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# On the Innovation of Mental Health Education for Postgraduate Students in the WeChat Era

Li Tianwei

Counseling Center of Psychological Health and Education, Southwest Forestry University, Kunming, China

**Email address:**

44803861@qq.com

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**Abstract:** Background With the increasing scale of the enrollment of the graduate students, the mental health problems of the postgraduates is becoming more and more prominent. The traditional method of mental health education does not seem to meet the needs of the mental health education in the new media age. Mental health workers in colleges and universities need to explore new ways to transform the challenges brought by the new media era into opportunities. Methods The paper studies the opportunity and challenge brought by the arrival of WeChat in the post-graduate mental health education through the literature analysis. Results The results indicated that (1) The lack of the system of post-graduate mental health education; (2) the relative lagging of the related research of the post-graduate mental health education; (3) the research tools and methods of the post-graduate mental health education are single. Conclusion (1) The popularization of WeChat in the postgraduates, the extension of the function of WeChat and the strengthening of the internationalization level have made WeChat a new way of education for educators. (2) To carry out the post-graduate mental health education, should adapt to this trend as soon as possible, make use of the function of WeChat as soon as possible, and continuously explore the innovative methods of effective postgraduate mental health education, including the use of the function of WeChat, and improve the "micro" of the mental health educators. By using the micro-mail public platform, the mental health knowledge is regularly pushed, and the hierarchical network of the WeChat mental health education is constructed.

**Keywords:** WeChat Era, Postgraduate Students, Mental Health Education

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## 1. Introduction

WeChat, like its advertising word as a "way of life", has become an irresistible trend with its rapidity. On January 15, 2013, Tencent WeChat announced a breakthrough of 300 million users, while as of August 15, 2013, WeChat overseas version (WeChat) registered users exceeded 100 million [1], WeChat was rated by the New York Times as "actively trying to reverse the fate of Chinese local Internet products cannot be pushed to the world". In just over two years, WeChat has become the hottest topic, both in the industry, companies and individuals are watching every move of WeChat. According to the WeChat user behavior analysis report of Express Research Institute, according to the age distribution of WeChat users, 74% of WeChat users are young between 20 and 30 years old, 64% of them are college students, followed by its industry and white-collar workers, which account for 90% of the total number of WeChat users [2]. WeChat users

habitually watch the news on WeChat every day, friends use short voice words to express their inner thoughts, department WeChat collective WeChat to tease and communicate with each other, strangers use "shake", "people nearby" to get to know each other, it can be said that we have unwittingly entered the "WeChat era"-it is a new mobile social model with the rise of the mobile Internet, accompanied by controversy and worship. It's quietly changing our lives [3]. The reality that college students "no one does not leave WeChat", whether in dormitory, canteen, campus or classroom, is worth paying attention to by educators. How to standardize and hold hands with WeChat has become a new subject facing education.

Graduate education is the highest level of higher education in our country and the highest-level representative of knowledge productivity in our country. In recent years, the scale of graduate enrollment in our country is also expanding. The proportion of undergraduates and graduate students in some

colleges and universities can reach 1: 1. With the rapid development of economy and society, the pressure of graduate students' own growth, employment and love, family relationship, and interpersonal communication are becoming more and more prominent [4, 5]. The crisis events such as suicide and criminal violence caused by psychological problems occur from time to time, so many colleges and universities begin to attach importance to the mental health education of graduate students [6]. It is precisely to see that WeChat is almost popular among graduate students. Anhui normal University, Northwestern University of Technology and other colleges and universities have launched WeChat platform to carry out graduate enrollment and management. Some colleges and universities [7, 8], such as the Mental Health Education and Counseling Center of Peking University, have also quickly cut into the WeChat carrier and regularly pushed mental health knowledge to students by using WeChat platform. In the WeChat era, mental health workers in colleges and universities should try their best to explore new ways to transform the challenges brought by WeChat into opportunities.

## **2. The Psychological Characteristics of Postgraduate Students in China at Present**

Graduate students, as a high-level group of people, are generally respected and respected by the society. Most of them are between the ages of 22 and 35, some are even over 40, some have a lifetime of college, some have some work experience, some are single, others are married and become parents. The hierarchy of graduate students is complex, but on the whole, the thinking of graduate students shows a positive, healthy and upward good situation, most graduate students have good emotional stability, good at seeking fun from life, maintaining a happy and confident look. But at the same time, the graduate students have the following psychological characteristics.

### ***2.1. The Identity of Students Contradicts the Role of Adults***

The contradiction between student identity and adult role often has an impact on the psychology of many graduate students. Graduate students include master students and Ph.D. students. In recent years, the proportion of graduate students aged over 30 is getting higher and higher. As students, they enjoy social respect, but at the same time, they do not have a real economic status. Many graduate students shoulder multiple roles-students, workers, parents, children, etc., how to coordinate the relationship between student roles (learning, scientific research) and other roles (career, family, love) has become an unavoidable problem for graduate students.

### ***2.2. The Imbalance Between Intellectual Development and EQ Development***

As a leader in higher education, graduate students have higher expectations and concerns in all aspects. However, the

relationship between graduate education and EQ has often become the topic of social discussion. In fact, the intellectual development and EQ development of graduate students are closely related to their previous school education and family education experience. However, the traditional education in our country often attaches importance to students' academic performance, which makes it difficult for many students to have time to cultivate some interest in life. Although many graduate students already have some social work experience and life experience before entering school, it is difficult for graduate students trained by the traditional education model of our country to get out of this strange circle. Some graduate students do not know how to properly manage their emotions and are at a loss as to what to do in the face of interpersonal relationships; some graduate students lack the spirit of cooperation and do not get along well with mentors and classmates; some graduate students find it difficult to adapt to their jobs and get along with colleagues and leaders after graduation. Interpersonal tension not only affects the study, scientific research, work and life of graduate students, but also seriously affects the physical and mental health of graduate students.

### ***2.3. The Gap Between Reality and Ideal***

With the expansion of graduate enrollment year by year, the number of highly educated talents in society has also increased sharply, the comprehensive quality and personal accomplishment of college students have been generally improved, the utilization value of society has appreciated in an all-round way, and the national quality has been generally improved. Although the personal competitive strength of graduate students has been strengthened after continuing to pursue further studies, at the same time, the pressure of social employment has also increased. Many graduate students are facing the awkward situation of being high or low. Due to the reason of age, more graduate students expect relatively stable, high-income and sense of achievement, and have too high expectations for the future of employment. From the principle of psychology, the higher the expectation, the worse the psychological tolerance. In the face of some money worship values, the concept of life in time, and the mentality of quick success and quick profit, it is often difficult for graduate students to break away from the impact of secular ideas. Far from the ideal situation of changing fate and situation before admission, many graduate students will have a large psychological gap in reality.

### ***2.4. Psychological Pressure Cannot Be Solved***

Graduate students generally have many psychological pressures, such as academic pressure, innovation pressure, employment pressure, economic pressure, love pressure and interpersonal pressure. A large number of foreign studies have proved that moderate physical exercise can promote the metabolism of stress hormones and is an important means to relieve stress, and the domestic research on the relationship between stress level and physical exercise of college students

has proved that physical exercise is very helpful to reduce stress level. However, at present, most colleges and universities in our country do not offer graduate physical education class, many graduate students because of the study, scientific research work is heavy, my sports exercise consciousness is also poor, the phenomenon of neglecting sports is very serious. Although other forms of leisure and entertainment activities can make graduate students relax for a while, they cannot replace the promotion of physical exercise to relieve stress. Some graduate students do not know how to solve psychological stress and cause physical and mental illness [9, 10].

### **3. Present Situations of Mental Health Education for Postgraduate Students in China**

School psychological counseling originated in the United States. Mental health education in foreign schools has gone through the initial stage, the development stage and the mature stage. The mental health education of graduate students in many countries (such as the United States, Britain, Japan, Canada, etc.) also belongs to the mental health education in colleges and universities, but it is carried out earlier than that in China, and the content is also rich. If the mental health education in colleges and universities in China is regarded as a baby in its infancy, then the mental health education for graduate students is still in gestation.

#### **3.1. Lack of Mental Health Education System for Graduate Students**

At present, there is no standard of mental health status in the training objectives of graduate students in China, there is a lack of strict institutional regulations and guidance for the mental health status of graduate students, and many colleges and universities lack of attention and understanding to the mental health education of graduate students. In particular, with the acceleration of the expansion of graduate enrollment in colleges and universities, in order to ensure the quality of graduate training after the expansion of enrollment, the school has strengthened the requirements and regulations on curriculum learning, scientific research achievements, foreign language proficiency and academic research in the postgraduate training program, but almost no special courses or lectures on mental health education for graduate students have been offered, and the investment in mental health education for graduate students is low and the degree of attention is not enough. We lack of graduate mental health education full-time team and the corresponding education system, lack of necessary supervision, management, emergency measures [11, 12].

#### **3.2. The Research on Mental Health Education of Postgraduate Students Lags Behind**

The theoretical research on graduate mental health

education lags behind, which is as follows: no research paradigm has been established; there is a lack of topics in graduate mental health education; the number of works is very few; longitudinal research is blank; sampling scope is very limited; and so on. Taking the mental health of graduate students as the key word, through the full-text database of China knowledge Network, it is found that there are only 4 papers before 2004. Since 2005, dozens of papers have been published every year, but these articles rarely appear in the authoritative journals of psychology. Therefore, the research on mental health of graduate students is still very weak. How to grafting the theory of mental health on graduate education according to the national quality and education system of our country is a difficult subject in itself.

#### **3.3. Research Tools and Methods of Mental Health Education for Postgraduate Students Are Single**

Among the only empirical studies, it is mainly the investigation and research on the mental health status of graduate students and the relationship between mental health status and personality and sports of graduate students. Almost all research tools use 90 symptom lists (scl-90). Although SCL-90 has the advantages of reflecting mental symptoms widely, saving time and easy to operate, it belongs to the standard reference test and has a good ability to distinguish positive psychological symptoms, while the discrimination degree of mental health level of people with no or less psychological symptoms is lower. Horizontal research and related research are used in the research methods, but longitudinal research and intervention research have not been reported.

### **4. Innovative Thinking on Using WeChat to Carry Out Mental Health Education for Postgraduate Students**

Graduate training institution is the most closely related environment with graduate work and life, and it is also the implementation point of graduate psychological education. In order to carry out graduate mental health education, this work should be carried out first of all. For example, graduate training units can bring mental health into graduate training program. The School of Stomatology of Huaxi Medical University has written "mental health" as the training goal of graduate students, believing that this practice will play a certain role in promoting graduate mental health education; in addition, it can strengthen the propaganda of graduate mental health education, popularize psychological knowledge, strengthen psychological counseling, enhance social support, and provide dredging channels for stress [13]. However, in the WeChat era, it is far from enough to use these traditional ways. WeChat can be used to carry out rich and powerful mental health education for graduate students, and three suggestions are put forward.

Firstly, We should make good use of WeChat function to improve the "micro" ability of mental health educators. In the

WeChat era, students' mental health education should take the initiative to cut into and occupy the WeChat position. WeChat features include chat, real-time walkie-talkie, circle of friends, message in a bottle, shake, nearby people, public platforms, hot spot recommendations, and so on. When using WeChat carrier to carry out mental health education, it is necessary to improve the WeChat manipulation ability and information literacy of mental health educators through special study and special training, to enhance the ability of mental health educators to "see WeChat", to be good at discovering possible problems and existing situations in time from the broken WeChat language and information released by students, and to enhance the predictability of mental health education. Early intervention, so that students feel respected, concerned so as to resolve the knot, effectively improve the effectiveness of mental health education. At the same time, it is attractive and effective to make good use of WeChat function to carry out students' mental health education. We can use the voice intercom and group chat function of WeChat to publish the lecture notice of mental health education and propagate the concept of mental health. By using the "shake" and "message in a bottle" function of WeChat, the content of mental health education can be placed on the mobile network with a large number of WeChat accounts, which can arouse the interest and curiosity of students and be imperceptibly influenced. Using the hot spot recommendation function of WeChat, we can find the campus hot spot and social hot spot that the students pay common attention to, and so on.

Secondly, use WeChat public platform to regularly push mental health knowledge. WeChat public platform is a WeChat user subscription service launched by Tencent for corporate, media, star and other group users. Users can enjoy QR code subscription, message push, brand communication and other personalized services. WeChat public platform is not a simple technical term, "but a complex semantic proposition of cultural communication, interpersonal communication, social psychology, lifestyle and so on." In September 2013, Northwestern University of Technology launched the Mobile WeChat platform of "Gua Da Life Circle", which is developed by graduate software club and regularly sends academic, scientific research, life, employment and other information concerned by graduate students, sends philosophical and inspirational short stories, provides graduate students with various kinds of information inquiry services, and investigates and understands the opinions and suggestions of graduate students on their study and life [15]. In just two days of school, WeChat's attention has reached more than 1500 people. In the era of decentralized WeChat, the use of WeChat platform to carry out mental health education for graduate students has the characteristics of convenient operation, rich content push, forced reading push information, message push precision and so on. Attention should be paid to combining the psychological characteristics of graduate students to push attractive and influential mental health knowledge, so as to obtain subscription, so as to master the dominant right of

information dissemination and the leading right of discourse.

Finally, the hierarchical network of WeChat mental health education is constructed. The traditional practice of mental health education is to establish a three-level network of psychological assistance for college students: the school psychological counseling center as the first level, the department student workers as the second level, and the student peer psychological committee as the third level. In the WeChat era, it is also feasible to construct the hierarchical network of WeChat mental health education by using WeChat function. Through the establishment of school psychological consultation center, college student work department, class and other WeChat public platform, WeChat group, etc., we can encourage professional teachers, counselors and student backbone engaged in mental health education to use WeChat to realize information exchange, feedback and transmission, and build WeChat mental health education platform. For graduate students, we should also give full play to the role of graduate mentors in mental health education, good teacher-student relationship, will make graduate students willing to exchange personal ideas other than academic ideas with mentors, mentors timely understand the psychological changes of graduate students, carry out effective real-time tracking, establish a hierarchical psychological early warning mechanism, stifle the possible psychological problems in the bud, and promote the positive and healthy growth of students.

## 5. Conclusion

- (1) The popularization of WeChat in the postgraduates, the extension of the function of WeChat and the strengthening of the internationalization level have made WeChat a new way of education for educators.
- (2) To carry out the post-graduate mental health education, we should adapt to this trend as soon as possible, make good use of the function of WeChat as soon as possible, and continuously explore the innovative methods of effective postgraduate mental health education, including the use of the function of WeChat, and improve the "micro" of the mental health educators. By using the micro-mail public platform, the mental health knowledge is regularly pushed, and the hierarchical network of the WeChat mental health education is constructed.

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