

The Interplay Between Students' Personal Growth and Psychological Well-being: A Practical Analysis Based on Humanistic Care-Oriented Educational Philosophy

Meilin Zhu

Tianjing University, Tianjing, 300072, China

Abstract: Based on the concept of humanistic care education, this paper explores the interactive influence of students' personal growth and mental health and its educational practice significance. Through empirical analysis of high school students, the study found that mental health and personal growth are significantly positively correlated. Students with good mental health perform better in self-cognition, emotional management and social adaptability, and positive personal growth further promotes mental health. Humanistic care education significantly improves students' mental health and accelerates their growth process through emotional support and personalized attention. Case analysis shows that Finland's "whole-person education" model and China's "double reduction" policy have both verified their role in improving students' physical and mental state. The study emphasizes the key role of humanistic care education in coordinating the relationship between the two, and recommends that schools integrate psychological counseling and interest cultivation to build a humane educational environment to promote students' all-round development and happiness.

Keywords: personal growth, mental health, humanistic care education, interactive influence, educational practice

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background and importance

The education sector increasingly prioritizes students' holistic development, emphasizing personal growth and mental health. Personal growth involves enhancing self-awareness, emotional management, and social skills^[1], crucial for self-worth and societal adaptation. Mental health impacts academic success, happiness, and future development^[2], yet students face challenges like academic pressure and career confusion, with 23.8% of Chinese college students reporting mental health issues^[3]. Humanistic care education, focusing on individuality and supportive environments^[4], improves teacher-student relationships, learning motivation, and personality development. However, few studies systematically explore the interplay between personal growth and mental health through this lens. This study analyzes their mechanisms within humanistic care education, offering insights for educational innovation and practice optimization.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study investigates the interplay between students' personal growth and mental health within the framework of humanistic care education. Its objectives are: first, to assess high school students' personal growth and mental health through surveys and interviews, analyzing their correlation; second, to compare mental health dimensions across varying

growth levels, highlighting personal growth's impact; third, to evaluate positive psychological qualities' role in personal growth and their connection to mental health; fourth, to analyze domestic and international practices to understand humanistic care education's role in balancing these factors; fifth, to propose strategies for schools to enhance mental health education, improve the educational environment, and foster students' holistic development.

2. Theoretical basis and literature review

2.1 The Core Connotation of the Concept of Humanistic Care Education

The concept of humanistic care education originates from humanistic psychology, emphasizing student-centeredness and respecting their individual development. Its core connotations include: paying attention to students' emotional needs and creating a warm and supportive teacher-student relationship; encouraging students to actively explore, learn experientially, and cultivate critical thinking and creativity; attaching importance to the shaping of students' values and guiding them to form a positive and healthy outlook on life. This concept advocates that education should return to humanity and effectively enhance students' sense of achievement and happiness. Compared with traditional exam-oriented education, humanistic care education pays more attention to the comprehensive development of students and strives to make them social citizens with healthy body and mind and perfect personality.

2.2 The interactive relationship between students' mental health and personal growth

Mental health is a sign of personal physical and mental harmony and perfect personality, while personal growth is a process of constantly improving oneself and realizing value. The two complement each other and are indispensable. On the one hand, healthy psychological qualities such as self-esteem, optimism, and tenacity help individuals to actively cope with difficulties and promote growth; on the other hand, positive experiences such as ability improvement and goal achievement gained by individuals in growth will strengthen mental health. Related studies have shown that high levels of personal growth can significantly predict mental health, and autonomy and personality development are positively correlated with mental health. On the contrary, psychological problems will hinder individuals from pursuing their goals and limit their development space. In short, personal growth is both a guarantee of mental health and a manifestation of its results.

2.3 Current status of related research at home and abroad

Foreign research has paid attention to the application of the concept of humanistic care education earlier. Some scholars emphasize that humanistic care cultivates the empathy of medical students and improves their professional skills. There are also studies that reveal the unique value of humanistic education in improving students' creativity and imagination. Domestic scholars focus on the localized practice of humanistic care education. Some scholars have proposed to build a "three-dimensional education" work pattern, to cultivate teachers' ethics with humanistic care and optimize teachers' professional development. There are also studies that emphasize the importance of humanistic care courses in broadening the talent path of secondary vocational students. In addition, it has been found that humanistic care teachers are positively correlated with students' happiness, and the quality of teacher-student interaction significantly affects students' physical and mental development.

3. Empirical research design and analysis

3.1 Research objects and methods

This study targets high school students (junior to senior high), a critical transitional phase from adolescence to adulthood marked by academic and identity challenges, where mental health and personal growth strongly interact. To ensure sample representativeness, 3-5 diverse schools (public, private, urban, rural) were chosen, with 30-50 students per grade, totaling 200-300 participants, reflecting variations in gender, region, and family background. Gender accounts for emotional expression differences, region addresses urban-rural educational resource gaps, and family background considers economic status and parental education. Using a mixed method, quantitative questionnaires measure mental health and personal growth, while qualitative interviews and observations explore student experiences. This approach verifies humanistic care education's role in fostering the mental health-personal growth relationship, focusing on mechanisms like social support (Zhang Jiayang, 2024). The design ensures statistical validity and captures individual differences, supporting further analysis (Figure 1).

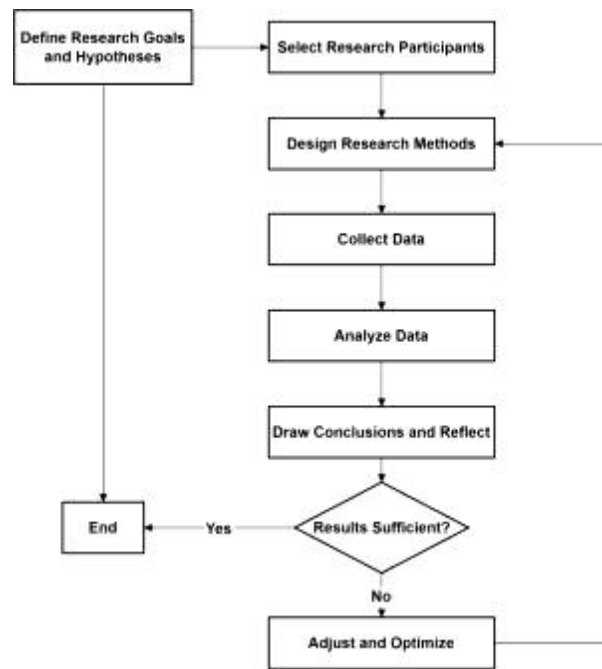


Figure1. Experimental Process

3.2 Data collection and analysis

Data collection employs multidimensional tools for comprehensiveness. Mental health is assessed using standardized scales (SCL-90, WHO-5 Happiness Index) to measure anxiety, depression, and happiness. Personal growth is evaluated via self-designed questionnaires covering self-cognition, emotional management, and social adaptation, alongside background variables like gender and family income. Semi-structured interviews with 10-15 students, guided by an outline on academic pressure and social support (Shen Honghao, 2023), and observations of students' behavior and emotions in class and extracurricular activities were conducted. Data analysis involves correlating questionnaire results to confirm the positive link between mental health and personal growth, followed by regression analysis to assess humanistic care education's predictive role. Qualitative data were coded to identify themes, complementing quantitative findings (see Figure 2). Results show students with higher mental health scores excel in growth dimensions, with humanistic care education (e.g., teacher support) significantly enhancing their interaction, confirming the hypothesis.

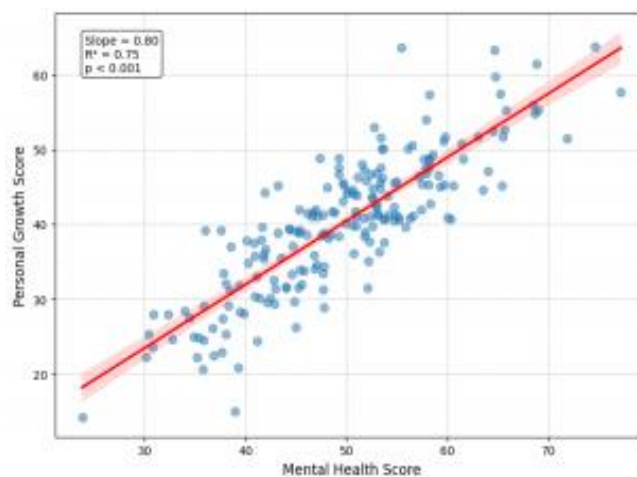


Figure2. Regression Analysis: Mental Health vs Personal Growth

3.3 Case practice and discussion of results

The case practice takes the Finnish "whole-person education" model and China's "double reduction" policy as examples to analyze the impact of humanistic care education. The Finnish model promotes mental health and social

adaptation through emotional skills and life skills education, and significantly improves students' happiness and growth initiative. China's "double reduction" policy reduces academic burdens. Surveys show that some students' psychological pressure is relieved and personal growth (such as interest development) is improved, but there are obvious regional differences. The results show that mental health is positively correlated with personal growth, and psychological resilience and social support are key variables. Humanistic care education improves mental state and accelerates growth through emotional support and personalized attention. However, the utilitarianism and uneven resource distribution of traditional education limit its effect. It is recommended that schools integrate psychological counseling and interest courses to make up for the shortcomings and coordinate the development of the two.

Conclusion

This study examines the interplay between students' personal growth and mental health within humanistic care education, using empirical analysis of high school students. It confirms a strong positive correlation: students with better mental health exhibit enhanced self-awareness, emotional management, and social adaptability, while personal growth reinforces mental health. This bidirectional relationship underscores their mutual dependence in student development. Humanistic care education, by offering emotional support and fostering security and belonging, significantly boosts mental health and accelerates growth. Case studies, like Finland's "whole-person education" and China's "double reduction" policy, show improved student well-being when education prioritizes individual needs. However, traditional education's utilitarian focus and uneven resource distribution limit these benefits. The study highlights humanistic care education's role in balancing mental health and growth, advocating for a shift from academic-centric models to ones emphasizing internal needs and personality development. Future practices should integrate counseling, interest cultivation, and social support to create inclusive, humane educational environments, enhancing students' happiness and social adaptability while addressing modern educational transformation needs.

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