering unprecedented psychological pressure^[3]. Many college students may feel confused or even desperate about life when facing pressures from academic performance, employment, and interpersonal relationships, leading to suicidal ideation (SI). Suicidal ideation is a strong predictor of suicide attempts and completed suicide, and adolescence and early adulthood are the peak periods for the first occurrence of suicidal ideation^[4]. This not only affects personal healthy development but also poses a potential threat to family and social stability. The fundamental goal of education is to cultivate “people”. Therefore, the importance and necessity of life education for college students have become increasingly prominent. Carrying out life education to help students establish a correct outlook on life, recognize the value of life, and develop a positive, confident, and resilient attitude towards life is the foundation for personal healthy growth and the cornerstone of promoting social sustainable development.

2. Practical dilemmas of life education for college students

2.1. Insufficient national support in legislation, finance, and education

Laws are the criterion for restricting people's criminal behavior. Behind illegal and criminal acts such as intentional homicide, human trafficking, and organ trading, in addition to factors such as profit-seeking and hatred of society, the fundamental reason is the lack of reverence for life and a serious deficiency in life values^[5]. Therefore, life education is not only a universal education that college students need to receive before entering society but also an education that runs through the entire growth process from birth. Thus, strong national support for life education plays a guiding role.

2.2. Lack of death education at the social level

Influenced by traditional Chinese superstitious ideas, people often avoid talking about death, leading to college students' immature understanding of death and occasional disregard for life. When dealing with the death of relatives, friends, or classmates, they may feel confused, indifferent, or immersed in grief for a long time and unable to recover^[6].

2.3. Insufficient attention and support from colleges and universities

Colleges and universities pay insufficient attention to and support for life education, with inadequate coverage and depth of educational content, practical activities that fail to closely meet students' actual needs, and an underdeveloped evaluation system. From the perspective of recognition, educators and students do not attach enough importance to life education, regarding it as an optional component, which directly affects the in-depth advancement of life education. From the perspective of implementation strategies, the existing education system lacks systematic curriculum design, textbook compilation, and teaching method innovation for life education, and the construction of the teacher team is incomplete. From the perspective of practical effectiveness^[7], life education practices are formalistic (such as theoretical lectures and promotional posters), lacking depth

and practical results. They fail to fully mobilize students' enthusiasm for participation, making it difficult for students to empathize, deeply understand the core value of life education, and thus affecting the maximization of educational effects. The evaluation system for life education has not yet been established, resulting in a lack of scientific and systematic methods to measure educational effectiveness^[8].

3. Goals of life education

3.1. Cherish life

Cherishing life is the primary goal of life education. If life is regarded as “1”, the subsequent “0s” (representing achievements, wealth, etc.) are valuable only when “1” exists. When the awareness of cherishing life is deeply rooted in the heart, people can maintain a positive and optimistic attitude when facing setbacks and challenges, show kindness when facing weak lives, and extend a helping hand with goodwill when encountering life crises^[9].

3.2. Create life value

Life value includes multiple dimensions such as personal self-realization, social responsibility, and respect for others and nature. When people recognize that their lives are limited and unique, they generate internal motivation to create life value^[10].

The creation of life value involves overcoming difficulties, continuous reflection in life practice, correctly handling failures and setbacks, continuously enhancing individual resilience and adaptability, unremittingly pursuing and inheriting personal ideals, and forming a positive cycle of life value.

3.3. Enhance life value

The goals of life education are comprehensive. It guides students to recognize the importance of life, respect and cherish life, and maximize life value^[11]. It includes the cultivation of survival skills, life cognition, emotions, and values, as well as psychological adjustment and moral cultivation when facing the fragility and impermanence of life.

To achieve the enhancement of life value in practical education, it is necessary to balance theoretical depth and practical breadth. For example, integrate life education elements into mental health courses, offer courses on life safety and security education, and hold seminars on life value and meaning. Relying on modern technology, carry out online life education courses through network platforms to expand educational boundaries and provide students with more flexible and diverse learning approaches. It is also necessary to combine students' personal life practice with social practice^[12]. Through participating in social services, volunteer activities, scientific research innovation, etc., students integrate the realization of self-value with the needs of social development, achieving socialization and personalized development of life.

4. Content system of life education

Life education covers life knowledge education, life skills education, life emotion education, death and funeral education, and cultural life education^[13].

4.1. Life knowledge education

Systematically impart life science knowledge to improve college students' level of life science knowledge.

Enable them to comprehensively understand human biological characteristics, the origin and evolution of life, and methods for the prevention and treatment of common diseases, establishing a basic cognitive framework for life science, thereby enhancing their cognition and respect for life value^[14].

Life knowledge education also includes the scientific cognition of life phenomena, such as the origin and development of life and the basic laws of life activities. It enriches college students' scientific knowledge reserve, stimulates their interest in scientific inquiry, and cultivates their scientific thinking abilities.

Life knowledge education is also the foundation for realizing life safety education. Systematic learning of life science knowledge allows college students to understand the importance and methods of safety protection, enabling them to take correct preventive measures to protect themselves and others when facing potential life dangers^[15].

4.2. Life skills education

Systematic life skills education is an important part of life education practice. Life skills education covers a wide range of content, including the cultivation of survival skills (such as first aid skills and disaster escape knowledge), which are basic skills to ensure individual safety. It also includes health management skills needed in daily life, such as nutrition and health care, and psychological self-regulation. Mastering these skills helps students form a scientific and healthy lifestyle.

4.3. Life emotion education

Life emotion education focuses on cultivating students' mental health, emotional management, and social communication abilities. Its core is to help students recognize and accept their emotional experiences, learn to express and regulate their emotions healthily, develop empathy, and understand the feelings and needs of others.

4.4. Death and funeral education

In the field of life education, death education and funeral education are sensitive topics that people avoid or fear talking about, but they are indeed important and unavoidable content in life education.

4.5. Cultural life education

Cultural life education emphasizes deepening college students' understanding of life, ethical care, and value pursuit from a cultural perspective. It includes the scientific exploration of the origin, development, and end of life, the cognition of psychosocial adaptation at different stages of life, and the cultural and ethical reflection on life value.

5. Practical paths of life education for college students

5.1. Curriculum design and curriculum system construction

The curriculum design and curriculum system construction of life education for college students provide psychological guarantee for enhancing students' safety awareness, life value, life quality, cultivating a sound personality, and improving their ability to respond to difficulties.

The construction of the life education curriculum system is oriented towards holistic personal development, including life education content in general education and special life education courses as public electives. Integrate life education content in general education into various disciplines, such as discussing the value and

meaning of life in psychology, sociology, or philosophy courses, popularizing life education skills and methods in military theory and labor education, and presenting classic cases of life education in law and ethics courses.

5.2. Construction and development of the teacher team

Teachers are theoretical researchers and educational implementers of life education. Building a professional teacher team in educational practice that can gain insight into students' psychology, detect crises promptly, and establish effective communication is the key to achieving the goals of life education.

5.3. Integration of campus culture and life practice

Integrate campus culture with students' life practice to imperceptibly cultivate students' awareness of respecting, cherishing, and loving life, creating a good environment for the implementation of life education in colleges and universities.

Establish campus institutional culture, such as safety education regulations and psychological counseling support, to provide institutional guarantees for life education. Carry out a variety of campus cultural activities, such as psychological melodramas, community safety officer grid management, and fire safety social practice, allowing students to experience and understand the diversity of life value in actual life safety work scenarios.

5.4. Home-school-community collaboration

The family is the primary position for life education of college students. Family values and educational methods have a profound impact on students' outlook on life. Among college students with psychological problems, the majority suffer from psychological issues or feelings of hopelessness due to family disharmony, tense family relationships, or sudden family changes. Active parental participation and providing a growth environment full of love and respect can play a positive guiding and exemplary role during the formation of students' values.

5.5. Application of internet platforms

The widespread application of network technology has brought new opportunities and challenges to life education for college students. The virtuality and openness of the network environment provide a broader space and diverse educational resources for life education. With the help of network platforms, the interactivity, timeliness, and engagement of education have been significantly enhanced, improving the attractiveness and effectiveness of life education.

6. Conclusion

In-depth exploration and improvement of the practical paths of life education for college students are of great significance for cultivating a sound personality, promoting mental health, and enhancing life value. Curriculum design and curriculum system construction are the foundation of life education for college students. The integration of campus culture and practical life is an effective way to improve the effect of life education. The collaborative cooperation among families, society, and schools builds a comprehensive support system for the life education of college students. The application of modern technology and network platforms provides new perspectives and methods for life education of college students.

In summary, life education for college students is a comprehensive topic that integrates theory with practice. Educational researchers, practitioners, and policymakers need to work together to protect college students'

growth in a healthy psychological environment. Future research should pay more attention to the depth and breadth of theory, the innovation and integration of practice, and the deepening of interdisciplinary and inter-departmental cooperation to jointly promote the development of life education for college students.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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