

A Study on Family Education Problems and Countermeasures of Higher Vocational Acquired Helplessness Groups from the Perspective of Collaborative Parenting between Home and Schools

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Abstract: Home-school collaborative parenting is a form of education in which family education and school education integrate, collaborate and reasonably educate each other, which can effectively promote the healthy development of students. In the intervention and help for the higher vocational acquired helpless groups, home-school collaboration is a very important and effective way. In this paper, based on the analysis of the current situation of the acquired helpless group in higher vocational colleges and the problems of their family education, we put forward the educational response strategies of the acquired helpless group in higher vocational colleges under the perspective of home-school collaborative parenting.

1. Introduction

With the change of the times and the continuous progress of people's thinking, the importance of family education in the process of children's growth is more and more prominent, and even plays a vital role in the future of children. For students in higher vocational colleges and universities, family education is also irreplaceable and is an important supporting force for school education.

2. The necessity of family education in higher education

General Secretary affirmed the role of family, school, government and society in fulfilling the mission of education in the National Education Conference. National education in the new era is mainly composed of family, school and social education, in which family education is the cornerstone of school and social education. The family is the first school of life, and parents are the first life tutors of their children. In the family environment, parents' teaching and influence on their children plays a key role in guiding the cultivation of good behaviour, ideology, morality, values and sound personality. As an important part of China's higher education, higher vocational education is also an important area of the national education system and human resources construction, shouldering the great responsibility of cultivating senior technical talents in various industries. Therefore, promoting home-school collaborative parenting in higher vocational colleges and universities has a key impact on the cultivation of technical and applied talents.^[1]

3. The current situation of acquired helplessness of higher vocational students

The concept of learned helplessness is proposed by American psychologist Seligman after a series of psychological experiments. Through an in-depth study of animal behaviour, Seligman believed that after an individual experienced many setbacks and failures, they would subjectively develop a pessimistic and negative attitude in terms of emotion, cognition and behaviour, and subsequent studies have also confirmed this view. After a period of unconscious learning, when people are faced with unchangeable and uncontrollable situations, they are internally trapped in a state of helplessness, and they believe that no matter how much effort they put in, they will not be able to change the final outcome. This psychological state has a significant negative impact on their emotions, cognition and behaviour, and may even cause them to choose to give up trying. It is important to note that this state of mind is transferable and generalisable, meaning that failure in one particular area can lead to the spread of "learned helplessness" in other areas.^[2]

In the era of the popularisation of higher education, the scale and mode of enrolment of higher vocational education are being constantly reformed and optimised, providing more students with a ladder for growth and development. However, the diversification of the structure of the student population and the continuous lowering of the entrance threshold have brought great challenges to the requirements of higher vocational education on students' quality and cultivation. Some students have already shown negative psychological states such as low motivation for learning and low sense of achievement at the stage of general or vocational high school, which will also be transferred to the learning life of higher vocational education.^[3]

These "acquired helplessness" students usually carry on their previous learning habits and methods, and are unable to adapt their learning strategies to the higher vocational learning environment, nor can they find effective learning techniques to overcome their helplessness. This kind of students often have passive acceptance of learning, low motivation for learning, low achievement motivation, obvious eagerness, low self-evaluation, and low mental health. Specifically, they can be categorised as follows.^[4]

1) Inadequate achievement motivation. Achievement motivation is an intrinsic psychological force that pushes an individual to engage in meaningful activities and expects satisfactory results. If a person has a strong achievement motivation, he will be able to devote himself to a certain activity, and even in the face of challenges, he will have great courage and determination to overcome the difficulties. On the other hand, students with acquired helplessness, because of their lack of positive and active learning attitudes, have more obvious learning difficulties, and when they encounter setbacks, they will show a negative mindset such as cowering and timidity, hesitation, and self-abandonment. They do not realise that they should make adjustments in their learning habits, attitudes and strategies in response to changes in the learning environment and requirements. They may still accept learning passively and unidirectionally, and some of them may even form a self-imposed blockage of learning. They are unable to formulate appropriate learning goals and plans according to the existing conditions and their own abilities, they are careless or fearful in learning, and their fear of expected failure is much greater than their hope of success, so they no longer expect themselves to succeed.^[5]

2) Low self-concept. People's self-concept and evaluation of all aspects of themselves, including physiological, psychological and social adaptations, can provide a sense of self-identity and continuity, and help self-adjustment and maintenance of corresponding behaviours, which is an important support for the existence and development of individuals. Acquisitively unhelpful students have lower than average self-concept in all dimensions of physical characteristics. Their lack of self-confidence, lack of interest in learning, low self-esteem and suspicion, and the belief that they are unrecognised and unaccepted can lead to anxiety over time, and even to a state of

self-imposed isolation.

3) Negative stereotyped thinking. Negative stereotyped thinking refers to the actions taken by individuals to predict the future based on inherent regularities, which are mainly manifested in the following ways: lack of self-confidence, fear of setbacks; fear of difficulties, fear of becoming a city, and fear of attempting new tasks. Those learned helpless students who experience frequent setbacks in their academic life are often subjected to negative evaluations from their teachers and peers, which may trigger negative psychological reactions such as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, etc., thus gradually forming stereotypical thinking patterns and cognitive concepts. They tend to label themselves as "losers", believing that they are incompetent and that no matter how much effort they put in, it is all in vain. They are also often stubborn and unwilling to accept the opinions and suggestions of others, and even persistently adopt a negative attitude to cope with learning difficulties.^[6]

4) Low self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief, judgement or self-perception of whether and to what extent he or she can perform a certain behaviour before performing it. Students who are learned helpless because they have not achieved a sense of academic success and satisfaction for an extended period of time feel doubt and uncertainty about their self-efficacy and are unable to motivate sustained learning. Therefore, to avoid the possibility of failure, they prefer to set easy-to-achieve, low-difficulty learning goals. When frustrated, they often choose to give up their efforts due to a lack of information, and may even suffer from anxiety due to doubts about their self-efficacy, which affects their physical and mental health.^[7]

4. Family Education Problems of Higher Vocational Acquired Helplessness Groups

4.1. Misconduct of Parents' Education Methods

From the point of view of parents contacted in daily work, the vast majority of parents are still very concerned about their children, and also have deep hopes for their children. However, due to the influence of values and behavioural habits, the educational methods chosen by parents do not necessarily meet the psychological characteristics of contemporary young students, which may easily lead to the deterioration of parent-child relationship. Most of the learned helpless students also said in the interviews that their parents could not understand and accept their true thoughts, and could not give them encouragement and comfort after they experienced setbacks and failures, and more often than not, what they got was a round of criticism and education. This is why many students "lose contact" with their parents when they go to university.^[8]

On the one hand, higher vocational students have already possessed the ability to think independently in the course of their education, they have their own opinions on many things, and with the advent of adulthood, they are more eager to take control of their own lives. When parents adopt a strong and authoritarian education style, it is difficult for them to promote their individuality, which is not favourable to their psychological health development. On the other hand, there is a weak sense of communication between parents and children, a lack of communication skills and a weak foundation of mutual trust. Many parents, because of their rich experience in life, tend to impose their expectations and subjective will on their children from the perspective of "I am doing it for your own good", while ignoring their children's intrinsic needs and wishes. These parents often advocate a strict or even violent approach to parenting, neglecting positive discipline, thus gradually forming a huge gap between parent-child relationship. Children begin to fear communicating with their parents and even choose to confront them, mistakenly believing that communication is useless. This makes them slowly become negative and lack the motivation to be themselves and to succeed.^[9]

4.2. Deficiencies in parents' educational literacy

1) Backward concepts of family education. With the development of social economy and culture, people are paying more and more attention to their children's education, but the traditional mode of family education still dominates. Due to the influence of traditional concepts, many people regard family education as the task of "creating a good learning environment for children" and neglect the role of family education. Many parents regard the provision of food and clothing as the responsibility of parents, while the responsibility for education lies with schools and teachers. In the family, the problems of "emphasis on upbringing rather than teaching, on intelligence rather than morality, on intellectual factors rather than non-intellectual factors, and on physical health rather than mental health" are more prominent. On the issue of students with acquired helplessness, many parents simply do not understand the helplessness of their children after experiencing setbacks, thinking that it is just some minor disappointments, and adopt a laissez-faire or indifferent attitude, failing to provide timely guidance and psychological support for their children.^[10]

2) Family education ability is low. Parents of higher vocational students generally have low cultural level, insufficient knowledge reserve, and lack of knowledge about psychological laws in family education, which is the main reason for the low capacity of family education. At the same time, the problems of intergenerational education, single-parent education, poverty education and left-behind education are also prominent, which makes parents feel at a loss. In addition, many families lack a global perspective and systematic planning when educating their children, and always "treat the head when there is a headache and treat the foot when there is a foot sore". When children have problems, the challenge of family education and the difficulty of solving the problems increase.

4.3. Emotional absence in family education

Parents' absence in family education or incomplete family structure can bring great harm to children. Through observation and contact in daily work, it is found that a considerable portion of senior first-year students come to school with different degrees of trauma or negative emotions. They can be categorised mainly into the following aspects.

1) Lack of parental companionship. Most of the families of post-00 senior students were born in rural areas, and their parents chose to go out to work in order to improve the overall standard of living of the family, and their children were raised by the elderly or boarded at school since childhood. Such children not only lack parental guidance in problem-solving and help-seeking, but also lack parental affection. They like to be alone, seldom participate in group activities, and seldom communicate with their peers. They do not know how to reasonably plan their own learning and life, and when they encounter problems, they will habitually choose to avoid, fantasise, blame themselves, rationalise and other ways to cope with them, and they have more negative emotions.

2) Lack of complete family structure. There is a certain connection between students' emotions and behaviours and the lack of family structure. With the accelerated pace of modern life, the stability of marital relationship is decreasing and the divorce rate is getting higher and higher. When divorced parents reorganise their families individually, the children's roles in the new family environment often become blurred. In single-parent families, children are very prone to psychological problems such as low self-esteem, isolation, paranoia and self-blame due to the lack of love and care from one of the parents, coupled with psychological sensitivity. Parents who fail to notice the changes in their children's psychology may also cause more and more serious trauma to their children as a result of the single-parent family structure. For example, some children who are often self-blaming may think that their parents' separation is due to their own reasons and suffer from self-condemnation and self-depreciation; and in some restructured families, the children may

develop problems of isolation, extreme behaviour and hyper-sensitivity. Especially when children in restructured families live with other siblings, they may wrongly perceive themselves as a burden, which may lead to emotional frustration, reduced self-confidence, social difficulties, inner vulnerability, lack of security and "learned helplessness".

3) Lack of relaxation in family relationships. A sense of relaxation in family relationships is essentially a positive way of thinking, strong emotional management and peaceful communication, where family members support each other in coping with challenges, no matter how difficult they are, and where children feel deeply loved and received, so that they can feel free to be themselves. Unfortunately, however, such a family environment is not common in many real-life families. Many higher education students report that they grew up in a tense, high-pressure family atmosphere, and that this has left a psychological shadow that is hard to erase. Many parents have a very low tolerance for mistakes made by their children, who are harshly criticised and reprimanded when they accidentally make small mistakes. In this kind of family atmosphere, the child's sense of security continues to decline, and he or she often feels stressed and anxious, fearful of making mistakes. This fearfulness will make them no longer dare to take risks and try things out of fear of punishment, thus weakening their desire to explore achievement motivation. They gradually become timid and lack courage, and their potential for personal growth and development is inhibited.

5. Family Education Response Strategies for Higher Vocational Acquired Helplessness Groups

In the process of personal growth, family education plays a key role, which is not only the education in the initiation period, but also accompanied by a person's whole life. For the "acquired helplessness" students in higher vocational education, their problems usually stem from a variety of factors such as past learning experiences, growth environment, family and school environment. Therefore, in order to improve learned helplessness, it is necessary to rely on the collaboration between families and schools. Therefore, we have to take the perspective of home-school collaborative parenting, give full play to the respective advantages of home education and school education, construct a home-school joint mechanism and form several coping strategies in order to promote the positive transformation of students' learned helplessness. The guiding principle is: under the guidance and assistance of higher vocational institutions, form a home-school collaborative work team, give full play to the respective educational advantages of the different roles in the team, mobilise parents to take the initiative to learn and seek change, establish a long-term mechanism of home-school collaboration, and help students correct the negative state of acquired helplessness. The following forms can be adopted.

5.1. Formation of a home-school collaborative work team

The negative psychology of the learned helplessness group can't be solved overnight, and the transformation of learned helplessness can't be realised by a few times of communication between home and school. Therefore, in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of home-school co-education, in addition to opening up the channels of home-school co-operation, a home-school co-operation team should be set up in order to better achieve the expected educational effects of the learned helplessness group. This team can be composed of family education experts, leaders of the school work department, parents, full-time counsellors, class teachers, full-time and part-time psychological teachers, professional teachers, student cadres, etc. The main tasks include screening the acquired helpless groups, carrying out daily intervention and support, closely contacting parents to discuss education strategies, carrying out psychological counselling and guidance, playing the role of professional teachers in academic guidance and direction, playing the role of peer

counselling, keeping abreast of student dynamics, and playing the role of peer counselling. We will also play the role of academic guidance and counselling by professional teachers, peer counselling to keep abreast of students' dynamics, and peer support. Each member of the team has his/her own responsibilities and a clear division of labour, forming a synergy between home and school to help the learned helplessness group out of their confusion and to promote their healthy growth.

5.2. Psychological check-up for new students

In the psychological assessment conducted at the time of admission of new students, the completion of the Acquired Helplessness Scale and the Family Situation and Parent-Child Communication Questionnaire can be added, so as to grasp early information on whether there is the phenomenon of acquired helplessness in the students, how their parent-child relationship is like, how they communicate with each other and how often they communicate with each other, etc., which is very important for the accurate analysis of the causes of the students' acquired helplessness afterwards. Counsellors and full-time and part-time psychologists can also combine the past information provided by parents to look for relevant information that can help students positively transform their learned helplessness and carry out psychological counselling in a targeted manner.

5.3. Parent-child relationship counselling

In order to help parents accurately identify their children's learned helplessness, reduce the antipathy and rebelliousness caused by communication problems between parents and children in daily life, and thus promote the harmonious development of parent-child relationship, so that children can grow optimistically and positively, enhance their self-confidence, and regulate the state of learned helplessness, the school can provide family counselling and group counselling services for parent-child relationship according to the needs of parents and students. The school can provide parents and students with family counselling and group counselling services according to their needs.

5.4. Parents' "heart" classroom platforms

Sound views, skills and behaviours in family education are crucial to the upbringing and guidance of children. Building a "heart" classroom platform for parents is an innovative strategy for schools in the field of family education, which can guide parents to systematically master and practise scientific education methods, and thus revolutionise the concept of family education and optimise its effectiveness. Schools can achieve this goal by organising regular mental health seminars, developing parent learning courses, and exchanging and promoting good family education cases. The "heart" classroom platform for parents can be closely related to the critical period of learned helplessness of college students. For example, when new students enter the university, they may feel confused because they cannot adapt to the independent study of the university. At this time, the school can issue a parent guide at the orientation meeting, guiding parents to care about their children's mental health and strengthen communication with them. For second year students, they are facing more and more difficult professional courses, increased pressure from examinations and certificates, and may encounter failing examinations and unsatisfactory academic performance. Under such circumstances, the Parent Classroom platform can provide parents with guidance on how to think differently, help their children establish reasonable academic expectations, and enhance their children's psychological resilience and sense of self-efficacy. In the third year of college, students and parents will face the decision of pursuing higher education or employment, and they may feel anxious, fearful and confused. Parents' "heart"

classroom platform can also provide guidance on how to choose development paths and change employment attitudes.

5.5. Online Interactive Platform for Home and School

The prevalence of the Internet makes modern post-00s students more inclined to online communication, while more and more parents are also equipped to participate in online interaction. Higher vocational colleges and universities can make use of social network media such as WeChat, public number, microblogging, QQ and other social media to establish a communication platform for students, parents and teachers to provide timely information about their children's past growth experience and student life in school, so that parents and teachers can understand the psychological condition of the students in depth, and discuss and respond to problems encountered by the students in the course of their growth in a timely and effective manner to help them dissolve their negative emotions, cultivate optimism, enhance the experience of success and promote the learning of the attitude of the students. It also helps them to resolve negative emotions and cultivate optimism, enhances the experience of success, and promotes the positive transformation of learned helplessness, so that university students can be more confident in meeting the challenges of the future!

6. Conclusions

This article proposes educational strategies for the learned helpless group in vocational colleges from the perspective of home-school collaborative parenting. Family-school cooperation is a crucial and effective method to intervene and support the learning helpless group in higher vocational education. By first analyzing the current situation and family education issues faced by the learned helpless group in vocational colleges, this study aims to enhance educational outcomes through collaborative efforts between families and schools.

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