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Practical Application of Educational Psychology in Adolescent Mental Health Education

Hongni Wei

College of Educational Science, Jilin Normal University, Siping, 136000, China

Abstract. Mental health problems among teenagers have grown more frequent and severe worldwide in recent times; many young people suffer from high degrees of anxiety, depression, and abnormal behaviours. Educational psychology, as a discipline that blends psychological theory and educational practice to lay the factual foundation of good quality development for mental health education in primary schools; Based on publically available data from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), combined with existing theories such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Bandura's social-cognitive theory, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological-systems theory, this article explores how educational-psychology principles can be applied to adolescents' mental-health education; analyse some common intervention Strategies such as cognitive-behavioural techniques, social-emotional-learning programmes and school-based counselling systems, then propose an overall implementation plan. Based on this foundation, we need to devise various means combining elements from both schools and families to better foster the mental health development of middle school students.

Keywords: Adolescent mental health; Educational Psychology; Social-emotional Learning; Cognitive-Behavioural Intervention; School-Based Mental Health; Psychological Well-Being.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a period of psychological complexity and developmental significance in people's lives during this time. During this period, young individuals experience significant upheaval in biology, cognition, emotions and social development all at once; Therefore, they are more prone to developing mental health issues. The World Health Organisation estimates that about 14 per cent of adolescent students from around the world suffer from mental health issues; Among these are depression, anxiety and behavioural problems. Also according to WHO data, more than half of all lifetime mental disorders occur before the age of 14; however, many individuals do not seek help because they lack understanding or are too fearful of it[1].

The Educational Environment offers a special Setting to improve the Mental Health of Adolescents. schools are among the few places for which most children from different social classes and families have had a relatively comprehensive exposure. The CDC School Health Policies and Practice study indicates that school settings have gained more attention as key locations for promoting mental health, early detection of psychological issues, and connecting with specialised support systems [2]. However, due to their acknowledged potential for enhancing effectiveness, many school-based mental health education programmes have failed to integrate systematically or effectively in practice within different countries globally.

Educational Psychology is a branch of science that systematically applies psychological theories and methods to the context of education to address this issue. Drawing on existing theories about human development, learning, motivation and behaviour in educational psychology can provide us with the theoretical framework and action methods for designing mental health education programs that are suitable for children's growth, culture-oriented and scientifically proven.

This paper has three related purposes. Firstly, a review of theoretical bases in educational psychology pertinent to adolescence mental-health education will be conducted. Second, investigate empirical studies on the effectiveness of primary schools' intervention strategies. Thirdly, propose an organised

implementation pathway of combining the teaching of education psychology with comprehensive adolescent mental health courses.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

Several basic theoretical frameworks of educational psychology serve as the core references for exploring adolescent mental health issues in schools.

Based on the views of L.vygotskij that people develop socially as a result of learning among their peers and adults from previous generations; individual growth is not enough. The Model for enhancing adolescent's mental health care focuses primarily on how peers' interactions, teachers-student bond and the entire school environment shape a person in their minds. Based on the perspectives of Vygotsky, mental health education at present mainly involves collaborative learning experiences, dialogical classroom activities, and building supportive social contexts to foster students' growth in their emotions[3].

According to Bandura's social cognition theory, people's belief in whether they have the ability to achieve some goal autonomously (self-efficacy or sense of agency for controlling performance), which significantly affects their psychological resilience and good moods. Teens with high self-belief in academics and social life can better cope with stress, seek help promptly when they face problems, etc., while keeping a healthy mind. According to Bandura's theory of observation-based learning and model, teachers' and peers' behaviour can serve as an essential way for students to acquire mental health knowledge and skills indirectly in schools[5].

Based on Bronfenbrenner's ecology Theory, we may think that adolescents are affected at different levels within several types of environments: from immediate family members and schools right down to the higher-order cultures and societies. An ecological view can help enhance the development of mental health education in schools; It pays more attention to the external system and not only focuses on an individual's psychology when improving their mental state. Mental Health Education programmes that are effective at the ecological level need to focus on multiple systems and not only students' individual behaviour or cognition.

2.2. Empirical Evidence on School-Based Mental Health Interventions

School-based mental Health intervention studies have been increasing recently; a strong body of research now exists to guide practitioners' work in this area. School-based cognitive-behavioural intervention can help alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression among middle school students to varying extents continuously. Merry et al. carried out an updated systematic review of universal School- Based Programme on depression; They found that cognitive-behavioural approach was effective at reducing depression risk [6].

Another type of well-researched intervention is social-emotional-learning programmes. Durlak et al. carried out a seminal meta-analysis of 213 school-based social-emotional-learning programs for over 270, 034 students, finding significant improvements in the target group's social-emotional skills, attitudes towards learning, behavior adjustment, etc., [7] with an approximate one-standard deviation increase relative to those in control conditions [8]. The above research findings are closely related to the fact that mental health education is unlikely to hinder but rather be beneficial to students' general progress across various disciplines such as Mathematics; it also holds this effect.

Research on teachers' influence and impact has attracted significant attention from researchers for this reason. According to the research results of Pianta, teachers' relationship with their students may have a widespread influence across different developmental periods on these children. Teachers displaying warmth, exhibiting constant kindness when interacting with students, and genuinely caring

about the emotional well-being of these students can create an atmosphere that fosters safety; Some disadvantageous students do not receive sufficient family-based social support.

The empirical research supporting Mindfulness-Based Interventions has been on the rise in school Mental Health Education. In a large-scale systematic literature review of Zenner et al., it was found that among several studies, the results indicate some degree of improvement after participation in Mindfulness-Based Intervention Programs on students' psychological state and school engagement [10]. Mental health stigmas have also been explored in the research presented here. Corrigan's relevant studies have shown that the phenomenon of stigma regarding mental illnesses occurs at both individual and institutional levels; among these, structural stigma in school environments can serve as a substantial yet underrecognised obstruction for teenagers' help-seeking behaviour and programme participation [10]. Overall, from the above research results, it can be concluded that schools are required to set specific targets of weakening stigmas together with skill enhancement measures; thereby motivating students' confidence and active participation in asking for aid in time.

3. Methodology

Using the system of systematic reviews to integrate publicly available epidemiological data with those derived from empirical studies in peer-review journals and meta-analyses. Epidemiological and prevalence data were obtained from two public sources: The world health organization's mental health data platform ([1]) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's youth risk behaviour surveillance system ([2]), both providing free internet access to regular updates on young people's mental health conditions worldwide at different levels of countries in general.

Based on these three conditions for empirical studies: Methodological rigor - whether they are published in peer-reviewed journals; Relevance to school-based mental health education intervention research; Temporal range - from the early 1990s to the early 2020s. This period allows for differentiation of the long-lasting theoretical foundations from recent advances in intervention Design and Implementation Science. In the entire analysis process, adopting a three-models analysis method according to Vygotskian sociocultural Theory (Type A), Bandura et al. social Cognitive Theory variants such as and, along with Bronfenbrenner ecological System model Type C).

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Prevalence and Educational Impact of Adolescent Mental Health Difficulties

At present, many factors contribute to the urgent problem of adolescents' mental health in school environments. According to WHO data worldwide, Among young people aged 15-19 years, depressive disorders rank high among chronic or non-communicable diseases and issues; Anxiety disorder is listed at the sixth spot. According to CDC surveillance data from the Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance System in the United States, approximately 42 per cent of high school students experienced frequent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2021, which had risen from 28 per cent in 2011 [2]. There is a gradual worsening situation among the teenagers' mental health over the years beginning from the pandemic.

The research has also investigated the education-affected outcomes linked to unacknowledged psychological issues. The rate of absence due to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and behavioural issues among students with low academic performance is twice that of those with high academic performance. Through repeated accumulation of these educational effects from an early age, it leads to poorer results at work and difficulty adapting socially later on; The bidirectional linkages among mental health and academic performance further support the idea that systematic integration of mental health education should be included in school's overall goal of cultivating individuals, not just considered a marginal issue.

4.2. Application of Educational Psychology Principles in Practice

Several forms exist for the translation of educational psychology theoretical frameworks into concrete schools' practices based on specific theories emphasising particular aspects of adolescent mental health.

Based on the foundation of cognitive restructuring and behavioural activation provided by established theories, school-based interventions based on cognitive-behavioural approach have been widely studied. The Programs of Penn Resilience Program and FRIENDS programme have shown good effects in lowering the levels of Anxiety and Depression among Adolescents across various cultures [6]. These programmes utilise the core cognitive-behavioural principles of identifying and combating maladaptive thoughts, improving coped-skills repertoire, enhancing problem-solving abilities within a classroom-oriented psychoeducation framework.

Social-emotional Development programmes adhere to Bandura's Social-Cognitive Theory and systematically construct the skills of students for self-awareness, discipline self-management, interpersonal awareness, cooperation ability, etc. Based on the CASEL framework (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), which offers an extensive empirical basis to implement social-emotional education throughout schools rather than just addressing vulnerable groups [7], provides support. A generalised strategy aligns with the ecological-systems view [5], establishing a set of schools-wide conditions to enhance mental health among all students and provide further support for those requiring it.

Empirical support for mindfulness-based interventions as a supplementary tool in schools' mental health education has been increasing gradually. Zenner et al. conducted a systematic review of Mindfulness-Based Interventions for School-aged Children to investigate the effectiveness on the psychology, emotion regulation and learning outcomes [10]. Therefore, based on this, it is proposed that mind exercise integration strategies can be reasonably introduced into the school's course system to enhance all students' ability to prevent mental health problems.

4.3. Barriers to Effective Implementation

There is a solid foundation of education Research on the construction of school-based Mental Health Programs, but some barriers hinder its effect. Teacher preparedness is an important restriction; many classroom teachers have received insufficient training in psychology theories and evidence-based methods for mental-health intervention to effectively deliver the programme faithfully. Due to a lack of substantial investment in professional development, well-designed but poorly implemented programmes or those lacking sufficient depth will fail to fully demonstrate their preventive and rehabilitative capabilities. There need to be systematic pre-service and on-the-job teachers' education programmes that integrate basic educational psychology knowledge with practical mental health intervention skills, providing necessary foundations for the school's work.

There is still mental health stigma; among peers at school in middle and high school age, they view others needing help-seeking behavior as a sign of insecurity or weakness. Based on Corrigan's research, institutions such as schools are considered to be an important source of systemic stigmatisation in helping behaviour for teenagers. Hence, an effective mental health Education programme should also aim to reduce stigma in addition to improving students' abilities and disseminating knowledge. Embed anti-stigma content directly into curricula implementation; combine it with school-wide awareness-raising activities and purposefully create a psychologically safe learning environment to change the social evaluation system for whether to seek assistance in dealing with psychological problems among middle school students.

Resource restrictions, such as a shortage of funds for school-counseling services; An unreasonable ratio between counselors and students; And various other educational tasks compete with mental health care. The American School Counsellors' Association advocates for a ratio of 1:250 counsellors per student; however, the average in many states remains significantly higher than that recommended

by the American School Counsellors' Association [2]. Based on this issue, it still needs to be continued promoting institutions and policies at the grassroots level; in addition, long-term funding for mental health education should be guaranteed to avoid a chain of temporary measures without systemic impact.

5. Implementation Framework

Based on the above theory and empirical summaries from previous studies, a three-level Implementation Framework of Educational Psychology Principles Integration into Comprehensive Adolescent Mental Health Education is thus put forward.

At the general prevention level, all students are included in regular course content for overall mental health education. Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory [3], this level aims to build a psychologically safe classroom Environment that supports the formation of supportive Teacher-Student Relationships, Collaborative Peer Learning Systems, and explicit emotional-literacy training programmes. Fidelity-delivered social-emotional learning programmes in whole-school settings are, therefore, considered the fundamental programme delivery type within this category.

At this selected-aiding stage, students with higher risk of academic performance deterioration and other social problems such as conflict among peers or emotional disturbance will receive additional training support. Small-group cognitive-behavioural skill-building programmes; structured peer-support mechanisms; and strengthened teacher observation, feedback, etc., are suitable for the present scenario. Based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory [4], this paper designs a series of educational activities to build students' sense of efficacy for managing emotions and seeking assistance when facing problems.

At the set-intervention-level student whose mental health has been identified by evaluation at a low-risk is given individual help through school-counselling-services; If these students face high-marginal risk, beyond the scope of their own institutions' capabilities, it should be promptly passed on to other relevant places for handling. The theory of counselling and therapy can offer rich references for Methods presented later on in this paper, which are also frequently used by experienced therapists during real-life application. Through professional guidance and paying special attention to individuals in their daily lives and leisure activities, we can tackle the root cause directly; combined with other approaches, these interventions' specifics are on a journey towards active progress of our future studies. Bronfenbrenner, according to his research on ecology theory (2016), each level needs to cooperate among all levels of education; family involvement and community services are also essential, which need to have a unified environment system across them.

6. Conclusion

Mental Health Issues Among Adolescents Is One of the Most Severe Problems Affecting Education Globally Today. The reviewed evidence in this paper shows that educational psychology provides an abundant, scientifically validated basis for the Design of effective School-Based Mental Health Education programmes. Based on Vygotsky's theory, Bandura's theory and Bronfenbrenner's theory to examine the various aspects of conditions influencing psychological disorders in adolescents at different levels from multiple perspectives. Consistent empirical evidence demonstrates that cognitive-behavioural strategies, social emotional learning programmes and mindfulness-based training are effective under conditions of sufficient fidelity and institution-building in education.

The three-layered implementation system put forward by our paper provides a feasible Structure for translating these theoretical and empirical contents into coordinated School-based Practice. This system's actualisation needs institutional support, ample finances, robust professional education for teachers, as well as the intervention in reducing stigmatisation. Future studies need to pay more attention to longitudinally observing multiple levels' implementation model in different cultural and

educational environments to determine which condition promotes sustainable long-term effects on adolescent psychological health through school-based mental health education.

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