

THE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINE FOR MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS IN NANNING UNIVERSITY*

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: 1) To study the current mental health status of freshmen at the Intelligent Manufacturing College, and 2) To propose development guidelines for the mental health of freshman at the Intelligent Manufacturing College, Nanning University. The sample were 265 freshmen at the Intelligent Manufacturing College in Nanning University. Research instruments included: questionnaire and structured interview. Data analysis by using percentage, mean, standard deviation and content analysis.

The results were found that: 1) the current situation of mental health of freshmen in five aspects was at a high level; and 2) Guidelines for the development of mental health of freshmen of the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University China is a multiple approach; the researcher has analysis the content as follows: 2.1) The course promotes positive thinking through discussions and emotion recording, and regulates emotions by simulating time-limited challenging scenarios; laboratory mindfulness exercises and result presentations help alleviate anxiety; 2.2) Guide students to assess their own

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abilities, compare themselves with peers, and focus on their progress through collaboration. Encourage anonymous evaluations and simulation playback to enhance cognition. Promote reflection on the past to cultivate a growth mindset; 2.3) Teach students to distinguish different mental states, reasonably allocate task types, and transform stress into a signal for growth; design challenges based on strengths, connect stress with long-term significance, and establish a connection between stress perception and ability improvement; 2.4) The group takes turns to play different roles and undertake collaborative tasks, which helps new students build trust and reduce social anxiety; sharing vision experiences enhances their sense of identity; setting step-by-step social tasks and teaching communication skills eliminate communication barriers; 2.5) Anonymous assistance, enterprise visits, and interdisciplinary activities expand the social network and secure support from various sources; professors teach communication and assistance skills, guide students to effectively express their needs, and establish mutual assistance mechanisms.

Keywords: Social support, Interpersonal relationships, Stress management, Self-awareness, Emotional stability

Introduction

Despite the increasing attention paid to students' mental health issues by society, many education systems still fail to recognize the adverse effects brought about by students' psychological problems. According to the World Health Organization, nearly one in five children and adolescents worldwide suffer from mental health disorders, but only a few can receive the necessary treatment. In many schools, there are very few teachers who have received mental health training, and the mental health resources available to students are also extremely scarce. The stereotypes about mental health in society force students not to seek help from the outside world. Academic success is more important

than mental health, so mental health problems are likely to be ignored by the education system. If education policies and practices do not attach importance to students' mental health, the adverse effects will persist and bring incalculable consequences to future generations (World Health Organization. 2022).

The significance of mental health in education cannot be underestimated. Research has repeatedly shown that students with good mental health perform better in life, studies, and interpersonal relationships. However, psychological treatment is often overlooked by many people, and untreated mental health problems can have far-reaching effects, including poor academic performance, social isolation, and even physical health issues. Therefore, integrating mental health support into the education system is crucial for ensuring the all-round development of students (McKenney, E. E. 2024). University students must deal with heavy tasks, competitive pressure in various competitions, overly high expectations for grades, and the gap between these expectations and reality, which gradually increases the pressure. Due to the stigmatization of mental illnesses in society, as well as the low cultural and economic levels of family members, college students with mental illnesses are reluctant to seek social support, which leads to huge pressure and ultimately damages their mental health (Peach, E. 2023).

Objectives

1. To study the current mental health status of freshmen at the Intelligent Manufacturing College, Nanning University.
2. To propose development guidelines for the mental health of freshman at the Intelligent Manufacturing College, Nanning University.

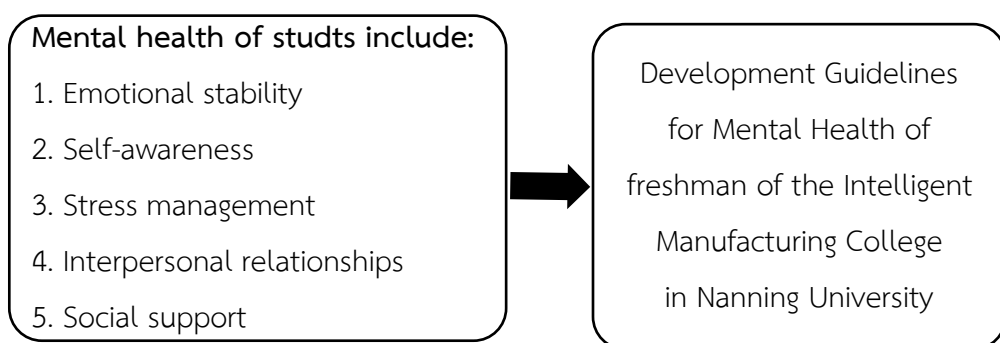
Literature Review

1. Theory of mental health: Emotional regulation consists of five stages: scenario selection: approach or avoid people, places, or events that may affect emotions; scenario modification: intervene in the current situation to reduce the impact of emotions; attention allocation: shift attention to other things when facing stressful situations to alleviate stress; cognitive change: transform negative thoughts into positive ones; response adjustment: inhibit one's expression and behavior before expressing negative emotions (Gross, J.J. 1998). The focus of public self-awareness lies in how others evaluate oneself and whether one's behavior is recognized. This is typically manifested as social anxiety and impression management. The focus of self-awareness lies in one's own emotions and values, as well as the consistency between cognition and behavior. This is typically manifested as self-reflection and an increase in sensitivity (Duval, Wicklund. 1972). The value of social support lies in its ability to mitigate the negative impact of stress on an individual's psychological health. When people encounter misfortunes and challenges, their stress levels will increase. If people can obtain support from all aspects, they can withstand most of the stress, reduce depression and anxiety, lower the risk of illness, and enhance happiness (Cohen, Wells. 1985).

2. The concept of mental health: 1) Policy: In 2005, the People's Republic of China issued the "Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving College Students' Mental Health Education" by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Communist Youth League (Policies of the People's Republic of China. 2005). This policy is a guiding document for mental health education in Chinese universities. It clearly states that mental health education is regarded as an important part of college ideological and political education, and it is "an important measure to fully implement the Party's educational policy and promote quality-oriented education". It has reference and practical

significance for Nanning University. 2) Definition: Mental health refers to a person's ability to maintain stable emotions and a positive psychological state, to adapt to society, to bravely face life's challenges, to establish good relationships with others, and to properly handle conflicts and stress (Kaur, M. 2025). When individuals are coping with stress, which includes emotions such as anger, lack of concentration, insomnia, depression, loss of interest, excessive tension, sweating, extreme anxiety, etc., they can effectively manage their emotions, maintain a stable lifestyle and achieve psychological balance by relying on strong willpower (James, M. K. 2024). Individuals, when confronted with high-pressure academic, economic and power-related stress environments, can effectively fulfill the obligations and responsibilities that their roles entail, and possess the ability to cope with difficulties (Gray, W. S. 2024).

This study focuses on five aspects of mental health: 1) emotional stability, 2) self-awareness, 3) stress management, 4) interpersonal relationships, and 5) social support. Mental health is an essential part of education in fostering students' high quality and healthy development. The research framework is as follows:



Methodology

Sample and Population: 1) The population of this research was 857 freshmen who registered in College of Intelligent Manufacturing in 2025 academic year at Nanning University. 2) According to the Krejcie and Morgan sampling table (1970), the sample group of this research consisted of 265 freshmen who registered in College of Intelligent Manufacturing in 2025 academic year at Nanning University. The sampling method used was simple random sampling.

Research instruments: This study employed a mixed-method approach, with questionnaires and interviews serving as the main research methods. A questionnaire on students' mental health was designed, along with interviews focusing on the status of mental health in five aspects: 1) emotional stability, 2) self-awareness, 3) stress management, 4) interpersonal relationships, and 5) social support.

Questionnaires: The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part collects the personal information of the respondents, including gender, whether they are the only child in their family, and their accommodation choices. The second part employed a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932) to assess the mental health status of the freshmen in the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University. According to the conceptual framework of this study, the scale covers five dimensions: 1) emotional stability, 2) self-awareness, 3) stress management, 4) interpersonal relationships, and 5) social support. To ensure the reliability and validity of this questionnaire, three experts evaluated the objective consistency index (IOC) of the questionnaire to be between 0.67-1.00, and the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.93.

Interviews: The first part provides background information. The second part collects the respondents' suggestions and guidelines regarding the improvement of freshmen's mental health at the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University. A total of five experts were selected as

respondents and were evaluated based on the following strict screening criteria: 1) 5 years of work experience in students' mental health in university, 2) received the certificate in the field of psychology, 3) graduated with master's degree or above.

Data Collection: The data collection for objective 1: To study the current situation of mental health of freshmen students at the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University. Questionnaires were distributed to 265 freshmen of the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University. Waiting for 15 days to receive the questionnaire from the sample group. After receiving the responses, we checked the completeness of the questionnaire. A total of 265 valid questionnaires were received, with a response rate of 100%.

The data collection for objective 2: to Propose guidelines for enhancing the mental health of freshmen of the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University. The researchers, depending on the convenience of each expert, either through online platforms or in person (the specific method varies), invited 5 experts to conduct interviews. The purpose was to provide guidance on improving mental health for the freshmen of the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University, with each interview lasting approximately 30-60 minutes.

Data Analysis: An analysis was conducted on the frequency and percentage of the personal information of the respondents. The current situation of mental health in five aspects: 1) emotional stability, 2) self-awareness, 3) stress management, 4) interpersonal relationships, and 5) social support was analyzed by mean and standard deviation. To provide more descriptive insights, we conducted a further analysis of the statistical scores to examine the extent to which students performed in the five aspects of mental health. The interpretation of the average data is based on the theory of Lesnik Likert (1932). 4.50 – 5.00 refers to the highest level, 3.50 – 4.49 refers to high level, 2.50 – 3.49

refers to medium level, 1.50 – 2.49 refers to low level, 1.00 – 1.49 refers to the lowest level.

Results

Objective 1: To study the current mental health status of freshmen at the Intelligent Manufacturing College, Nanning University.

In this study, 265 questionnaires were distributed, and 265 valid questionnaires were examined. The validity rate was 100%, which met the requirements for data collection.

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation of the mental health of freshmen in five aspects (n=265)

Mental Health of Freshmen of Intelligent Manufacturing College		\bar{X}	S.D.	Level	Ranking
1	Emotional Stability	3.57	0.71	High	5
2	Self-awareness	3.65	0.55	High	4
3	Stress Management	3.73	0.68	High	3
4	Interpersonal Relationships	3.80	0.58	High	2
5	Social Support	3.88	0.63	High	1
Total		3.72	0.46	High	

According to table 1, finding that the current situation of mental health of freshmen in five aspects was at a high level ($\bar{X}=3.72$, S.D.=0.46). Considering the results from the highest to the lowest mean were as follows: the highest mean was social support ($\bar{X}=3.88$, S.D.=0.63), followed by interpersonal relationships ($\bar{X}=3.80$, S.D.=0.58), stress management ($\bar{X}=3.73$, S.D.=0.68), and self-awareness ($\bar{X}=3.65$, S.D.=0.55), respectively, and Emotional stability was the lowest mean ($\bar{X}=3.57$, S.D.=0.71). This indicates that emotional stability and self-

awareness still need to be improved. The interview results show that when students experience emotional breakdown, they refuse to seek help and are unable to find the meaning of growth from setbacks. This qualitative feedback is consistent with the quantitative results.

Objectives 2: Enhancement guidelines of mental health of freshmen of the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University.

Based on the results of the questionnaire survey and expert interviews, the development guidelines for improving the mental health of freshmen at the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University are as follows: 1) The course promotes positive thinking through discussions and emotion recording, and regulates emotions by simulating time-limited challenging scenarios; laboratory mindfulness exercises and result presentations help alleviate anxiety; 2) Guide students to assess their own abilities, compare themselves with peers, and focus on their progress through collaboration. Encourage anonymous evaluations and simulation playback to enhance cognition. Promote reflection on the past to cultivate a growth mindset; 3) Teach students to distinguish different mental states, reasonably allocate task types, and transform stress into a signal for growth; design challenges based on strengths, connect stress with long-term significance, and establish a connection between stress perception and ability improvement; 4) The group takes turns to play different roles and undertake collaborative tasks, which helps new students build trust and reduce social anxiety; sharing vision experiences enhances their sense of identity; setting step-by-step social tasks and teaching communication skills eliminate communication barriers; 5) Anonymous assistance, enterprise visits, and interdisciplinary activities expand the social network and secure support from various sources; professors teach communication and assistance skills, guide students to effectively express their needs, and establish mutual assistance mechanisms.

Discussion

The research results can be summarized into the following two parts:

Objective 1: To study the current mental health status of freshmen at the Intelligent Manufacturing College, Nanning University.

According to the research findings, found that the current situation of mental health of freshmen in five aspects was at a high level. Considering the results from the highest to the lowest mean were as follows: the highest mean was social support, followed by interpersonal relationships, stress management, and self-awareness. Emotional stability was the lowest means. This is because Students can effectively manage their emotions, clearly recognize their own strengths, be able to transform stress into motivation, maintain good relationships when interacting with others, and often receive support from others. It is consistent with Meshke McLay, B. (2021) pointed out that the survey results of teenagers regarding emotional regulation, self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, and social support indicated that their levels were at an above average or moderate level, suggesting that the mental health of teenagers was relatively high. Moreover Kuhn, T. A. (2023) It is pointed out that individuals have relatively high levels in terms of emotional regulation ability, stress management ability, interpersonal relationships, and social support. When facing difficulties, they will not remain in the shadow of failure for a long time. Instead, they will adopt positive coping strategies. Their self-awareness becomes deeper and clearer due to the tests. Interpersonal relationships become closer due to seeking help and mutual assistance. Moreover, their emotional regulation and stress management abilities are further enhanced. Final Coursey, S. J. (2024) They may be more likely to be attracted by scenarios and activities that require expression, cooperation, and demonstration. These scenarios provide a unique and valuable psychological and social practice field for the students' healthy growth.

Objectives 2: Enhancement guidelines of mental health of freshmen of the Intelligent Manufacturing College of Nanning University.

The proposed mental health development guidelines adopt a multi-faceted approach for improvement. Universities should simulate scenarios of negative emotions to help students control their negative emotions, carry out concentration training to cultivate stable emotions (Lee, S. E. 2025). promote students' reflection on the past to find the meaning of growth and enhance their self-awareness (Kaur, M. 2025). teach students to allocate task types according to their current state to reduce stress, transform pressure into a driving force for long-term development (James, M. K. 2024). teach communication skills, collaborate with others to complete tasks, build trust to alleviate social anxiety (Nguyen, N. 2024). Encourage students to seek help anonymously and expand their social networks. Promote interpersonal relationships and teach students to effectively express their needs when seeking help (Peach, E. 2023). These suggestions are largely consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of mental health in education. Meanwhile, this study provides these mental health development guidelines to practice-oriented universities as a reference, offering more practical guidance for universities to improve students' mental health. In conclusion, the survey results emphasize this point: students with good mental health have stable emotions, maintain a positive attitude when facing difficulties, sustain good relationships, and better adapt to society.

Although this research has made contributions, there are still limitations. This research was conducted at a university. The results of this study may have limitations when applied to other universities or in different regional contexts. The investigation of this study relies on the collected questionnaire data, and this data may be influenced by cognitive biases. The cross-sectional study captured mental health status at a single point in time but failed to examine the dynamic changes in individual psychological states or the long-term follow-up of

intervention effects. Future research could consider expanding the sample size, integrating multi-source assessment data, and adopting a longitudinal design to better understand the mechanism of the impact of the higher education environment on mental health and the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

Recommendation

For university: universities should incorporate the psychology module into their professional teaching, enhance psychological skills training, introduce industry mentors to share experiences, develop VR scenarios and physical collaborative spaces, systematically train teachers to recognize emotions, and implement the peer mentoring system.

For administrators: administrators should expand resources such as industry mentors and VR scenarios, organize competitions to create a supportive atmosphere; systematically train grassroots personnel like dormitory managers to identify early warning signs, and build a home-school collaboration support network; through the implementation of personalized plans, achieve data-driven precise intervention, and combine stress management with professional responsibility.

For teachers: teachers should help students overcome stress through error-tolerant projects and role-playing; record students' behaviors, identify emotions to achieve empathy in interactions; guide students to restructure their cognition and reshape their understanding of setbacks; use reflection tools and identity tree diagrams to transform failures into milestones, thereby establishing a regular mutual assistance system.

For students: students should redefine stress as a state of physical and mental readiness, view trial and error as a means for brain improvement; use tools such as problem decomposition and breathing relaxation to regulate

emotions, transform complaints into specific requests for help; and use questionnaires and video replays to examine themselves.

For Future Research: Compare the differences in the construction of the meaning of stress among students from different cultural backgrounds and different professional fields, develop a stress cognition reconstruction course module that is more culturally adaptable and professionally relevant, and conduct effectiveness verification. To conduct a thorough investigation into the impact of the project of tracking and observing fellow psychological first aiders on their own psychological qualities, leadership development, as well as the improvement of the assistance atmosphere within the group and the rate of early problem identification, and to establish an optimal practice model.

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