

Research on the Integration Path of College Students' Mental Health Education and Ideological and Political Education

Wei Chengyuan¹

¹ Guilin University of Electronic Technology, China

Correspondence: Wei Chengyuan, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Guilin, Guangxi, China.

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Abstract

This study is designed and extended to explore the pathway between college students' mental health and ideological and political education. A thorough approach was adopted involving the literature review, the theoretical analysis, and the empirical research that dealt with the relationship between the two fields from the point of view of their contents, objectives, and strategies for their implementation. The findings disclose that the combination of mental health education and ideological and political education can lead to the formation of a positive and peaceful atmosphere in students as well as fostering their value identification and social responsibility. Vital roles are played within students' comprehensive development by promoting emotional regulation, stress management, and interpersonal skills, thus helping them live a much more fruitful life. To foster the development of higher education reform, the paper suggests an effective pattern based on the strengths of existing approaches and offers solutions that can be implemented in advance. This provides a blueprint for those who incorporate theories into practice, thus enhancing teachers' ability to apply them.

Keywords: College Students' Mental Health Education, ideological and political education, integration path, educational model, higher education reform

1. Introduction

Today's college students face a lot of challenges in their daily lives. The issues range from stress in academics to conflicts in relationships, to the problems of finding work, which altogether emphasize the mental health of the students. On the opposite end, mental health education together with political and ideological education does not fully help the students grapple with their ever-changing ideals, beliefs, and value systems. The connection between mental health education and political and ideological education has become increasingly important, as it helps students develop emotional regulation, stress management, values, and social responsibility. College students experience a phase where they need to find themselves, if such mental health issues like anxiety and depression come in, they can seriously affect both the academic and personal development of the students. Ideological and political education mainly aims to guide learners in developing a proper worldview and values, but it is usually delivered through traditional methods, which are often unengaging and ineffective. The topic explores techniques for designing curriculum, teacher development, and practical activities to establish a new educational model that promotes students' holistic development. Moreover, the paper contains a theoretical model for higher education reform and innovation, as well as a practical framework to achieve this goal[1].

2. Theoretical Framework and Definition of Related Concepts

2.1 Basic Concepts of College Students' Mental Health Education

The theme of the contemporary higher education context is precisely the urgent necessity for college students' mental health learning, and its basic issues are an awesome point for the development of the future theoretical framework and integration path research. For example, mental health refers to not only an individual's emotional stability and balance, but also their abilities in cognition, behavior, socialization, and self-regulation. Early adulthood is a period of intense mental development and self-exploration for college students, and their mental condition directly affects how well they learn, how they establish bonds with other people, and how they choose to continue their future careers. Consequently, defining and understanding the concept of mental health is crucial. From the traditional psychological theories to the current psychological counseling practices, the study attributes emotional regulation, stress management, and cognitive adjustment as the most needed components of health, therefore, these are the key areas of health that require teaching college students mental health education[2].

Synthesis of mental health education for college students should be oriented not only to the individual but also to the social. It is a must for professionals in the field to redirect the focus more on students' emotional and psychological well-being by teaching them to gain self-awareness, social adaptability, and interpersonal communication skills. It is most effective when mental health education is implemented according to their developmental stage, especially for college students, with content and activities that match their cognitive development and real-life needs[3]. For instance, programs focused on emotional management, stress response, and self-regulation can help students manage the dual demands of academics and interpersonal relationships. Key issues in college students' mental health education include the principles of health, outcome-based education, content, and delivery. This will provide a scientific explanation and a comprehensive approach for different institutions to develop mental health education and upgrade the theory and practice of educational models coherently.

2.2 The Connotation and Functions of Ideological and Political Education

At the university level, political and ideological education has a decisive impact on students' mindsets, feelings about life, and values. It also addresses political theory, moral and ethical education, and the development of core socialist values. Ideological and political education is not only a form of knowledge transmission, but it is a system that puts more stress on teaching students what is correct in terms of political stance and what exact ideals and beliefs are, as they are not simply given and acquired, but shaped by both systematic theoretical study and practical activities. As a result, students gain valuable insights into the country's development and societal values. They get their thoughts near to the nation and society. Concurrently, ideological and political education refers to the process of exploring and handing down China's traditional culture, which, in turn, helps students understand the developments and goals of the society, as well as promoting their comprehensive development through their improved ethical and moral behavior[4].

Roughly, in higher education, teaching students about their ideology and politics has three main functions: First, it forms the core of the value orientation program. Here, through theoretical and practical training, students are guided toward the correct value orientations and life ideals. Secondly, it has a function of political guiding, that is, systematic political theory education gives students opportunities to understand and identify with the country's political system, policies, and social development strategies, which results in them assuming a sense of responsibility for national construction; third, it is the task of the moral norms and behavioral guidelines by providing training in ethical behavior and social conduct, which helps students develop good social behaviors and civic morality, thereby enhancing overall social civilization. In short, higher education's ideological and political education is not only a key path for cultivating high-quality talents but also a core course in the promotion of social harmony and sustainable development[5].

2.3 Theoretical Model of Integration Education and Its Constructive Logic

In today's higher education context, constructing a theoretical model of integrated education has become crucial for promoting students' overall development. On board with this are different theories such as systemic theory, holistic development theory, and educational integration theory. The growth of knowledge in the human mind is a synthetic process of the mind through which creativity is nurtured. Central to this approach is teaching each child to think critically about the world to foster empathy and creativity. The model of integration education tends to think of learning as a change in the meaning of "from knowing to doing" rather than just about the theoretical aspects of the subject at hand. The practical aspect of the class involves not only the systematic teaching of theoretical knowledge but also experiential practice in emotional regulation, stress management, and the development of ideal traits[6]. Operational and constructive logic can be categorized as follows: first, using redesign of course modules, it connects mental adjustment and emotional management with political theory and moral education in a well-structured and well-thought-out teaching system. The second is how it stresses that curriculum development must be a mutual effort conducted by a confident team. Thus, it advocates for the joint education of the faculty members and among them for the exchange and cooperation of specialists in the psychological area and ideological and political educators to maximize the results of the students; third, in terms of teaching evaluation and feedback, it employs diversified assessment methods that focus on students' knowledge acquisition and the transformation of practical skills and emotional attitudes, which are increasingly the integration model. In general, the theoretical model is laid out to develop all-round talents with a healthy psychological quality and strong aspirations which, in turn, provides scientific and systematic theoretical support and practical guidance for higher education reform[7].

3. Current Situation Analysis

3.1 Analysis of College Students' Mental Health Situation

In this study, we conducted a questionnaire survey with 500 college students from different grades, focusing on mental health indicators such as anxiety, depression, and academic/employment stress. Figure 1 below shows the overall sample data, segmented by gender and grade[8].

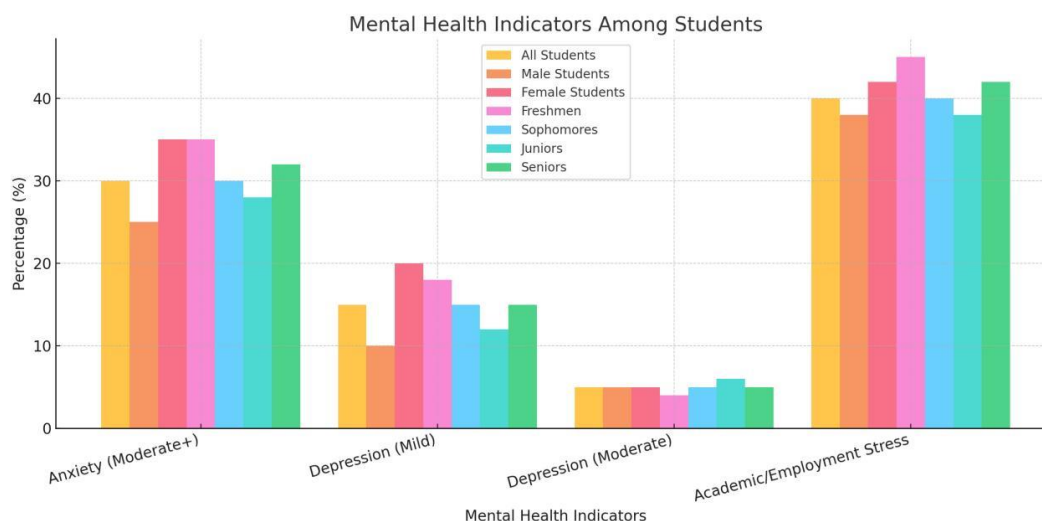


Figure 1. Mental Health Indicators Among Students

Based on Figure 1, it appears that the percentage of students who are under the influence of anxiety at a moderate or higher level is about 30%; the rate of anxiety among female students is much higher than that of male students, with the former registering 35% and the latter 25%, and thus it may be assumed that emotional regulation might be affected by gender differences. On the other hand, depression is found to be in 15% of the students who seem to be mildly depressed and in 5% who are moderately depressed. Most of the female students indicate a mild form of depression as it is reflected in the differences between them on the emotional expression and social support dimensions. Academic and job stress are also common issues, with 40% of students experiencing high stress[9]. Freshmen are the most stressed, with 45% reporting stress due to the challenges of adapting to college life. Moreover, when analyzed by grade, freshmen show higher levels of anxiety and academic stress due to difficulties adjusting to a new environment, while juniors and seniors experience a slight increase in employment stress. This indicates that psychological issues vary across developmental stages. In a nutshell, this graph in Figure 1 not only demonstrates the serious mental health problems present among college students but also provides the foundation for the development of mental health strategies that are targeted. It is a crucial guide to the structure of models that relate mental health education with ideological and political education.

3.2 Analysis of the Current Situation and Issues in Ideological and Political Education

In this study, we conducted a questionnaire survey with 500 college students to collect multidimensional data on the current situation and issues in ideological and political education. The results are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The results of ideological and political education

Indicator	All Students	Male Students	Female Students	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors
Satisfaction with Ideological and Political Education (Satisfied)	50%	55%	45%	48%	52%	50%	50%
Course Participation Rate	70%	68%	72%	75%	70%	68%	65%
High Level of Political Identification	60%	62%	58%	65%	62%	58%	55%

Table 1 indicates that almost 50% of the students are satisfied with the current ideological and political education, and it is mostly the male students who are slightly more satisfied than the female students. The participation rate of the courses is quite high at 70%, suggesting the students are very active in class discussions and individual activities. Still, only 60% of the students believe that they are politically identifying the political theories that are taught to the highest level; this rate is highest among freshmen (65%) and drops among seniors (55%)[10]. In addition, 35% of the pupils argue that the educational content is out of hand; of the practical needs, with 40 percent of the female students who think this way, which may be indicative of the dissatisfaction and uncertainty regarding the practical and relevance of the course contents. These results prove that, even though ideological and political lessons engage some students in the classroom, there is a mismatch between content design and students' actual needs. As students progress through college, their expectations regarding political identification and educational outcomes are gradually increasing. This provides evidence for improvements in ideological and political education and the integration of theory and practice.

3.3 Intersection and Integration Situation between Mental Health Education and Ideological and Political Education

The integration of mental health education with ideological and political education is achieved through a questionnaire survey that analyzes students' participation in and perceptions of integrated courses. Figure 2 shows the graphical representation of various statistical data, including the number of students, their exposure to integrated courses, their understanding of the benefits for psychological and political identification, and their overall satisfaction with the integrated education.

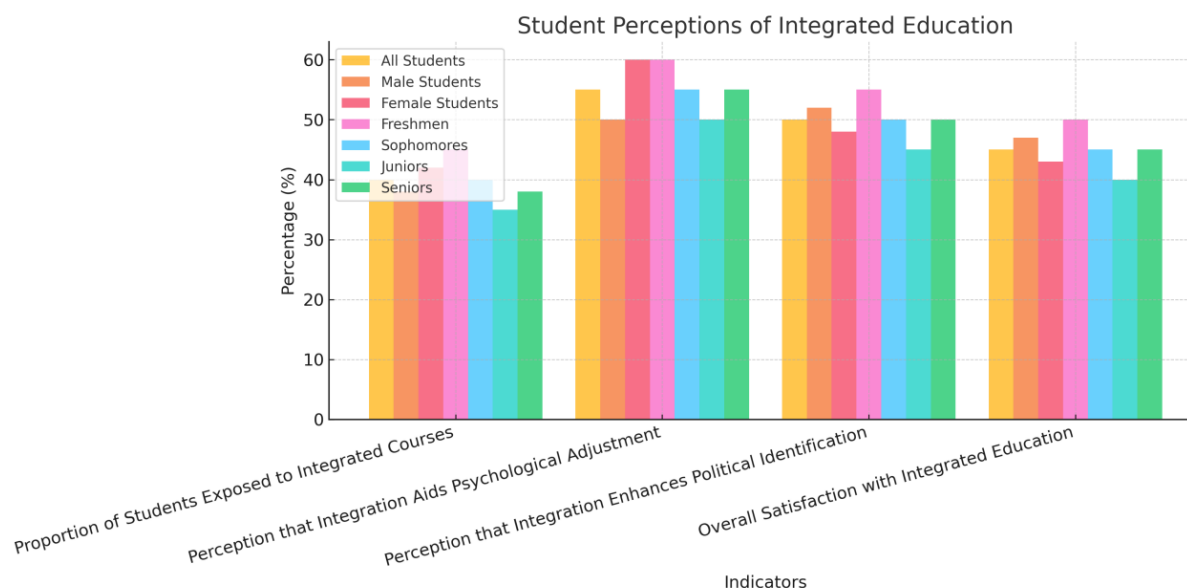


Figure 2. Student Perceptions of Integrated Education

The data presented in the figure tells us that only 40% of the students have taken part in integrated courses, with female students having a bit of an upper hand over the males as they are a little more participating, and first-year students exhibiting the highest participation, because new students usually show more readiness for the implementation of new teaching models during the adaptation period. The survey findings also reveal that about 55% of students believe integrated courses are more beneficial for psychological adjustment, whereas more than 60% of females feel the same, indicating that the positive effects are in emotional guidance and stress management. As a further contribution, 50% of students feel that integrated learning enhances their political identity, while boys tend to rate this higher than girls, suggesting that some students link their identity to political theory and experiential learning. However, the overall satisfaction with integrated education is only 45%, indicating that the current model still has shortcomings in content design and implementation effectiveness—such as a limited variety of teaching methods and insufficient integration between theory and practice. In sum, the facts point out that learners these days are still not ready to deal with their mental health issues and ideologies as a result of wrong paradigm-shifting in the provision of courses, lecturers' development, and all these processes.

4. Construction of the Integration Path and Practical Exploration

4.1 Design Thinking and Target Positioning for the Integration Path

While drafting the path for integration that ultimately makes the adoption of the idea most efficient, the primary decision here is to sketch the design thinking and position it in the niche, which serves as the key to the whole experimental work. The design thinking should kick off with utilizing the positive aspects of both education in mental health and education in political theory to the fullest, besides promoting the integration of theory and practice and the provision of diversified teaching models”. Namely in the area of the curriculum, the target is to make the learning content more attractive by creating interdisciplinary modules that are tightly interconnected with emotional management and psychological adjustment strategies and the political theory and moral education that the learners should acquire forming a well-structured and content-rich curriculum system. Regarding teaching approaches, moving away from the traditional one-sided transfer model is essential. Therefore, new methods such as case discussions, scenario simulations, group counseling, and practical activities should be implemented to engage students in active, self-directed learning. Additionally, the installation of a scientific and rational evaluation and communicational measure as a significant part of the design thinking; this can be attained by conducting regular surveys, getting information about classroom feedback, and performing on-site observations to immediately realize the efficient approach to the integrated teaching and persist in changing the content and teaching methods. About target positioning, the integration path endeavors to develop comprehensive skills in those who are both psychologically healthy and have firm ideals and beliefs. First, the goal is to make young people resilient academically, spiritually, and professionally, and teach them self-adjustment and emotional management, thereby laying a stable foundation for mental health. The second one is that we have to educate our students with ideological and political knowledge in a way that they can gain the correct values, a sense of social responsibility, and a positive outlook on life, which will help them to continue having a clear political insight and unshaken ideals when being in a chaotic and ever-changing society. The integration path aims to equip students with this knowledge and these skills. This will be achieved through dynamic updates to educational content, innovations in educational models, and other practical methods, supported by theoretical research, that will yield practical outcomes for higher education reform. The design suggested for path integration starts by matching the needs of both the institutions and the students who are enrolling to ensure the education process is the best for efficient teaching and learning, thus, it is the primary desire of all involved.

4.2 Construction of the Integration Mechanism

In constructing a new method of integration the primary point lies in the necessity to break the already-existing disciplinary partitions and to create a field for interdisciplinary cooperation. Firstly, teachers for the curriculum need to be realigned. This realignment should involve the integration of mental health educators and ideological-political education teachers to ensure content cohesion and continuity. By linking psychology with politics and moral education, a dual-track curriculum can be developed, combining theoretical understanding with practical skills, achieving the dual objectives of knowledge transfer and skill development. Regarding teacher development, higher education institutions are encouraged to establish teams of interdisciplinary psychologists and ideological-political educators who participate in joint training and share experiences, ensuring that teaching improvements extend across departments. About outcomes, institutions can use their campus culture, volunteer services, and social practices to develop a variety of activities that center on students, and in the process, they not only teach and allow students to put into practice but also allow them to see and remember the love of the courses. Students will be able to assess themselves and showcase peer appreciation as the college-wide improvement journey emerges and continues. The next step after identification should be the setting up of a scientific evaluation and feedback mechanism, where questionnaires, classroom observations, and regular focus group discussions are supplied to the teachers who can immediately obtain results on both teaching effectiveness and students’ feedback thereby constantly changing and optimizing the integration strategy. In sum, the construction of the integrative model involves acquiring institutional guarantees and resource integration and, besides, interactive cooperation between teachers and students, such cooperation aims to create well-developed individuals who are not only mentally healthy but also have well-grounded aspirations, which, in turn, is the cornerstone of the educational change and talent development.

4.3 Analysis of Practical Cases and Evaluation of Effectiveness

The practical case analysis was a pilot integrated course from a higher education institution we selected as the research subject. Students worked with several teaching activities like special lectures, scenario simulations, group counseling, and social practice over one semester of integrated teaching reform. In this situation, the school naturally merged psychological adjustment content into its existing ideological and political education curriculum.

To solve the similar problems of emotional regulation and academic stress college students usually face, a more concrete course titled “Spiritual Growth and Value Shaping” was developed. With the curriculum design, teacher training, and interdepartmental collaboration, the teachers, as well as the students, were more involved, which not only led to classroom interaction but also to the theoretical knowledge and practical experience being connected. For effectiveness evaluation, after course implementation, various methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, were used to evaluate indicators such as students' psychological states, emotional management, political identification, and classroom participation. The results indicated that among the students who participated in the course, their emotional management abilities significantly improved, and overall anxiety levels decreased. Meanwhile, their understanding of and identification with political theory also increased, resulting in higher classroom satisfaction. Additionally, both teachers and students reported that interdisciplinary collaboration fostered innovation, creating an effective interactive feedback mechanism that provided valuable insights for further promoting integrated education. Overall, this practical case demonstrates that the integration model has positive significance and high feasibility in optimizing educational outcomes and cultivating composite talents.

5. Conclusion

This paper examines both the theoretical background and practical paths for effectively combining mental health education with ideological and political education among college students. This research paper aims to demonstrate that the integration of emotional and brain science offers significant benefits for emotional re-adjustment and identity development. It also addresses flaws in teaching, faculty collaboration, and examination mechanisms. So, higher education institutions must implement cross-disciplinary teacher training, construct optimal curriculum designs and feedback systems, and build a scientific integration education model to help put together talents that have both good mental health and unshakable beliefs so that effective solutions in the reform of higher education are made available.

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