

Original Paper

The Application of Chinese Cultural Psychology in Psychological Crisis Intervention for College Students with Depression and Suicide

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Abstract

At present, multiple pressures and bad guidance cause college students to fall into confusion and contradiction, which leads to such problems as selfishness, indifference, anxiety, fear, coercion and other psychological discomfort phenomena, as well as frequent suicide incidents. Eliminating the psychological crisis of college students has become an important task faced by colleges and universities. Applying Chinese cultural psychology to the psychological crisis intervention may have great guiding significance for the current psychological crisis intervention of college students. Psychological crisis intervention for suicidal ideation in patients with depression can improve their mental health level and reduce the risk of suicide.

Keywords

Suicide, College Students, Depress, Psychological Crisis Intervention, Chinese Cultural Psychology

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

According to the 2022 *Blue Book on National Depression*, the current number of people suffering from depression in China is 95 million, with depression patients aged 18 to 24 accounting for 35.32% of the total number, exceeding 33 million. According to the China Mental Health Survey, approximately 280000 people commit suicide in China every year, of which 40% suffer from depression.

At present, the incidence rate of depression among college students in China is increasing year by year. As a group with high social activity, college students, on the one hand, have to face academic pressure and employment pressure, and on the other hand, are impacted by some bad thoughts such as "lying down", individualism, and Cyberculture. Multiple pressures and bad guidance cause college students to

fall into confusion and contradiction, which leads to such problems as selfishness, indifference, anxiety, fear, coercion and other psychological discomfort phenomena, as well as frequent suicide incidents. Eliminating the psychological crisis of college students has become an important task faced by colleges and universities at present. Psychological crisis intervention for suicidal ideation in patients with depression can improve their mental health level and reduce the risk of suicide.

The main focus of cultural psychology research includes language symbols and psychological phenomena, and culture in cultural psychology is regarded as an organic component of human inner psychological functions. Language symbols are symbolic tools within the psychological system, and psychological phenomena reflect people's ways of thinking, emotional attitudes, and so on. For example, people express their attitudes, values, emotions, and feelings through chatting. The process of communication not only involves obtaining literal information, but also involves acquiring implicit content, including communication skills, intonation, speaking speed, pauses, facial expressions, etc. These all need to be understood in culture. In cultural psychology, culture is a tool that people can use to acquire knowledge, concepts, and structures, thereby better understanding psychology.

Chinese cultural psychology is a psychology that studies the psychology and behavioral patterns of the Chinese people from the perspective of Chinese culture and psychology. The profound traditional Chinese culture provides the possibility to overcome the psychological health dilemma of college students, especially the epitome of traditional Chinese culture - Confucianism culture, which includes many psychological health elements that emphasize the meaning of life, the principles of dealing with people, and methods of mental adjustment. These elements contain the thinking of ancient sages on the psychological wisdom of ideals, beliefs, and meaning of life, and apply Chinese cultural psychology to the psychological crisis intervention of college students, which is beneficial for alleviating depression, improving mental health levels, and reducing the suicide rate of patients, and has important guiding significance for the current psychological crisis intervention of college students.

1.2 Statement of Research Problems

According to the current phenomenon of frequent psychological crises among college students, relying solely on past Western psychological theories and methods is clearly not enough. At present, the main basis for mental health education in Chinese colleges and universities is Western psychological education theories, which carry out educational activities through general education courses, elective public psychology courses, and one-on-one counseling at psychological counseling centers. Although Western psychological education theories have many valuable educational ideas and methods that are worth learning from in Chinese colleges and universities, there are significant differences between Chinese local culture and Western culture. Western psychological theories and systems often struggle to explain local psychological phenomena, and cognitive differences due to different national conditions also determine that we cannot fully absorb Western psychological education theories. For example, there is a gap between the popular positive psychology in the West and Eastern culture, and there is also a certain degree of "acclimatization" when it is accepted by the public and put into practice. On the

one hand, some positive psychology scholars strongly emphasize positivity unilaterally and completely negate negativity, viewing "positivity" as the answer to all problems, to the extent that many people view positive psychology as a facelift of "success" or a shallow chicken soup for the soul, seriously affecting the recognition of positive psychology. On the other hand, positive psychology is rooted in Western culture. Even though it focuses on the external environment of groups and society, it still has strong individualistic and liberal characteristics in essence. The pursuit of happiness is not completely equivalent to the understanding of happiness in mainstream Chinese values and traditional values. For example, American psychologist Ellen Langer particularly emphasizes "mindfulness", which she sees as the power of positive psychology. She believes that "no one can understand everything, because everything is constantly changing, and the uncertainty that comes with it requires us to invest more attention", and "once I emphasize mindfulness, I no longer care about other people's gossip and fear of making mistakes, but instead smile at various so-called mistakes". However, the Chinese way of thinking emphasizes comprehensive thinking and a holistic approach, taking into account the feelings and needs of others when thinking and acting, emphasizing interpersonal relationships and harmonious coexistence. This focus on others makes it impossible for Chinese people to be "mindful". The differences in social and cultural values between the East and the West make the research of cultural psychology in China unique and needs to be combined with traditional Chinese culture. When the conflict between the individual and the collective occurs in college students and leads to psychological crisis, completely intervening in Western psychological theories for college students is clearly in conflict with the values education they received from a young age, and even more detrimental to problem-solving. Faced with the poor effectiveness of Western style psychological education, the researcher delves into the psychological elements of excellent Confucian culture and achieves a deep integration of Confucian culture and psychological crisis intervention for college students through diverse educational channels.

There is limited literature on the application of Chinese cultural psychology to suicide research. Some scholars have taken suicidal behavior in the Chinese population as an example to study the characteristics of factors that affect the formation of suicidal ideation and survival reasons in the Chinese population, as well as the impact mechanism of cultural factors on suicidal psychology and behavior in the Chinese population. There are various ways to prevent and intervene in suicidal behavior, and different intervention techniques are used according to different suicide populations and psychological stages. Currently, the mainstream prevention and intervention measure for suicide is cognitive behavioral therapy, mainly applied to college students, depression patients, and other populations, and has achieved certain intervention effects. According to statistics, the suicide rate in China has been consistently high in recent years, and suicide has become the leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 34, and the age of suicide is constantly decreasing. In the face of a severe shortage of psychotherapists, finding effective and simple intervention methods and treatment measures is a serious issue.

1.3 Key Research Questions

1. What are the suicide factors for depression among Chinese college students?
2. What measures are there to intervene in the psychological crisis of Chinese college students?
3. How can Chinese cultural psychology intervene in the psychological crisis of suicide among college students?

1.4 Key Aim & Objectives

Psychological crisis can have negative impacts on various aspects of an individual's life, such as social interaction, learning, and work. The researcher applies Chinese cultural psychology to optimize the intervention methods for depression and suicidal psychological crisis among Chinese college students, with the aim to help college students optimize their individual psychological qualities, enhance their mental adjustment ability, improve their mental health level, and help individuals recover from normal life to improve their quality of life, especially helping students with suicidal tendencies overcome psychological difficulties, early prevention, effective intervention, and rapid control of possible psychological crisis events among students, reducing the incidence of psychological crisis events, reducing various injuries caused by psychological crisis events, and promoting healthy growth of students.

At the same time, the researcher uses Chinese cultural psychology to carry out life education and guide students to love life, love life, and treat life well; Carry out self-awareness education, guide students to have a correct understanding of themselves, happily accept themselves, actively develop themselves, and establish confidence; Carry out crisis response education to help students understand what a crisis is, under what circumstances it may occur, and how to help students with psychological crises. Through prevention education, the researcher creates a good psychological atmosphere, guides college students to correctly understand psychological crises, enhances their adaptability and resilience, improves their ability to face difficulties and challenges, and reduces the negative impact of crisis factors, so as to avoid or reduce the occurrence of self-injury or injury to others among college students.

2. Literature Review

After graduating from the relatively closed environment of high school, college students need to face various problems independently. If these problems cannot be properly solved, they can easily develop mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, and even suicidal ideation. Suicidal ideation is the most important risk factor for college students' attempted suicide. Xue et al. (2023) pointed out that in the process of transitioning from suicidal ideation to suicidal behavior, a suicidal approval attitude is a proximal risk factor, impulsivity, frustration, family poverty, and gender are distal risk factors, and hope is a distal protective factor. Li (2022) proposed that being left behind, having religious beliefs, high stress, anxiety, and a negative and pessimistic attitude towards life are risk factors for college students to develop suicidal ideation. Yu (2023) proposed that contemporary college students' suicidal behavior is mainly influenced by five factors: cognitive bias, psychological disorders, personality traits,

psychological stress, and negative life events. Xu et al. (2022) identified suicide risk based on different demographic characteristics: Female students have higher suicide scores than male students, urban students have higher suicide scores than county, town, and rural students, children with high-educated parents have higher suicide scores than children with low-educated parents, children with parents with unstable emotions have higher suicide scores than children with parents with stable emotions, children with parents with disharmonious marriage or divorced have higher suicide scores than children with parents with harmonious marriage, and students with disharmonious family atmosphere have higher suicide scores than students with harmonious family atmosphere. Yu (2022) found that the number of suicides among college students in the post-epidemic era is significantly higher in autumn than in spring, with the main form of suicide still being jumping off buildings, the main cause of suicide being academic pressure, and the majority of suicide class being graduating class. College students have always been one of the high-risk groups for suicidal ideation in China, as well as one of the key groups for academic research and suicide prevention and control. Therefore, doing a good job in intervening in suicidal psychological crisis is a top priority in the safety work of colleges and universities.

Psychology in the context of traditional Chinese culture is not the same as Western psychology. Xu (2022) pointed out that original research rooted in Chinese culture is the core driving force behind the development of Chinese psychology. Cui (2020) proposed that Chinese psychology is not a science of the “brain”, but a science of the “spirit”. This state of the “spirit” cannot be understood through technical means, and can only be understood through the “spirit”. Liu (2019) proposed that the analysis of cultural psychology should be diversified, and the construction of philosophical theories should also be diversified. In terms of methodology, it is also necessary to gather the strengths of various scholars and absorb the experiences and methods of various interdisciplinary disciplines. Bai (2020) believed that due to the complexity of cultural propositions, especially the exploration of the position of culture in the field of psychology, the development and evolution of the relationship between culture and psychology, and how the generation of cultural psychology triggers changes in human psychology and behavior, it will still be an important issue in the theoretical research of Chinese psychology in the cultural context.

Psychological crisis intervention for suicidal ideation in patients with depression plays an important role in improving their mental health level and reducing the risk of suicide. Huang et al. (2018) pointed out that the common coping strategies for psychological collapse are Moritatherapy, Humanistic Therapy, and Zen methods. He (2017) pointed out the connection between the psychological health of college students and culture, and gave due attention to the impact of culture on the psychological health of college students. Li and Sun (2023) proposed to explore the integration of Confucian culture and college students' mental health education from the perspectives of curriculum, culture, practice, and media, so as to help college students' mental health growth while promoting Confucian culture. Li (2020) proposed that there are rich psychological education resources in traditional family education culture, such as the spirit of "being strong and promising and constantly striving for self-improvement",

the patriotic sentiment of "everyone is responsible for the rise and fall of the country", and the interpersonal view of "being tolerant" and "being considerate". Li (2021) proposed the application of Chinese cultural psychology to develop and implement cultural rescue intervention strategies. Song (2018) pointed out that traditional culture has always attached great importance to human spirit and traditional harmony. Traditional culture is an important element in rescuing psychological crises. It is skillfully applied in the process of psychological nursing crisis intervention, guiding patients in crisis to work towards love, self-harmony, and environmental harmony, which will definitely help patients' concepts undergo substantial changes and promote mental health.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Interview Method

The research data of this project will be generated through interviews with a group of college students with suicidal intentions. The interviewees must meet the following three conditions simultaneously: (1) Meeting the diagnostic criteria for depression in the CCMD-3; (2) Having suicidal thoughts and behaviors during college; (3) Developing and implementing psychological crisis intervention strategies using Chinese cultural psychology, with the entire intervention process being the responsibility of teachers with psychotherapist qualifications.

Finally, referring to the efficacy evaluation criteria: (1) the reduction rate of scores on the SDS and SAS exceeds 75% and the complete elimination of suicide attempts is considered significant; (2) The reduction rate of SDS and SAS scores is between 50% and 75%, and it is effective if one has suicidal thoughts but can control them; (3) Persisting in suicide attempts is ineffective.

3.2 Case Analysis Method

The researcher will select publicly reported suicide incidents among Chinese college students, study the factors that affect their suicidal behavior, such as family factors, negative life events, mental illness, personality factors, and lack of positive coping styles, and propose corresponding intervention strategies to prevent and reduce the occurrence of suicide among college students.

4. Research Significance

With the increasingly prominent psychological conflicts among college students at present, exploring new ways to intervene in college students' psychological crisis has become an important task for the development of universities. The *Outline of Moral Education in Chinese General Higher Education Institutions (Trial)* proposes to cultivate college students with strong mental adjustment abilities, which is in line with the psychological education goals contained in Confucian culture. Therefore, integrating Confucian culture into the psychological crisis intervention of college students is a necessary choice to help them grow healthily. On the one hand, the psychological wisdom contained in Confucian culture can subtly cultivate the optimistic psychological qualities of college students, reduce their psychological distress, and play an important guiding role in cultivating healthy psychology and

enhancing their psychological quality. On the other hand, integrating Confucian culture into college students' mental health education allows students to understand the philosophical principles of interpersonal communication, psychological adjustment, and life values contained in Confucian culture during the learning process, which not only helps to enhance college students' sense of identification with China's excellent traditional culture, but also strengthens the cultural confidence of college students. At the same time, it promotes Confucian culture to take root in psychological crisis intervention in colleges and universities.

The principle of benevolence and righteousness is an important principle advocated by Confucianism in handling interpersonal relationships, and also provides a reference for solving psychological problems among current college students. The interpersonal relationships of college students are worrying, and psychological barriers or crises caused by improper handling of interpersonal relationships account for a significant proportion of current college students' psychological problems. Guided by the interpersonal philosophy contained in the Confucian ideology of "benevolence and righteousness", contemporary college students should seek common ground while reserving small differences, communicate and interact with others with a respectful, tolerant, and friendly attitude, understand their difficulties, help each other, and establish harmonious interpersonal relationships.

The moderate principle advocated by the Golden Mean has important guiding significance for the mental adjustment of current college students. One is to impart the meaning of the Golden Mean, guiding college students to pay attention to self-cultivation in their daily lives to improve their psychological regulation ability, and thus avoid psychological disorders such as blind arrogance, inferiority, and extremism. The second is to teach the Golden Mean, face the difficulties in learning and life with an optimistic attitude, timely resolve external negative stimuli, maintain mental health, and achieve "happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy without expression".

The philosophy of life contained in the Confucian ideology of actively entering the world is crucial for solving the problem of values among current college students. Exploring the integration of Confucianism's active participation in the WTO and the intervention of college students' psychological crisis is of great significance for universities to solve their psychological problems in terms of ideological cognition and guide them to realize their life values.

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