

Influence of Parenting Style and Teacher Support on Mental Health among Vocational College Students in Guangxi, China

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Abstract

This study delves into the mental well-being of vocational college students in Guangxi, China, with a focus on the support provided by their families and teachers. It surveyed 384 students from higher vocational colleges in Guangxi, utilizing various assessment tools including the Mental Health Scale, Parenting Style Instruments, and Teacher Attitude Assessment Questionnaire. The data was analyzed with SPSS 19.0, utilizing multivariate analysis of variance, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The findings suggest: 1. The mental health status of students in higher vocational colleges in Guangxi is moderate. 2. While no significant gender difference in mental health was observed, grade level emerged as a significant factor, with junior students exhibiting notable differences compared to freshmen and sophomores. 3. Multivariate regression analysis unveiled a significant influence of parenting style on mental health. 4. Moreover, multiple regression analysis underscored the significant influence of teacher support on mental health. These results provide evidence for further research on the mental health level of Guangxi college students.

Keywords: Parenting Style, Teacher Support, Mental Health, Vocational College Students

Introduction

Background and Significance

Mental health is mainly embodied in normal intelligence, sound personality, emotion Stable mood, healthy will, etc., but also show that they get along well with others, have a strong adaptability to work, and can fully release the individual's physical potential and positive social functions (Bai, 2023). Mental health encompasses various facets such as emotional, psychological, and social aspects. It is essential for individuals to lead fulfilling lives and achieve their personal and professional goals (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). In higher education,

especially among vocational college students, mental health significantly influences academic achievement, career preparedness, and overall contentment (Diener et al., 2018). College students are at a crucial stage of life development, encountering numerous pressures and challenges related to their studies, relationships, and self-perception. Consequently, their mental health is significantly influenced during this period (Zhang, 2024). As social competition intensifies, students face increasing pressure in academics, employment, and interpersonal relationships, leading to more prominent psychological issues. Mental health education for college students is vital not only for addressing individual psychological problems but also for enhancing the overall mental health of society (Gao, 2024).

This study examines the mental well-being of vocational college students in Guangxi, China, focusing on how parenting styles and teacher support influence their mental health.

Mental Health in Vocational Education

The quality of education in higher vocational colleges significantly influences student development, as these institutions are crucial for providing students with knowledge and refining their skills. In high school, in order to be admitted to the ideal college, many students focus on their own studies, but ignore the development of comprehensive ability. When they enter the university campus, they will realize that the reality and their ideal college life and social life have a certain difference, resulting in a psychological gap. If they do not get timely and appropriate guidance at this time, they will have confusion, loss, irritability and other emotions, and seriously will lose interest in learning and learning motivation, unable to improve themselves, resulting in a decline in competitiveness and adverse effects on future development (Cheng, 2021). Before entering colleges and universities, some college students are the top students in middle schools, but after entering colleges and universities, they tend to see their competitiveness gradually weaken, or even have no competitive advantage. In this environment, without proper attention and guidance from teachers, students may become discouraged and increasingly unmotivated. Over time, this negative cycle can harm their learning, as well as their physical and mental well-being (Bai, 2023). Vocational education is crucial for providing students with the practical skills and knowledge needed for the job market. However, the unique challenges faced by vocational students, such as the pressure to acquire specific competencies and the transition from education to employment, can significantly influence their mental health (Wang et al., 2019). Understanding the factors that contribute to or hinder their well-being is crucial for developing effective support systems and interventions.

Parenting Style and Its Influence on Mental Health

Parenting style pertains to individuals' satisfaction with their family life, including emotional support, communication, and general family interactions. Various research works have underscored the significance of parenting style in fostering mental health and wellness. For example, Liu et al. (2020) discovered that robust family support correlates with decreased stress and depression levels in Chinese students. Likewise, Zhang and Lin (2019) demonstrated that parenting style significantly contributes to bolstering psychological resilience and overall well-being in adolescents. In the Chinese cultural context, where family bonds and support are highly esteemed, the impact of parenting style on mental health might be particularly significant (Chen et al., 2021). The collectivist nature of Chinese society places significant emphasis on family cohesion and support, which can serve as a buffer against various stressors encountered by students (Huang et al., 2020). The family is every student's

confidence and confidence, is every student's strong backing. Every family should adopt the right parenting style, give students more tolerance and encouragement, and give them all the support. When encountering difficulties, discuss and analyse together how to face and solve problems instead of avoiding problems. No matter what pressure students encounter in the future, they can calmly face and actively solve problems. If parents complain every time, or even ignore the students, the lack of companionship and love, so that the growth of students cannot get any help, what kind of students reflect what kind of family is (Ding et al., 2024).

Teacher Support and Its Influence on Mental Health

Teacher support involves how students view their academic surroundings, encompassing interactions with peers and teachers, the curriculum quality, and the general school atmosphere. Creating a positive school setting is essential for nurturing a feeling of inclusion, drive, and academic involvement, all of which influence mental well-being (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Recent research has highlighted the importance of teacher support in improving students' mental health. For instance, Jiang et al. (2019) discovered that students who perceived greater teacher support also reported increased life satisfaction and reduced psychological distress levels. Vocational colleges, with their focus on practical skills and employment readiness, present unique challenges and opportunities for enhancing teacher support. Effective instructional methods, supportive teacher-student relationships, and relevant curriculum content are essential components of a satisfying school experience that can significantly influence students' mental health (Wang & Zhang, 2018). As a school group, in the daily study life, some college students will inevitably appear various psychological problems.

Mental health status doesn't just influence individual physical and mental well-being; it also influences societal development. In college mental health education, teachers must offer proactive and influence guidance, employing diverse methods to foster students' development of accurate worldviews, life perspectives, and values (Liu, 2023).

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to examine the mental health of vocational college students in Guangxi, alongside analysing the impacts of parenting style and teacher support. The research objectives are:

- Assessing the mental health status of vocational college students in Guangxi, China.
- Investigating potential gender and academic grade disparities in mental health.
- Exploring the correlation between parenting style and mental health among vocational college students in Guangxi.
- Examining the influence of teacher support on the mental health of vocational college students.

The study hypothesizes the following

- H1: What is the level of mental health among vocational college students in Guangxi?
- H2: What influence does gender have on the mental health of vocational college students, and what is the influence of academic grade on their mental well-being, particularly comparing juniors with freshmen and sophomores?
- H3: What influence does a positive parenting style have on the mental health of vocational college students?

-H4: What influence does teacher support have on the mental health of vocational college students?

By exploring these hypotheses, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the mental well-being of vocational college students in Guangxi, China. It also seeks to inform interventions and support strategies aimed at enhancing their mental health and overall well-being.

Method

Participants

The study involved 384 students from higher vocational colleges in Guangxi, China, using stratified random sampling to ensure diversity across different grades and genders. The group comprised 192 male and 192 female students, evenly distributed among freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. This balanced mix enabled an analysis of gender and grade distinctions concerning mental health, parenting style, and teacher support.

Instruments

Mental Health Scale (MHS)

The Mental Health Scale used in this study is a comprehensive tool for measuring overall mental well-being. It evaluates dimensions such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents provide ratings on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating better mental health.

Parenting Style Instrument (PSI)

The Parenting Style Instrument evaluates individuals' satisfaction with family life, covering various facets of family interactions such as emotional support, communication, and overall family unity. Participants assessed these aspects using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

Teacher Attitude Assessment Questionnaire (TAAQ)

Teacher support was evaluated through the Teacher Attitude Assessment Survey-Revised, which examines students' perceptions of their school setting, encompassing interactions with teachers and peers, academic assistance, and overall school contentment. Similar to the other tools, the SAAS-R employs a 5-point Likert scale for feedback, where increased scores reflect enhanced teacher support.

Procedure

The data collection process was conducted in several stages:

-Preparation: Before collecting data, permissions were secured from educational authorities and the administrative heads of the involved vocational colleges. Ethical approval was obtained to ensure compliance with ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, and participants' right to withdraw from the study.

-Survey Administration: Surveys were conducted during regular school hours to enhance participation and provide a comfortable setting for respondents. Clear instructions were given to explain the study's purpose and questionnaire completion. Trained assistants were present to address queries and ensure a smooth process.

-Data Collection: Participants were allotted sufficient time to fill out the questionnaires. Completed surveys were gathered and checked for accuracy. Incomplete surveys were excluded from the final analysis to maintain data integrity.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent analysis using SPSS 19.0 software, employing various statistical methods:

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were computed to characterize the sample and describe the distributions of key variables like mental health, parenting style, and teacher support.

MANOVA was used to explore the influence of gender and grade level on mental health, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of multiple dependent variables simultaneously. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to explore the relationships between mental health, parenting style, and teacher support, revealing the strength and direction of associations among these factors.

Multiple regression analyses were performed to evaluate the predictive capacity of parenting style and teacher support on mental health, testing both univariate and multivariate models to assess individual and combined effects.

Stepwise Regression: This method identified the most significant predictors of mental health by adding or removing factors based on specific criteria.

Hierarchical Regression: This analysis assessed the additional value of parenting style and teacher support in predicting mental health, with demographic variables entered first, followed by parenting style and teacher support in subsequent steps.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability and validity of the study instruments, several steps were taken:

-Internal Consistency: Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for each scale to assess internal consistency. A coefficient of 0.70 or higher was deemed acceptable, indicating reliable measurements.

-Construct Validity: Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to validate the construct validity of the Mental Health Scale (MHS), Parenting Style Instrument (PSI), and Teacher Attitude Assessment Questionnaire (TAAQ). The CFA findings demonstrated that the factor structures of these instruments aligned with their theoretical constructs, confirming their validity.

-Pilot Testing: A pilot test was carried out with a small group of vocational college students before the main study. This step was essential for refining the survey instruments and procedures. Feedback from the pilot test was used to make necessary adjustments, improving the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaires.

These measures ensured that the study instruments were both reliable and valid, providing a solid foundation for the research findings.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The research involved 384 students from higher vocational colleges in Guangxi, China, with an equal split between male (n=192) and female (n=192) students across freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for mental health, parenting style, and teacher support:

Mental Health: Mean score of 3.02 (SD = 0.57) on a 1 to 5 scale, indicating moderate mental health levels.

Parenting Style: Mean score of 3.48 (SD = 0.64), reflecting moderate satisfaction with family life.

Teacher Support: Mean score of 3.33 (SD = 0.68), showing moderate satisfaction with the school environment.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Mental Health	3.02	0.57
Parenting Style	3.48	0.64
Teacher Support	3.33	0.68

Gender Differences in Mental Health

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to examine mental health variations between male and female vocational college students. The outcomes revealed no notable gender disparities in mental health ($F(1, 382) = 0.39, p = 0.53$).

This suggests that gender does not significantly influence the mental well-being of vocational college students in Guangxi. Hence, interventions and support measures for mental health can be devised and executed without considering gender differences, directing attention towards other factors influencing mental well-being in this student demographic.

Table 2

MANOVA Results for Gender Differences in Mental health.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Gender	0.12	1	0.12	0.39	0.53
Error	115.4	382	0.30		

Grade Level Differences in Mental Health

The MANOVA explored the impact of academic year on mental health, revealing significant variations among students of different grades ($F(2, 381) = 5.67, p < 0.01$). Post-hoc analyses using Bonferroni correction showed that junior students had notably higher mental health scores compared to both freshmen and sophomores ($p < 0.05$). However, there was no significant difference in mental health scores between freshmen and sophomores ($p > 0.05$). These results underscore the importance of considering academic year when addressing mental health concerns, suggesting that tailored interventions may be particularly beneficial for freshmen and sophomores.

-Freshmen: Mean = 2.94, SD = 0.56

-Sophomores: Mean = 2.96, SD = 0.58

-Juniors: Mean = 3.17, SD = 0.55

Table 3

MANOVA Results for Grade Level Differences in Mental Health

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Grade Level	3.39	2	1.70	5.67	<0.01
Error	114.3	381	0.30		

These results suggest an improvement in mental health as students' progress through their vocational education, particularly in their junior year.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to evaluate the associations among mental health, parenting style, and teacher support, indicating statistically significant positive correlations.

-Mental Health and Parenting Style: $r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$

-Mental Health and Teacher Support: $r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$

-Parenting Style and Teacher Support: $r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$

Table 4

Correlation Coefficients

Variables	1	2	3
1. Mental Health	1.00		
2. Parenting Style	0.45**	1.00	
3. Teacher Support	0.41**	0.38**	1.00

*Note: $*p < 0.01$

These findings suggest that increased family and teacher support correlate with improved mental health.

Regression Analysis

Parenting Style and Mental Health

In examining the link between Parenting Style and Mental Health, a multiple regression analysis assessed the influence of parenting style on mental health. Results showed that parenting style significantly predicts mental health ($\beta = 0.45$, $t = 9.87$, $p < 0.01$), explaining 20.3% of the variance in mental health ($R^2 = 0.203$, $F(1, 382) = 97.37$, $p < 0.01$). These findings highlight the considerable impact of parenting style on students' mental well-being.

Teacher Support and Mental Health

In a hierarchical regression analysis, the additional value of teacher support in predicting mental health, beyond parenting style, was examined. Initially, parenting style was included in the model, explaining 20.3% of the variance. Subsequently, teacher support was introduced, contributing an extra 11.6% of the variance (R^2 change = 0.116, $F(2, 381) = 87.53$, $p < 0.01$).

The combined model, encompassing both family and teacher support, accounted for 31.9% of the variance in mental health ($R^2 = 0.319$). Both parenting style ($\beta = 0.35$, $t = 7.88$, $p < 0.01$) and teacher support ($\beta = 0.34$, $t = 7.70$, $p < 0.01$) emerged as significant predictors.

Combined Influences of Parenting Style and Teacher support

In a multivariate regression analysis, it was verified that both parenting style and teacher support significantly predict mental health, with parenting style exerting a slightly greater influence.

-Parenting style: $\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$

-Teacher support: $\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Step	Variable	R^2	ΔR^2	β	SE	B	t	p
1	Parenting Style	0.203	0.203	0.35	0.04	0.45	9.87	<0.01
2	Teacher Support	0.319	0.116	0.34	0.04	0.34	7.70	<0.01

The findings indicate that enhancing both family relationships and the school environment could notably enhance the mental well-being of vocational college students.

Discussion

Overview

The study examined the influence of parenting style and teacher support on the mental health of vocational college students in Guangxi, China. Results showed that these students generally have moderate mental health, which is significantly affected by both their upbringing and teacher support. This section will discuss the implications of these findings, compare them with previous studies, suggest practical applications, outline future research directions, and stress the importance of tailored interventions to enhance mental health outcomes among vocational college students.

Mental Health Levels

The discovery that the mental well-being of vocational college students in Guangxi is moderately rated corresponds with prior studies highlighting the distinct stressors vocational students typically encounter. These include academic pressures, concerns about future employment, and adjusting to a more practical, career-oriented curriculum. The moderate well-being level suggests that while students are coping reasonably well, there is room for improvement. Interventions aimed at enhancing support systems both at home and in school could help elevate students' mental health.

Gender Differences

The absence of substantial gender variations in mental health is a noteworthy result. Prior research has produced conflicting findings on gender disparities in mental health, with some suggesting elevated stress and anxiety levels among female students, while others indicating minimal distinctions. The current study's findings suggest that male and female students in Guangxi vocational colleges experience similar levels of mental health. This could be due to similar academic and social pressures faced by both genders in vocational settings, which might neutralize typical gender differences observed in other educational contexts.

Grade Level Differences

The significant differences in mental health across different grade levels highlight an important trend: junior students report higher well-being compared to freshmen and sophomores. This improvement over time could be attributed to several factors. Juniors may have better adapted to the vocational education system, developed stronger social networks, and gained confidence through accumulated academic and practical achievements. Freshmen and sophomores, on the other hand, might still be adjusting to the demands and expectations of vocational education. These findings underscore the need for targeted support and resources for lower-grade students to help them navigate the initial challenges of vocational college life.

Influence of Parenting Style

Parenting style was a key predictor of mental health, aligning with extensive research emphasizing the influence of family dynamics on individuals' well-being. A nurturing family setting offers essential emotional support, guidance, and stability crucial for students' mental health. The robust connection found in this study between parenting style and mental health implies that interventions focusing on family dynamics could greatly affect students' well-being. Initiatives like family counselling, communication workshops, and parental engagement in academics could be beneficial.

Influence of Teacher Support

Teacher support, though slightly less influential than parenting style, still played a significant role in predicting mental health. A positive school atmosphere, marked by supportive educators, a sense of community, and ample resources, can enrich students' academic and social experiences, leading to better mental well-being. The notable correlation between teacher support and mental health emphasizes the importance of nurturing a positive and engaging school setting. Schools can promote such an environment by encouraging extracurricular participation, involving students in decision-making, and maintaining a safe and inclusive atmosphere.

Combined Influences of Parenting Style and Teacher support

The joint influence of family and teacher support accounts for a significant part of the differences in mental health. This result shows that students thrive with a comprehensive support system encompassing both home and school settings. Efforts to improve mental health should therefore address both contexts. Schools could collaborate with families through regular communication, involving parents in school events, and offering joint family-student activities to strengthen the home-school connection.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications for educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals. These include:

-Interventions and Support Programs: Developing targeted interventions aimed at improving family and teacher support can enhance students' mental health. This might include family therapy, parental education programs, and initiatives to improve the school climate.

-Policy Development: Policymakers should consider the importance of both family and school environments when designing policies aimed at supporting student mental health. Policies that encourage parental involvement and provide resources for schools to create supportive environments can be effective.

-Training for Educators: Training programs for teachers and school counsellors on the importance of family and teacher support can equip them with the skills to support students better. Educators should be trained to recognize signs of distress and understand how family dynamics might influence students' well-being.

-Holistic Approaches: Schools should adopt a holistic approach to student well-being that includes academic support, mental health services, and family engagement strategies. Integrating these elements can create a more supportive environment for students.

Directions for Future Research

Future research could expand on this study by investigating additional factors affecting mental health among vocational college students. Longitudinal studies would be particularly useful for understanding the long-term effects of family and teacher support on well-being. Additionally, qualitative research could offer deeper insights into which specific aspects of family and school environments are most influential. Exploring cultural influences and socioeconomic status could also provide a more thorough understanding of the underlying dynamics.

Moreover, future research could explore interventions aimed at boosting family and teacher support to directly improve students' mental health. Evaluating these interventions through randomized controlled trials would provide robust evidence of their effectiveness.

Conclusions

This study emphasizes the crucial role of family and teacher support in enhancing the mental well-being of vocational college students in Guangxi, China. The identification of a moderate level of mental health indicates an ongoing need for supportive initiatives. The lack of significant gender differences suggests that interventions can be broadly applied, whereas the variations in mental health across different grade levels underscore the necessity for targeted support for lower-grade students. The strong predictive influence of both family and teacher support highlights the importance of fostering nurturing environments both at home and in schools to promote mental health. These insights lay a robust foundation for creating interventions and policies aimed at improving the well-being of vocational college students.

In conclusion, enhancing parenting styles and cultivating a positive school environment are crucial for improving the mental health of vocational college students. Prioritizing these aspects can greatly enhance the overall well-being and academic achievement of these students in Guangxi, China. Future research should further investigate these factors and develop effective interventions to support this important student population, potentially through randomized controlled trials to confirm the efficacy of these interventions.

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