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From Frustration Education to Psychological Resilience: An Integrated Intervention Path for Class Management in Technical and Vocational Colleges

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Abstract

In recent years, the issue of psychological vulnerability and insufficient resilience among vocational college students has become increasingly prominent. Faced with multiple pressures such as academic performance, employment, and interpersonal relationships, many students are prone to feelings of inferiority, avoidance, or even extreme behaviour, posing a significant challenge to educational management. This study is based on the theory of "Adversity Quotient" (AQ) and positive psychology, employing a combination of questionnaire surveys and case analysis to explore the current state of resilience among vocational college students. The findings reveal that students' lack of resilience primarily manifests as poor emotional regulation skills, inadequate problem-solving abilities, and weak social support systems. Based on this, this paper proposes an integrated intervention pathway for class management, including course integration, psychological counseling, practical experiences, and multi-party collaboration, to gradually enhance students' psychological resilience. The research indicates that systematic, tiered class interventions not only significantly improve students' psychological adaptability but also strengthen class cohesion and educational effectiveness.

Keywords

Frustration Tolerance, Psychological Resilience, Class Management, Technical and Vocational Colleges, Integrated Intervention

1. Introduction

As social competition intensifies and education becomes more widespread, mental health issues among vocational college students are increasingly drawing attention. Compared to students at general universities, vocational college students generally face challenges such as weak academic foundations, insufficient self-identity, and employment anxiety. These factors collectively contribute to their tendency to exhibit negative emotions when faced with setbacks. Resilience to adversity, as an important psychological quality for individuals to cope with adversity, regulate emotions, and solve problems, plays a decisive role in the learning and lives of vocational college students. However, the current reality is that some students lack psychological resilience, leading to frequent conflicts in class management, insufficient motivation for learning, and even a higher incidence of psychological crises. Therefore, how to integrate adversity education into class management and explore effective pathways to enhance students' psychological resilience has become an urgent issue in the educational practice of vocational colleges.Vocational education plays a transitional role in the lifelong learning system, bridging institutionalized and non-institutionalized education and serving as a bridge between general education and continuing education. In particular, the enrollment scope of higher vocational education has broken through the limitation of only admitting secondary vocational school students, with recent high school graduates becoming a significant source of students. Students in higher vocational colleges further enhance their academic qualifications through various means such as associate-to-bachelor's degree programs, self-study exams, adult education, and distance learning, upgrading their associate's degrees to bachelor's degrees. Therefore, higher vocational education supplies a large number of students to higher-level institutions and simultaneously drives the progress of secondary vocational education. Thus, higher vocational education plays a crucial role in bridging secondary vocational education and general undergraduate education. As a product of the Industrial Revolution and industrial transformation, higher vocational education has become a beneficial supplement to secondary vocational education, and both have contributed to social development. Further education in higher vocational education is also an important path for many secondary vocational school graduates to improve their academic qualifications. Higher vocational education plays a crucial role in connecting various forms of education, providing continuing education and vocational training for members of society, giving them the opportunity to receive associate degree education, and also providing students for regular undergraduate education, thus driving the development of lifelong learning together with regular undergraduate education.

2. Current Situation of Frustration Tolerance among Students in Technical and Vocational Colleges

2.1 Insufficient Psychological Resilience

Students at vocational and technical colleges are typically between the ages of 16 and 22. At this stage of development, they tend to have a relatively mature sense of self-awareness, but their emotional regulation and rational thinking are still underdeveloped. Surveys indicate that a significant proportion of students lack rational coping strategies when faced with academic pressure, interpersonal conflicts, or emotional setbacks, making them prone to emotional distress. For example, after failing a skills exam or being rejected in an internship interview, some students may develop strong feelings of self-doubt, even interpreting a single failure as "worthless." In extreme cases, students may resort to self-harm or excessive internet use as more intense coping mechanisms for psychological stress. Recent media reports of students engaging in self-harm or suicide due to romantic breakups or academic failures highlight the fragile psychological resilience of vocational and technical college students.

2.2 Insufficient Family Educational Support

A significant proportion of vocational college students come from rural or migrant worker families. Many of them lack long-term parental companionship and effective communication during their upbringing, leading to insufficient emotional support. Some parents adopt extreme educational approaches: on one hand, overly protective parents interfere in every aspect of their children's lives, depriving them of opportunities to independently confront challenges; on the other hand, some parents largely neglect their children's psychological needs, focusing solely on material provision and basic living conditions. Such family environments often leave students without effective psychological support when facing difficulties and lacking positive role models, thereby exacerbating their psychological vulnerability.

2.3 School Education Priorities Skills over Mental Health

Vocational and technical colleges are tasked with cultivating highly skilled talent. Therefore, teaching practices often emphasis professional skills and employment-oriented education, while mental health education is marginalized. In many schools, mental health education is limited to "a few classes" or "setting up a counseling room," lacking systematic and routine implementation. Additionally, class advisors and counsellors are often burdened with administrative tasks, making it difficult for them to dedicate sufficient time and effort to in-depth psychological counseling. As a result, when students encounter academic or life-related setbacks, schools fail to provide timely and effective psychological support and intervention, leading to some issues being overlooked or delayed in resolution.

2.4 Social Bias and Pressure

Society still harbor's biases against students from vocational colleges. For a long time, society has generally regarded regular universities as the "first choice," while vocational colleges have been labelled as "inferior" and "second-rate." These external stereotypes easily foster feelings of inferiority among students, leading them to believe they are "less capable," [1]thereby exacerbating their sense of insecurity and anxiety in both their studies and job prospects. Additionally, the uncertainty of the job market further increases students' stress. Many students encounter restrictions or discriminatory treatment during internships or job searches after graduation, leading to feelings of helplessness and frustration. Due to a lack of sufficient psychological resilience, they often internalize external pressure as self-doubt, thereby falling into a vicious cycle.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Adversity Quotient (AQ)

The Adversity Quotient (AQ) is an important psychological concept proposed by American psychologist Paul Stoltz in the 1990s, used to measure an individual's resilience and coping ability when faced with setbacks, stress, and adversity. Stoltz believes that AQ, following IQ and EQ, is another key factor determining an individual's success and happiness. IQ focuses on cognitive abilities, EQ on interpersonal relationships, while AQ focuses on whether an individual can persevere and achieve breakthroughs in adversity.

AQ theory comprises four core dimensions:

1.Sense of Control: The extent to which an individual believes they can influence outcomes when facing adversity. Students with a strong sense of control are more likely to actively seek solutions rather than passively wait.

2.Endurance: The tolerance for the duration and intensity of setbacks. Students with high endurance are less likely to give up easily and can persist until the problem is resolved.

3.Scope of Influence: Whether an individual allows negative emotions and feelings of failure to spread to other areas of life. Students with a lower scope of influence often generalist a single failure into a complete self-denial, while those with a higher scope of influence can view setbacks as isolated incidents.

4.Sense of Responsibility: Whether an individual is willing to take responsibility for the outcomes of adversity and actively seek improvement. Students with a strong sense of responsibility tend to believe that "I can change the current situation" rather than attributing outcomes entirely to external factors or fate.

In resilience education for students in technical and vocational schools, AQ (Adaptive Quotient) provides valuable guidance. Many students encounter failure or rejection during their studies, internships, or job searches. Without a sense of control and resilience, they may develop negative emotions; if their adaptability and attribution style are misaligned, they may amplify local failures into overall self-denial, potentially leading to psychological crises. Therefore, classroom management aimed at cultivating psychological resilience can design educational activities around the four dimensions of AQ-for example, cultivating a sense of control through "situational simulation," enhancing endurance through "resilience challenges," preventing overgeneralization of failure through "case analysis," and reinforcing a sense of autonomy through "responsibility education." [2]

3.2 Positive Psychology (PERMA Model)

Positive psychology, proposed by American psychologist Martin Seligman, posits that mental health should not only be defined as the absence of illness but should also include positive psychological experiences and sustained well-being. Seligman's PERMA model provides a theoretical framework for cultivating resilience.

The PERMA model comprises five dimensions:

1.Positive emotions: Experiencing emotions such as joy, gratitude, hope, and satisfaction in daily learning and life. Positive emotions help students reduce anxiety and despair when facing setbacks, thereby maintaining psychological balance.

2.Engagement: A state of being fully absorbed in an activity, often associated with "flow experiences." When students achieve engagement in skill learning or extracurricular activities, they enhance their self-efficacy, thereby mitigating the impact of failure.

3.Relationships: The quality of interpersonal relationships, which is key to happiness and coping with adversity. In classroom management, teamwork and peer support provide students with encouragement and assistance during challenging times.

4.Meaning: Perception of the meaning and value of life and learning. “If vocational students understand the connection between skill learning and future careers, they are more likely to find the motivation to persevere in the face of setbacks.” [3]

5.Achievement: The sense of accomplishment gained from achieving goals through effort. Even small successes can boost students' self-confidence and enhance their stress resilience.

In vocational and technical college education practices, the PERMA model provides specific pathways for classroom management. For example, teachers can encourage students to record "daily positive experiences" to accumulate positive emotions; set phased goals in practical courses to ensure students achieve small yet sustained feelings of accomplishment; foster a sense of belonging through group counseling and collaborative learning; and reinforce a sense of meaning through career planning education. These interventions help students maintain optimism and resilience when facing setbacks, thereby enhancing their overall psychological resilience.

4. Conceptual Framework

This study identifies adversity education, psychological resilience, and classroom management as three core concepts. Although they differ in definition, they are closely intertwined in educational practice. Based on the Adversity Quotient (AQ) theory and the PERMA model from positive psychology, this study constructs a conceptual framework for psychological interventions in classroom management at technical and vocational colleges.

4.1 Adversity Education

Frustration education is not merely about exposing students to failure, but rather about providing purposeful education and training to enable students to experience frustration and stress in a safe and controlled environment. Through this process, students learn emotional regulation and coping strategies. “This study defines frustration education as the integration of curriculum design, activity planning, and psychological counseling in classroom management to help students develop a positive attitude toward frustration.”[4] It serves as both a trigger for psychological growth and a prerequisite for enhancing resilience.

4.2 Psychological Resilience

Psychological resilience refers to an individual's ability to maintain psychological balance and achieve personal growth in the face of adversity. It emphasizes not only "coping with stress" but also "achieving recovery and development through stress." In the context of vocational education, psychological resilience manifests in students' ability to maintain positive emotions, stay engaged, seek social support, and derive meaning and a sense of accomplishment when facing academic, interpersonal, or career-related challenges. Resilience thus becomes the core outcome of adversity education and a key ability for future career adaptation and social integration.

4.3 Classroom Management

Classroom management is not limited to discipline and academic organization but is also a critical environment for

psychological education and personal development. In this study, classroom management is defined as a comprehensive educational intervention system achieved through course integration, psychological counseling, experiential practice, and home-school-community collaboration. It serves both as the implementation platform for adversity education and as a catalytic environment for resilience cultivation.

4.4 Theoretical Framework of the Three Relationships

Based on the above definitions, the relationships among the three concepts can be summarized as follows:

1.Adversity education as an input pathway: providing students with opportunities for "simulated adversity-coping practice-reflective learning" to accumulate adaptive strategies in a safe environment;

2.Psychological resilience as the core output: systematic frustration education helps students develop emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and social support, thereby enhancing their ability to endure and adapt;

3.Classroom management as the practical domain: through institutional design, activity organization, and resource integration, classroom management transforms frustration education into concrete actions that promote resilience, thereby improving the overall quality of classroom management.

Therefore, this conceptual framework reveals a cyclical mechanism:

Classroom management → Integration of adversity education (curriculum, counseling, activities, collaboration) → Enhancement of students' psychological resilience → Improvement of classroom quality and educational outcomes → Further educational interventions.

This conceptual framework not only clarifies the intrinsic logic between adversity education, psychological resilience, and classroom management but also provides practical guidelines for vocational colleges to design effective intervention measures.

5. Integrated Intervention Path in Class Management

5.1 Curriculum Embedding: Integrating Frustration Education into Daily Teaching

Failure education should not be established as an independent course but integrated into the daily teaching of academic and vocational courses. Teachers can design "failure scenarios" in the classroom to allow students to experience setbacks in a controlled environment. For example, in skill assessments, teachers can intentionally increase the difficulty of tasks so that some students are unable to succeed on their first attempt. Following this, teachers can guide students to participate in group discussions, analyst the causes of failure, propose improvement strategies, and optimism performance in subsequent exercises. “Through this cycle, students gradually develop a positive attitude toward setbacks.” [5]Additionally, class meetings can include a "failure case sharing" segment, encouraging students to share the challenges they have encountered and the coping methods they have employed, thereby promoting peer learning and mutual reflection.

5.2 Psychological Counseling: Combining Individual and Group Approaches

Psychological counseling is an important component in enhancing students' resilience to adversity and should adhere to the principle of combining universal education with personalized intervention. At the class level, regular group counseling activities can be organized, such as "emotional regulation workshops" or "resilience training camps." These activities include role-playing, group games, and therapeutic drawing, which help students release emotions and strengthen team support. At the individual level, class teachers should establish psychological profiles for each student, regularly assess their emotional state, and conduct one-on-one conversations. Students with significant psychological difficulties should be referred to professional counsellors. This "dual-track" mechanism addresses the general psychological needs of most students while ensuring timely support for high-risk individuals.

5.3 Experiential Learning: Strengthening Resilience through Activities

Psychological resilience is not developed solely in the classroom, but requires repeated training in practice. Class management can include various experiential activities, such as wilderness survival training, campus marathons, team-building exercises, and volunteer service. These activities often involve challenges and uncertainties, ensuring that students inevitably encounter difficulties. Teachers’ responsibility is to help students find solutions during these struggles and to experience the sense of achievement that comes from overcoming obstacles. For example, one technical college incorporated a “three-day trekking challenge” into freshman orientation. Under dual physical and psychological pressure, students were required to complete the challenge through teamwork, ultimately strengthening both their self-confidence and peer trust.

5.4 Multi-Party Collaboration: Family-School-Society Linkage

Enhancing students' resilience to setbacks requires not only the efforts of schools but also the joint efforts of families and society. First, principals should establish a sound home-school communication mechanism, such as a "parent mailbox" or parent groups, to provide regular feedback on student performance and guide parents to priorities encouragement over protection in family education. Second, parents can be invited to participate in school psychological education lectures or

parent-child activities to deepen their understanding of the importance of resilience education. Third, schools should actively collaborate with community psychological service center's, youth development center's, and non-profit organization's to provide students with psychological counseling, volunteer services, and career guidance. Through home-school-community collaboration, a comprehensive and sustainable support network can be formed to enhance students' psychological resilience.

6. Case and Practice

Take the 2024 preschool education class at a certain technical college as an example. The class has a total of 36 students, including 35 females and 1 male, most of whom come from rural families. Shortly after the semester began, the homeroom teacher discovered that the class as a whole lacked psychological resilience: some students showed anxiety and lack of concentration under academic pressure, while a few students fell into low moods due to family conflicts or emotional problems, and even showed tendencies toward self-harm. In response, the class teacher, with the support of the school's mental health education centre, implemented a comprehensive intervention plan combining "group counseling + experiential learning + growth portfolios." [6]

6.1 Organizing a Themed Class Meeting: Creating a Positive Atmosphere

The class teacher organized a themed class meeting titled "Fear No Setbacks, Live Optimistically." The meeting adopted a format of "story sharing + role-playing + teacher feedback." First, several volunteers shared their personal experiences of facing setbacks, such as failing skill tests, being rejected in internship interviews, or conflicts with classmates. Subsequently, students were divided into groups for role-playing, reenacting these scenarios and demonstrating different coping strategies. Finally, the class teacher conducted psychological analysis, guiding students to recognize that setbacks are universal, and the key lies in adjusting one's mindset and seeking effective solutions. This approach provided students with an emotional outlet and fostered empathy through peer interaction.Our traditional higher vocational education has always emphasized the transmission of knowledge and skills, while neglecting the cultivation of students' key abilities and lifelong development potential; it has emphasized enabling students to master existing production technologies and processes, while neglecting students' innovation in existing production technologies, processes, and management.

6.2 Organizing a "Failure Experience Camp": Learning in Adversity

To help students directly confront challenges, the school organized a "Failure Experience Camp." The activities included group challenges, outdoor expansion tasks, and skill competitions. Teachers intentionally increased the difficulty of the tasks, making it impossible for some groups to succeed on their first attempt. During the activities, many students became impatient, complained, or wanted to give up. Class teachers and counsellors guided students to reflect by asking questions such as, "Why did we fail? What should we do next?"[7] Through repeated attempts and teamwork, students gradually learned to remain calm in the face of setbacks, develop improvement strategies, and experience the sense of achievement that comes from perseverance.

6.3 Establishing "Psychological Growth Files": Recording and Reflecting

To track students' psychological changes, class teachers created "Psychological Growth Files" for each student. These portfolios include survey results, activity performance records, personal emotional diaries, and teacher comments. Students are required to record reflections after each activity, such as: "Although we lost the game today, I felt much better after communicating with my teammates." [8]Teachers regularly review the records and provide feedback to guide students in recognizing their own progress. As the semester progresses, students can clearly observe their own transformation from initial feelings of frustration and insecurity to a more positive and confident mindset.Vocational education should update its concepts, advocate lifelong learning, and attach great importance to cultivating students' innovative spirit and abilities. Key competencies are essential requirements for highly skilled personnel. Countless individuals who have achieved success in their professions demonstrate that the decisive factor for success is not primarily their extensive knowledge but their innovative personality. “Education should particularly emphasize the cultivation of key competencies, stimulate students' desire for innovation, and focus on the development of non-intellectual factors.”[9]

6.4 Actual Effects and Evaluation

After a semester of comprehensive intervention, the classroom atmosphere showed significant improvement. First, conflicts and disputes within the class decreased significantly, and dormitory relationships became more harmonious. Second, students demonstrated higher levels of focus and self-efficacy in their studies. For example, several students who had considered giving up due to repeated failures in skill training persisted with the support of teachers and peers, ultimately achieving significant progress in the final assessment. Additionally, survey results showed that over 80% of students reported being "more willing to seek help when facing difficulties," and 70% believed they could "handle failure more calmly than before." [10]The key to vocational education's role in laying a solid foundation for students' lifelong learning lies in cultivating their critical competencies. Through the development of core competencies, students acquire high-level professional skills and a lifelong learning mindset. Modern vocational education emphasizes that vocational schools must focus on cultivating highly skilled professionals to promote sustainable human development. This involves meeting diverse individual needs through knowledge and skills acquisition, while also fulfilling the requirements of industrial and sectoral transformation. Furthermore, the critical competencies students develop in vocational education are invaluable throughout their lives and indispensable for their future development.

6.5 Insights and Reflections

This classroom intervention practice demonstrates that resilience education and resilience cultivation should be promoted through diverse, long-term strategies in classroom management, rather than one-off activities. Theme-based class meetings provided a platform for sharing and emotional release, the Failure Experience Camp offered practical resilience training, and the Growth Portfolio enabled long-term reflection and self-tracking. Together, these three elements formed a closed-loop pathway of "cognition-experience-reflection," effectively enhancing students' resilience.

However, certain limitations remain. For example, the scope of activities is limited, and some introverted students have low participation rates in class meetings. Additionally, maintaining and reviewing growth portfolios requires significant time and effort from teachers, raising concerns about sustainability. Therefore, future intervention measures should priorities institutional design optimization, teacher training enhancement, and resource integration.

7. Conclusion and Prospects

Cultivating students' resilience to adversity and psychological resilience in technical and vocational schools is not an isolated task but a systematic and long-term endeavor. This study, based on the Adversity Quotient theory and the PERMA model from positive psychology, demonstrates that integrating adversity education into classroom management can effectively transform students' negative reactions to adversity into opportunities for growth. By treating classroom management as a practical arena, incorporating adversity education as an input, and setting resilience as the ultimate goal, a comprehensive framework can be established to address students' academic, emotional, and social challenges simultaneously.

Research findings indicate that such comprehensive intervention measures significantly enhance students' ability to regulate emotions, rebuild confidence, and maintain motivation in the face of difficulties. Additionally, the overall classroom atmosphere shifts toward greater cohesion and mutual support, thereby reinforcing dual improvements in individual growth and educational management outcomes. Although these strategies have demonstrated positive effects, limitations remain, such as high reliance on teacher initiative and fragmented available resources, highlighting the necessity of strengthening institutional and policy-level support.

Looking ahead, the development of adversity education in vocational colleges requires deeper theoretical exploration and more diversified practical innovation. One promising direction is to establish long-term mechanisms, integrating resilience cultivation as a routine component of classroom management rather than a temporary response to crises. Another direction lies in leveraging digital technology and community resources to expand the coverage and sustainability of intervention measures. More importantly, ongoing attention must be given to teacher development to ensure that educators possess the necessary psychological literacy and counseling skills to guide students in coping with adversity.

Ultimately, adversity education and resilience cultivation should not merely be viewed as tools to enhance students' immediate academic performance but as essential safeguards for their lifelong development and well-being. Only when vocational schools successfully create an environment where students can face adversity with courage, adapt to uncertainty with flexibility, and discover meaning and strength in challenges can education truly fulfill its fundamental mission of cultivating resilient, capable, and socially responsible individuals.

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