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An Empirical Analysis on Mental Health of Agricultural College Students

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Abstract Based on the empirical survey of 2013–2016 college students in Northwest A&F University, we analyze the 9260 valid samples, and the survey involves emotional state, self-worth, psychological adjustment capacity and students' attitude towards mental health education. On the basis of statistical data, we summarize the general situation of agricultural college students' mental health, analyze the problems in agricultural college students' psychological development and bring forward the feasible recommendations.

Key words College students, Mental health, Current situation, Recommendations

1 Introduction

Mental health is a level of psychological well-being, or an absence of mental illness. It is the psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment. The contemporary college students are dominated by the post–1990 generation, and the educational environment and living background are changed dramatically. Their psychological characteristics and behavioral development have distinct characteristics of the times. In order to fully and accurately understand the psychological development of agricultural college students and improve relevance and effectiveness of college students' psychological education and management, we conduct a survey on 2013–2016 undergraduate students in Northwest A&F University. The purpose of this study is to understand the mental health status of agricultural college students, and this paper analyzes the problems in the psychological development of agricultural college students and makes some recommendations for mental health education work concerning agricultural college students.

2 Research methods

2.1 Samples In this study, we select 9260 undergraduate students in Northwest A&F University as samples, including 4726 boys and 4534 girls. It involves 19 colleges and 65 majors such as humanities and social sciences, economics and management, agriculture, engineering and science. There are 2880 freshmen (2016), 2320 sophomores (2015), 2016 juniors (2014) and 2044 seniors (2013).

2.2 Research tools and procedures The study uses questionnaire for survey, and designs a total of 20 questions, involving

four aspects of emotional state, self-worth, psychological adjustment capacity and students' attitude towards mental health education. The Ruige Network Test System of School Counseling Center is used to carry out the survey, and the counselors of colleges organize students to take test in testing room. After exporting all data and excluding invalid data, SPSS17.0 is used for statistical analysis. On the basis of the questionnaire, the research group randomly selects the students with different majors in 12 different groups (20–30 people per group) for in-depth discussion, and the issues reflected in the questionnaire are additionally surveyed.

3 Survey results and analysis

3.1 Self-worth

3.1.1 Personality. Contemporary college students make positive assessment on their personality and four main personalities include optimism (72.6%), kindness (72.3%), good faith (50.3%) and integrity (47.4%). The main negative personalities include (27.3%), impatience (18.6%) and cowardice (11.4%). The proportion of remaining negative personalities is lower than 10% (see Fig. 1).

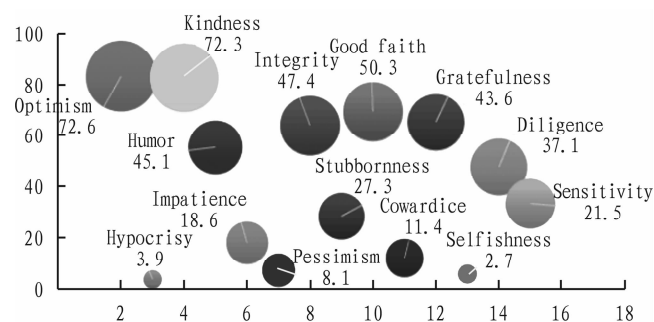


Fig. 1 The personality of students (%)

3.1.2 The main factors affecting college students' growth. Data show that 58.0% of seniors believe that "college classmates or friends" have the greatest impact on themselves, more important than "counselors, head teachers" (17.2%), "others" (3.0%), "teachers" (6.3%), "parents and other family members" (6.1%) and "themselves" (9.4%). Compared with freshman,

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the peers' influence is enhanced significantly (32.6%).

3.1.3 Sense of purpose. College students' sense of purpose is enhanced year by year but further analysis shows that even the senior graduate students with no clear target still account for 19.3% (freshman 38.5%, sophomore 32.8%, 28.4% junior).

3.1.4 Self-satisfaction. The seniors "very satisfied" or "quite satisfied" with their personality account for 88.6%, and data results suggest that college students' self-satisfaction degree declines grade by grade, but improves slightly in the fourth year. In accordance with satisfaction degree, it is in the descending order of arts > engineering > economics and management > science > humanities and social sciences > agriculture.

3.2 Emotional state

3.2.1 Main emotional experience. Contemporary college students' overall emotional state is dominated by happiness, and the top four emotional states are happiness (84.8%), calm (57.9%), satisfaction (52.6%) and self-confidence (40.3%). The three main types of negative emotion are confusion (17.6%), anxiety (2.1%) and self-abasement (see Fig. 2). By comparison analysis, it is found that the fourth emotion for freshman and sophomore is fullness after happiness, calm and satisfaction, while the emotion for junior and senior is self-confidence. It can be seen that the senior students are more confident than the junior students. The senior students are more prominent in the positive emotions than the students of other grades, and the proportion of negative emotions is obviously reduced.

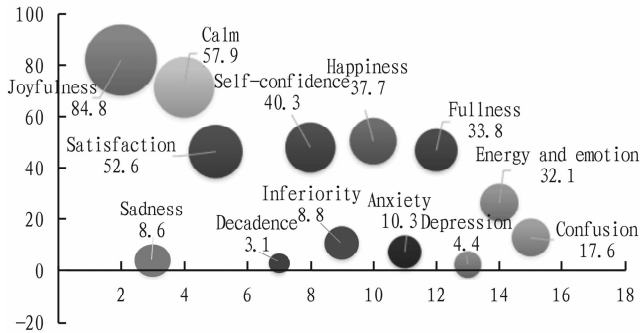


Fig. 2 Main emotional state of students (%)

3.2.2 Feeling of pressure. The feeling of pressure is surveyed in terms of employment. Results show that 8.5% of students have great employment pressure; the two colleges with minimum employment pressure are College of Information Sciences (4.0%) and College of Animal Sciences (5.2%); the two colleges with maximum employment pressure are College of Humanities and Social Development (20.0%) and College of Landscape and Architecture (13.1%). By comparing the data, it is found that the liberal arts students have greater employment pressure significantly higher than the science and engineering students.

3.2.3 Depressive tendency. The college students with possible depressive tendency account for 1.4%. The proportion of students long feeling depressed and unhappy is smallest in the majors of horticulture, animal science, electronics, wine, food and adult education; the proportion is largest in College of Innovation, up to 6%, much higher than the school average.

3.2.4 The main psychological distress. Overall, the main psychological distress for contemporary college students is academic problem, whose proportion is much higher than that of interpersonal problem, economic problem, emotional problem and employment problem (Fig. 3). The proportion of students from College of Information, College of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering and College of Water Construction facing academic problems is 61.5%, 56.8% and 50.2%, respectively, much higher than the school average.

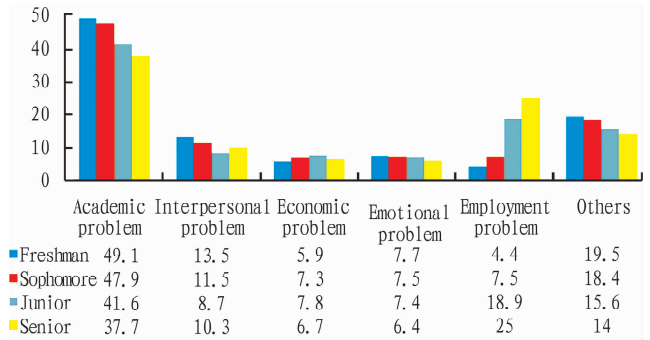


Fig. 3 The main psychological distress (%)

3.2.5 Degree of satisfaction with college life. 78.5% of the students are basically satisfied or very satisfied with the college life; 21.6% of the students are very dissatisfied with the college life, with a lot of regrets; the students from College of Economics and Management have the highest satisfaction with the college life and 89.2% of students are basically or very satisfied with the college life; the students from College of Information have the lowest satisfaction and 71.6% of them are very dissatisfied with the college life, with a lot of regrets, well above average.

3.3 Psychological adjustment capacity By data analysis and comparison, it is found that the psychological adjustment capacity of college students rises grade by grade. 46.8% of the senior graduates think their psychological adjustment capacity has been increased significantly, and 47% of them think it is slightly increased; when there is psychological distress, 56.6% of graduates choose to seek help from their peers, 14.7% of graduates choose to seek help from teachers or parents, and 12.8% of graduates choose to stand alone.

3.4 Students' attitude towards mental health education Up to 85.3% of the students think that psychological counseling is a positive way to solve psychological distress and will consider counseling if necessary. In face of psychological distress, only 1.6% of students do not consider counseling and 3.1% of students have some concerns about counseling. Data show that 87.3% of the students have no experience of psychological counseling; 11.4% of the students had 1–2 times counseling; only 1.3% of the students had 3 times counseling or more; 93.6% of the students think it is very necessary or necessary to set up mental health education courses; the students in engineering and humanities and social sciences have the strongest appeal for setting up psychology courses.

4 Discussions and recommendations

4.1 Strengthening "home-school" linkage and building solid "teachers-parents" support system for students Through the

survey, we can see that during the growth of contemporary college students, teachers and parents play a relatively weak role in academic guidance, psychological support and personality development. Counselor is an important part of college teachers, and the guide for healthy growth of college students. The school should organize long-term training for counselors to improve their ideological and political quality, professional and ethical standards and operational capabilities. At the same time, the scientific guidance and reasonable planning from the head teachers and classroom teachers is particularly important, and it is necessary to study how to play the role of the faculty in guiding students at different levels.

4.2 Emphasizing the mental health education idea characterized by clear division of labor, early prevention, early detection and protective intervention Schools and colleges should make the division of labor clear and perform their own functions, take prevention as the primary and fundamental task in mental health education work, overcome the difficulties of psychological crisis intervention, and maintain smooth information network. It is necessary to establish and improve the role of school mental health center-college psychological counselors-class mental liaison-dormitory soul angel network system, make the dormitory soul angel and class mental liaison work together, enhance communication between students, and report the students' mental health status to college counselors and psychological counseling center.

4.3 Strengthening scientific guidance and rational planning to make the students thrown into learning and life with optimal state of mind The college students can not adapt to college life as quickly as possible after being admitted to college, which is the direct cause of major psychological distress and insufficient motivation for learning, so the college should be used as the main force and it is necessary to play the role of head teachers, counselors and classroom teachers, to build a sound three-dimensional guidance system for college students. Given the current shortage of teachers in the school, there is a need to set up compulsory psy-

chological courses for the new college students in humanities and social sciences to meet their needs and explore the main channels for freshmen to adapt to education.

4.4 Enhancing training and creating a warm atmosphere of common concern about students' mental health Survey data show that for the establishment of foolproof psychological crisis protection system for college students, it is necessary to strengthen the psychological training of various types of personnel and create a warm atmosphere of common concern about students' mental health from dormitory to classroom to campus. College peer psychological counselors are a special and important force in college mental health education work, and their members come from college students, which can alleviate the pressure of professional teacher shortage. They can carry out psychological knowledge popularization, communication and psychological crisis warning in daily study and life, in order to achieve better mental health education effect.

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