

# *Research on Optimization Strategies of Life Education for College Students*

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**Abstract:** In recent years, there have been occurrences of indifference towards life, self-harm, or harm to others within Chinese universities. The misinterpretation of the meaning of life among college students requires guidance, and the lack of life education in universities urgently needs attention and reflection. Life education consciously undertakes the practical responsibility of caring for life, improving personality, and fostering life development. It transforms the concern for life situations from spontaneous empathy to sublime morality, and further integrates into societal systems and educational practices, aligning with the emerging logic, values, and practical pathways of cultivating virtue and nurturing individuals. Research on life education for college students has become a significant topic in the new era. Based on a statistical analysis of domestic research literature on life education for college students, this study captures the trends and theoretical foundations of relevant research. Additionally, by reflecting on the practical work of life education conducted by university counselors, the study combines theory with practice to propose optimization strategies for life education among college students.

## **1. Introduction**

With the continuous increase in the number of college students in China, there are more and more phenomena such as suicide, violence, alcoholism, internet addiction, and harm to others in universities. More and more college students are unable to correctly view and understand the phenomenon of life, the meaning and value of life, and various work in universities is also facing more and more new problems and challenges.

College student life education aims to guide students in understanding the origin, development, and culmination of life. Through this process, students gain awareness, understanding, appreciation, respect, and a sense of cherishing life. The objective is to encourage students to learn active survival, lead a healthy life, and pursue independent development, ultimately realizing the maximum value of their own lives. Implementing life education in universities can guide students to cherish and respect life, strengthen their will to live, and enable them to bravely face difficulties and setbacks in life, discovering the meaningful value of life. However, in the current educational landscape, there is a lack of dedicated life education courses, and Chinese universities have not yet established clear implementation plans for life education. This hinders the comprehensive coordination of curriculum

development, thematic activities, and the teaching staff, leading to certain challenges in the systematic development and comprehensive operation of life education. In recent years, the research on the implementation and current status of life education for college students has been less than optimistic. By analyzing the bibliometric data and practical cases related to life education for college students, targeted research is conducted to optimize strategies for college student life education. This is conducive to promoting the healthy development of college students and to accelerate the construction and development of schools.

## 2. Bibliometric Analysis

Taking a retrospective look at the research trajectory of life education for college students in China, it is evident that the systematic study in this field commenced relatively late. It began in the early 1990s with the introduction of the concept of "life education." Notably, the formal inclusion of college student life education in the national education system started gradually, as indicated in the 2004 "Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Education of College Students." The significance of life education was further emphasized in the 2010 "National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)," hereafter referred to as the "Educational Plan (2010-2020)," which explicitly stated the importance of prioritizing life education. Since then, scholars have shown extensive interest in researching life education, guided by the influence of China's rich traditional culture and the profound discussions on the values of life. In the context of the guidance provided by these cultural and philosophical influences, life education for contemporary college students has emerged as a crucial thematic concern of our time. Analyzing relevant literature from the past decade contributes to a clearer understanding of the developmental directions in life education research. By grounding our approach in the characteristics of the current era and practical considerations, we can better formulate efficient educational strategies to meet the comprehensive developmental needs of college students.

### 2.1 Article Volume and Temporal Distribution

The volume of publications in a journal refers to the quantity of articles published within a certain period. It serves as a direct reflection of the informational content of the journal and is a significant indicator of a journal's output, making it an essential metric in bibliometrics research. From 2012 to 2022, after deduplication and the exclusion of non-standard documents, approximately 784 academic journal articles related to college student life education were published on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). The overall quantity of research papers on college student life education in China does not stand out prominently. The exploration of college student life education research in China began in 2003, with scholars initiating systematic studies on the subject. Despite entering an intensive phase of advancement around 2010, the peak of research paper publications occurred between 2012 and 2014. Even during this peak period, the quantity of research papers remained relatively low, with no breakthrough surpassing 80 papers within the three-year peak. Since 2015, there has been a gradual decline in the number of papers, dropping from 59 papers in 2015 to only 18 papers in 2022. These data indicate that there is still considerable research space in China for contemporary college student life education. Over the past decade, research on college student life education has undergone profound reflection and reconstruction in tandem with the times. However, the research field has not yet matured into a systematic body of knowledge, suggesting that further in-depth development is needed.

## 2.2 Changes in Keywords

Keywords are extracted from the literature to express the main theme, describe the essence of the article, and signify the substantial meaning of the literature. They not only help identify the literature's theme and reflect its important information but also play a role in retrieval, representing the essence of the literature. Therefore, analyzing and statistically summarizing the keywords of literature on college student life education can to some extent reflect the changes in the research direction of college student life education. The analysis of keywords in literature on college student life education has undergone a process from macro to micro. From the keywords in 2012, 2013, and 2014, it is evident that during this period, the research on college student life education mainly focused on a macro-level investigation into the subject. This aligns with the immature stage of research on college student life education during this period. In 2015, literature keywords show a shift toward more comparative research on college student life education. From 2016 to 2019, keywords such as "issues," "measures," and "surveys" began to appear, indicating that research during this period started to pay more attention to identifying problems and selecting strategies. However, articles proposing clear solutions had not yet emerged. Starting from 2020, there is a shift towards a more integrated research perspective, combining curriculum-based ideological education and in-depth research on the significance and strategies of college student life education in the new era. The research becomes more systematic. Considering the current research outcomes, studies on college student life education primarily focus on describing the current situation and raising issues. However, they are often constrained by the framework of "current situation analysis—reason analysis." Most papers emphasize problem identification but overlook the importance of genuinely solving these problems. They lack strong operability and effectiveness. The theoretical research also lacks profound philosophical speculation, with minimal integration from the perspective of educational sociology for comprehensive understanding.

## 2.3 Distribution of Disciplines

Through studying the disciplinary distribution of literature on college student life education, we can gain a more intuitive understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of research in this field and identify the specific disciplines where the research is concentrated. This study utilizes the "Literature Classification Navigation" feature provided by the CNKI database to systematically categorize the selected literature. After standardization, we find that the literature spans various disciplines, primarily including sociology, education, sports science, cultural studies, history, and communication. Additionally, it encompasses content related to the psychological health education of university students and ideological and political education work. For instance, Chen Xia's monograph, "Research on Ideological and Political Education for College Students in the Internet Era — A Review of 'Exploration and Practice of Ideological and Political Education for College Students,'" focuses on the work of ideological and political education for college students in the context of the internet. Another example is the collaborative work by Wu Jie and Guo Benyu, "A View of College Student Life Education from the Perspective of Adlerian Individual Psychology," which explores college student life education through the lens of Adlerian individual psychology. Furthermore, Dong Jionghua's monograph, "Construction of a Long-Term Mechanism for Psychological Health Education of College Students under the Perspective of Life Education," contributes to the understanding of creating effective mechanisms for psychological health education within the context of life education for university students. This interdisciplinary research approach provides a comprehensive perspective on college student life education, enriching the discourse and paving the way for future studies in this field.

### 3. Practical Analysis of Counselor Work Cases

Case 1: Xiao Li (pseudonym) comes from a rural background and is enrolled at a university in the western part of the country. This student comes from a rather unique family situation where the parents divorced due to poverty shortly after her birth, and her father suffers from intermittent mental illness. Faced with exceptional poverty at home, her older sister married early to improve the family's financial situation. During high school, Xiao Li borrowed money from fellow villagers to invest, inadvertently getting involved with overseas money laundering organizations. This decision led her to accumulate a substantial amount of debt. As a result, she faced intense gossip and criticism within her village. Moreover, the absence of maternal care since childhood contributed to abnormal psychological conditions, leading to severe depression and anxiety. During her time at the university, she has experienced multiple suicidal thoughts.

Case 2: Xiao Jun (pseudonym) hails from a small county town in the western part of the country and was a student at a university in the same region. As the only child in the family, Xiao Jun's parents, who run a small business to make ends meet, have high expectations for him and show a significant amount of favoritism. Xiao Jun has been struggling with depression since high school, receiving intermittent intervention and treatment through hospitalization and medication over the years. However, due to a lack of serious attention from both his parents and himself, coupled with the significant academic pressure after entering university and various factors such as a romantic breakup, his psychological issues have become more pronounced. This has resulted in a severe decline in memory, leaving him feeling overwhelmed in both daily life and academics.

In their practical work, the counselor actively provides care and pays timely attention to the students' physical and mental development changes. By establishing a mechanism that involves coordination with parents, psychological counseling staff, and hospital doctors, they ensure comprehensive support for student development. Through relaxed and open-hearted conversations, the counselor proactively gains a thorough understanding of the root causes of the student's long-standing psychological issues. Additionally, by collaborating with the class committee and the student's family, they track and report on the student's behavior in daily life and studies. This proactive approach allows for timely intervention and guidance before any suicidal behavior occurs, preventing the tragedy from unfolding.

### 4. Research on Optimization Strategies for College Student Life Education

From the perspective of literature metrics, the total number of research papers on college student life education from 2012 to 2022 is not particularly prominent. Research on college student life education in China is still in the stage of integrated development, but the developmental trend is positive. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in both the quantity and quality of research outcomes. With China's increasing emphasis on the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture and outstanding cultural traditions, combined with the characteristics of the new era, there is still ample room for improvement in the research on college student life education. Efforts can be focused on the following aspects: ①**Broaden Research Scope:** Future research on college student life education should be expanded, deepening and widening the scope of study. Efforts should be made to increase the number of core journals and core authors. Higher levels of innovation should be pursued to secure additional funding support, continually elevating the scientific level of research on college student life education. ②**Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Researchers in the field of college student life education should actively engage in extensive collaborative research with scholars from various disciplines such as communication studies, sociology, history, anthropology, and psychology. Collaborative efforts can enrich the dimensions

and depth of the research. ③**Enhance Academic Research Capabilities:** Researchers should enhance their academic research capabilities by broadening their research perspectives and paying attention to incorporating relevant research findings from abroad. Overall, researchers need to improve their ability to absorb literature. Particularly noteworthy is the comparatively low citation rate of foreign literature, highlighting the need for researchers to broaden their horizons, engage in comparative research, and draw insights from relevant foreign studies for application in the domestic context.

From the perspective of practical cases involving counselors, collaborative education is crucial for college student life education. However, breaking through the bottleneck of how to effectively collaborate in student development is an urgent challenge in college student life education. The author believes that actively exploring strategies for college student life education should involve coordinated efforts from personnel across various departments in the university, family, and society, all of which play a role in youth development. As scholars have said, "There are many practical difficulties in adolescent life education, which involve various factors such as schools, families, and society, and are the result of the interweaving of various influencing factors." [1] "To cultivate moral character and cultivate new people in the era, we should attach importance to creating a good school, family, and social environment, solve the problem of horizontal and vertical integration, and achieve the integration of family, school, and social education." [2]. This collaboration is essential for building a solid foundation for coordinated education strategies. Specific optimizations should be made in the following three major aspects:

(1) Establish correct concepts and improve the quality of counselors based on school education

Counselors are the university faculty members who have the closest contact with college students, serving as guides, troubleshooters for family issues, and guardians of students' psychological and emotional well-being. How to provide life education for students with psychological issues is a challenging problem in the work of counselors and a bottleneck that needs urgent breakthroughs. This calls for attention to the work of counselors and a change in the misconception that views counselors as "university babysitters, anyone can do the job." In the case of student Xiao Li mentioned earlier, who excelled in a particular major, even reaching a state of "enthusiast" for a certain subject, it is evident that counseling cannot solely rely on simple care and persuasive reasoning to guide the student. Instead, it should use the student's academic interests, extracurricular activities, and easygoing and lively topics as entry points to infuse care gradually, empathize, and guide the student to let go of psychological defenses. Only by doing so can counselors truly enter the inner world of students with psychological issues and engage in effective conversations. Therefore, the personal qualities of counselors are crucial. They should possess not only a high level of scientific and cultural knowledge but also expertise in psychological counseling skills. Especially in universities in less developed western regions, it is essential to change the overall weak foundation of counselors, enhance the comprehensive qualities of the counseling team, focus on top-level design for counselors, and prioritize training in psychological education, student development education, and educational management. Only with a sound top-level design, a correct understanding of counselors' work, and the construction of a competent counseling team can effective life education for college students be carried out adaptively, allowing counselors to better play the role of "life education envoys" and establish a solid foundation for life education for college students.

(2) Home-School Collaborative Education Mechanism with an Emphasis on Family Education

The family is the primary environment for the growth of college students, and it forms the foundation for addressing psychological health issues and the lack of life education among students. The intimacy of the family environment, emotional expression, and the provision of knowledge are closely related factors. To effectively implement life education for college students, it is essential to

promptly improve the family-school education mechanism and enhance the "driving force" of family education. It can be said that family education is the key to promoting the mutual promotion and progress of young students' personal "small self" ideals and the great practice of the Chinese Dream "big self". In order to do a good job in life education for college students, it is necessary to quickly improve the family school education mechanism, grasp the "driving force" of family education, and truly consciously combine the struggle of "small self" with the development of the national "big self" in life pursuit. [3]In the case of Xiao Jun from Case Two, being the only child, his parents are busy with their business, providing minimal companionship, and excessive indulgence. The parents lack effective communication and resort to monetary compensation instead of genuine "care," leading to emotional outbursts if their wishes are not fulfilled. To eliminate the unfavorable impact of the family on students, counselors should thoroughly understand the family situations of college students, establish student family records, delve into the students' and their parents' upbringing processes, create a positive environment, communicate regularly with them, open up their hearts as much as possible, and foster a harmonious and caring atmosphere.

College student life education should insist on making family education a key focus. It is crucial to raise awareness of family involvement, collaborate with relevant government departments for education promotion, strengthen family network training, and establish a communication system for collaborative education. Increasing family support and allocating additional funds for life education are essential. Furthermore, developing a comprehensive resource protection mechanism is crucial to providing a structured and evidence-based approach to college student life education. Firstly, establishing effective collaboration between schools and families is a fundamental prerequisite for implementing life education. The success of any school education relies on family involvement, especially in the case of college student life education, where the active participation of parents is essential for achieving ideal results. Through school-family collaboration, teachers can bridge the communication gap with parents, understand the educational and developmental needs of each student with psychological issues, and gradually change the misconception among parents that "family education is ineffective for students with psychological problems." The establishment of parent-school associations can be a platform to transform this mindset. Through home visits and communication, parents of students with psychological issues can receive training on how to communicate with their children and enhance their care for disabled children. This approach maximizes the direct support and assistance role of parents in college student life education.

### (3) Strengthening the Foundation of College Student Life Education through Social Assistance

"Three Full Education" refers to adhering to the principles of educating all, throughout the entire process and in all aspects. Life education should be promoted with social assistance, focusing on the "Three Full Education" framework, enhancing the vital role of life education in the education system, and subsequently establishing a long-term mechanism for holistic student development. General Secretary emphasized, "To alleviate poverty, we must first support aspirations. We need to dilute the consciousness of poverty from an ideological perspective, avoiding constant mention of poverty and refraining from using poverty in every context." In fact, the fundamental factor causing poverty is impoverished thinking and a lack of will and courage to overcome poverty. In the case of student Xiao Li mentioned earlier, who comes from a family of disabled and impoverished individuals with low cultural qualifications, it is essential to promptly promote the Party's education policies, guidelines, and assistance programs, enabling disabled students and their families to fundamentally recognize the Party and the country's attention and care for special education for disabled individuals. This helps them truly feel the Party's dedication to serving the people wholeheartedly and the determination of the Party and the country to alleviate poverty in western regions. Consequently, they consciously uphold the authority of the Party Central Committee and maintain the unity of the Party, truly loving, protecting, and respecting the Party. Only by

vigorously promoting preferential assistance policies, ensuring the openness, precision, and positive effects of relevant information, and propagating the positive impact of educational assistance policies can we better encourage impoverished disabled students to enroll in schools. This will eliminate their economic, mental, and even psychological pressure associated with attending school.

Moreover, in the new era, life education for college students should elevate its position. It should establish a three-dimensional and grid-like support system based on various personnel in college student affairs and social organizations. This comprehensive and systematic approach should consolidate the efforts of relevant entities, grasp key links, strengthen overall planning, reconstruct the pattern and system of life education work, and establish a normalized and long-term mechanism for life education[3]. This will help students build confidence, be optimistic about the future, and remain steadfast in their studies and lives[4]. The specific efforts should focus on three aspects:

**Consolidate the joint efforts of the main body to grasp the education of all staff:** "All-Staff Education" refers to harnessing the collective efforts of school management, service, and education personnel to actively participate in the life education process. Engels pointed out, "Many forces converging into one force is equivalent to creating a new force, which is fundamentally different from the individual forces that constitute it." [5]The growth of life is a process with its own origin as the starting point, continually expanding life relationships horizontally. In the new era, life education for college students should use life relationships as the link, gathering the "many forces" to participate in life education. The convergence of these "many forces" must be united and coordinated, with a focus on coordinated education to lead the construction of the life education team. Universities should fully mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of life education teachers from various fields and fronts, especially encouraging ideological and political course teachers and administrative staff to strengthen communication, collaborate, and play a synergistic role between the main channel and the main positions. This will form complementary advantages, share resources, complement content in multiple dimensions, coordinate management and services, ensure effective connections in the process, enhance educational confidence, improve the accuracy and depth of addressing college students' life issues, and achieve multi-subject resonance.

**Grasp the key links and promote the entire process of educating people:** "Whole-Process Education" refers to integrating education into every aspect of the school's educational process. Life is a vertical developmental process, and in the new era, life education for college students should focus on the life development process. By emphasizing daily life education, understanding key moments in life growth, implementing stages and nodes, and resonating with life, it aims to promote holistic education throughout the process. Horizontally, life education should be highlighted in daily management and services. Daily work should strengthen the care for life and actively help students overcome difficulties encountered in their life growth process. It involves guiding students to establish correct moral values and construct positive life values through solving various problems. At the same time, in order to better stand at the height of comprehensive and harmonious human development, and establish an open and multipolar perspective and educational philosophy, schools can try to build a "third classroom" - the "Integrated Education Theory and Practice" cloud course. [6] The aim is to open up cloud based life education in the construction of network platforms, and provide on-site integrated education for ideological and political teachers and university normal students in the process of integrating theory with practice, so that they can experience the education and teaching of integrated classrooms, learn to understand, analyze, and solve the problems of "special students". [7] Vertically, life education should be implemented in stages, focusing on important nodes during admission, growth on campus, and graduation. The term "nodes" specifically refers to traditional Chinese festivals that showcase unique life wisdom, contain rich life education resources, and provoke deep reflections on life. This approach enhances the ritual, cultural, and practical aspects of life education, promoting the full-process

implementation of life education for college students in the new era.

**Strengthening global planning to achieve all-round education:** "Comprehensive Education" refers to the strategic arrangement of education on a global scale. The overall planning of life education for college students in the new era is a crucial guarantee for standardizing life education and achieving comprehensive education. In terms of macro-strategic guidance, the work of life education for college students in the new era cannot be separated from the strategic support provided by the country. This involves further implementing the life education plan, strengthening policy guidance and legal safeguards, and providing comprehensive strategic support for life education for college students. At the same time, universities need to base their plans on the actual situation of their own schools, formulate life education implementation plans with the characteristics of the university and in line with the growth and development laws of college students, and establish a solid foundation for the effective promotion of life education. From a practical operational perspective, it is necessary to establish specialized service and management institutions to coordinate the work of life education for college students in the new era, establish a sound system and mechanism for life education for college students in the new era, attach importance to the training of counselors in basic skills of heart to heart conversations, and grasp the "main battlefield" of daily heart to heart conversations. [8] Addressing the current status and problems of life education for college students, policies suitable for the development of life education in the new era should be formulated. This includes clarifying and refining teaching objectives for life education, establishing and improving institutional mechanisms for life education for college students from aspects such as school planning, organizational implementation, educational methods, evaluation supervision, condition guarantee, professional support, textbook construction, and teacher development. This forms an efficient, unified, and comprehensive modern institutional mechanism, promoting professionalization through institutionalization and effectiveness through professionalism.

## 5. Conclusion

Considering the current situation of life education in universities and various extreme phenomena and events that pose a "threat" to life among college students due to issues such as employment, psychology, academic pressure, and emotions, this study explores how, in the current context, life education for college students can guide them to form a correct perspective on life and values. It aims to encourage students to cherish their own lives and the lives of others. This exploration holds significant practical significance in enlightening teachers to enhance their capabilities in integrating ideological and political education and psychological health education into the curriculum based on their own circumstances. It also helps students in establishing a proper outlook on life and values, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education for college students.

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