

Feasibility Study of Calligraphy Activities in Intervening in the Psychological Health Problems of College Students

Zhanpeng Li¹ Haifeng Li²

1 Graduate School of Education, Sehan University, Yeongam-gun, Jeollanam-do, South Korea, 58447;

2 Gansu Minzu Normal University, Hezuo City, Gansu Province, China, 747000;

Abstract: As a special social group, college students face various pressures such as academic, employment, and social situations, and may have various psychological problems. Research has found that calligraphy activities are effective in regulating emotions and improving psychological states, providing reference for the application of calligraphy in alleviating mental health problems among college students. This indicates that calligraphy activities can have a positive intervention effect on psychological problems such as anxiety and depression among college students.

Keywords: calligraphy; College students' mental health; Intervention

DOI:10.69979/3041-0843.25.01.024

1. Research necessity

In his speech at the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "youth are the most active and dynamic force in the entire society, the hope of the country lies in the youth, and the future of the nation lies in the youth". In the "Report on the Development of National Mental Health in China (2021-2022)", it is specifically pointed out that the risk of anxiety and depression in the adolescent population is higher than that in the adult population; The psychological health risks of college students, especially the undergraduate group, are prominent and require more attention. The report points out that 45.28% of college students are at risk of anxiety and 21.48% are at risk of depression. Anxiety and depression have become the main issues affecting the mental health status of college students. (Fu Xiaolan et al., 2022)

The World Health Organization (WHO) interprets individual health as "not only the physical and psychological integrity of an individual, but also the social adaptation and moral perfection of the individual. Therefore, the mental health problems of college students not only affect their physical health, but also have a significant impact on the hope of the entire country and the future of the nation. It is a very important issue that deserves our attention.

There are currently many studies in the academic community that attempt to alleviate anxiety and depression, such as some through professional mental health centers, some through sports, some through artistic activities, and many other ways to alleviate anxiety and depression. But for a long time, people have been very resistant to psychological counseling or going to psychiatric or psychological departments. Even free psychological counseling in universities is rarely sought after by college students. (Li Xuejie, 2018). However, the use of art activities to alleviate the mental health problems of college students has been widely proven to be feasible and effective. There are many types of art activities, and compared to most art activities, calligraphy activities have higher requirements for venues and equipment, unlike painting, music, dance, etc. Calligraphy activities can be carried out at relatively low costs. In some cases, calligraphy activities can be carried out with just a table and some stationery. Calligraphy art, as a traditional national treasure of China, has been pointed out in ancient times for its impact on psychology. Therefore, exploring the use of calligraphy activities to alleviate anxiety, depression, and even mental health issues among college students is a very meaningful direction.

2. Research Status

Psychological therapy mainly based on calligraphy activities is a branch of art medicine, and the treatment methods in the form of calligraphy activities have been studied since the 1950s and 1960s. The scientific beginning of modern research in calligraphy psychology was in 1968, when Professor Gao Shangren, the head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Hong Kong, published works such as "Calligraphy Psychology", "Calligraphy and Cognition", and "Calligraphy Psychotherapy" based on experimental and empirical research results in various aspects of perception, cognition, and physiology. This provides strong experimental support for the application of calligraphy in the field of psychotherapy, and opens up new avenues for the combination of Western psychotherapy theory and local cultural practice. (Hu Bin, 2012)

Since 1995, Beijing Huilongguan Mental Hospital has collaborated with the Department of Psychology at the University of Hong Kong to launch a calligraphy psychotherapy program under its psychotherapy department. Through clinical observation and experimental methods, successful experiences have been summarized in the various therapeutic effects of calligraphy directly applied to psychiatric patients. (Yao Fuxin et al. 1999) In Hong Kong, the psychiatry department of Shatin Prince of Wales Hospital supervised by the Chinese University of Hong Kong psychiatry also uses calligraphy as an auxiliary tool for the treatment of schizophrenia patients, and psychiatric institutions in Taiwan, China, have also used calligraphy as an auxiliary project for rehabilitation for many years. (Gao Shangren, 2000)

Dong Xingping et al. (2006) randomly divided 60 patients with anxiety disorders into a study group and a control group for 8 weeks of treatment. The research group received both medication and calligraphy training, while the control group received only medication treatment. Evaluate clinical efficacy using the Self Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS) and the Clinical Global Rating Scale (CGI). The score of the research group decreased significantly compared to the control group, and the difference was significant. Conclusion: Calligraphy training combined with medication is more effective in treating anxiety disorders than medication alone, and can significantly shorten the course of treatment and reduce medical expenses.

Li Jingguang et al. (2009) pointed out in their study that calligraphy practice has positive effects on various aspects such as brain neural activity, cognitive ability, personality, and mental health; Calligraphy practice is also a feasible treatment for mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, neurosis, autism, etc. Short term calligraphy practice (60 or 90 minutes) also has a relieving effect on anxiety, depression, and other emotions of administrative personnel. The article also discusses the potential reasons for the positive psychological effects of calligraphy practice, as well as methodological issues in such research, and proposes "calligraphy based psychological training" as a possible treatment and training model.

Hu Bin's (2012) monograph "Calligraphy Psychotherapy" mainly analyzes the current situation and challenges of calligraphy psychotherapy, the relationship between Chinese calligraphy and physical and mental health, the development of calligraphy psychotherapy, research on the effectiveness of calligraphy psychotherapy, the intention and structure of calligraphy psychotherapy, the principles of calligraphy psychotherapy, calligraphy psychotherapy techniques, and calligraphy psychotherapy for intellectually disabled children.

In Li Chengzong's (2018) study, the ideological basis for the psychological value of calligraphy art was analyzed, empirical research on the positive effects of calligraphy practice on psychology was reviewed, and the mechanism of calligraphy practice on psychology was explored. Propose relevant measures at the psychological level. Calligraphy practice can promote psychological development, improve mental health levels, and play a certain auxiliary role in psychological therapy. Training in the "Calligraphy Practice and Appreciation" mode can help improve individual psychological qualities.

The report by Ma Huixia et al. (2022) pointed out that calligraphy psychotherapy has good therapeutic effects on children with intellectual disabilities, autism, ADHD (also known as ADHD), and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as adult patients with anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, and Alzheimer's disease.

3. Mechanism of action

According to existing research, the regulatory mechanisms of calligraphy activities on mental health can be divided into three aspects:

3.1 Perception and cognitive level

Research has shown that calligraphy involves a series of movements generated by cognitive and psychological processes that involve perceptual processes. Chinese character writing has the function of brain cognitive activation. The visual shape of Chinese characters is formed at the neural level, and the writing process constitutes the reproduction, reconstruction, and processing of visual perception. Each writing triggers an activation effect, which is conducive to cognitive activity and shapes and strengthens the function of relevant areas of the cerebral cortex. Gao Shangren (1968, 2000)

3.2 Emotional and personality shaping aspects

Xin Jing's (2006) study found that the calligraphy group scored significantly lower in the spiritual dimension of personality; In terms of coping strategies, the score for positive coping strategies is significantly higher; In terms of quality of life, multiple areas scored higher than the control group. This means that calligraphy can guide individuals to develop more positive personality traits and coping strategies, improving overall quality of life.

3.3 Physiological index regulation level

Lu Zhuolin's (2019) research shows that practicing different fonts causes participants to produce different physiological responses. Copying and creating have a direct impact on the sympathetic nervous system, which is associated with anxiety and depression. Another study suggests that calligraphy activities can regulate stable emotions, concentrate attention, activate cognition, enhance perceptual sensitivity, and improve mental health levels (Zhuang Yunlong, 2014).

4. Feasibility analysis

The university stage is at a critical stage of knowledge learning and ability cultivation, with high requirements for cognitive ability and attention. According to the above research, it has been found that every writing triggers activation in the brain, which is beneficial for cognitive activity and can also shape and strengthen the function of related areas in the cerebral cortex. Perhaps by participating in calligraphy activities, college students can exercise their cognitive functions, improve their attention levels, and better cope with various challenges in learning, thereby reducing the psychological burden caused by academic pressure. Calligraphy reduces neuroticism, enhances positive coping psychology, and improves the quality of life. (Xin Jing, 2006) can guide college students to develop more positive personality traits and coping strategies, helping them better regulate their emotions and face various problems in life with a more optimistic and positive attitude, thereby effectively alleviating possible mental health problems. In addition, practicing copying and creating different styles of books can regulate stable emotions, concentrate attention, activate cognition, enhance perceptual sensitivity, and reduce anxiety levels. (Zhuang Yunlong, 2014; Lu Zhuolin, 2019) This indicates that calligraphy activities alleviate negative emotions such as anxiety and depression in college students by regulating physiological indicators, improving their psychological state, and maintaining their mental health.

5. Conclusion and Prospect

Although calligraphy art has achieved numerous effective research results in the treatment of psychological disorders and diseases, there is currently a relative lack of research targeting college students. As a special social group, college students face various pressures such as academic, employment, and social situations, and may have various psychological problems. Although the group of college students is different from those with mental illnesses, these cases fully demonstrate the effectiveness of calligraphy in regulating emotions and improving psychological states, providing reference for the application of calligraphy in alleviating mental health problems among college students. It shows that calligraphy activities can have a positive intervention effect on psychological problems.

ms such as anxiety and depression among college students. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on calligraphy activities to alleviate the mental health problems of college students in the future, deeply explore the impact and mechanism of calligraphy art on college students' mental health, and develop a set of plans to alleviate college students' mental health through calligraphy activities, providing new methods and approaches to promote college students' mental health.

References

- [1]Yu Xiaobo, Fang Yanxia (2005) Research Progress on Psychological Health of College Students [J]. Practical Preventive Medicine, 2005, 3 (12), 723-725
- [2]Liu Xiu (2007) Causes and Countermeasures of Psychological Health Status of College Students [J]. Modern Preventive Medicine 2007,5 (34): 932-934
- [3]Fu Xiaolan, Zhang Kan (2022) Chinese National Mental Health Report 2021~2022 Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Social Sciences Academic Press
- [4]Li Xuejie (2018). Master's thesis on the application of 3D animation art therapy in psychological counseling for college students, Xi'an University of Technology
- [5]Gong Liquan (2008). Exploration of the Application of Painting Art Therapy in Psychological Counseling and Consultation for College Students, Master's Thesis, East China Normal University
- [6]Gao Shangren (1986). Calligraphy Psychology Dongda Book Company
- [7]Gao Shangren (2000). Calligraphy psychotherapy The University of Hong Kong Press
- [8]Yao Fuxin, Fan Zuoshu, Song Yanming, Liu Cuiwen, Xu Shuli,&Li Dao, etc (1999). Calligraphy therapy for chronic schizophrenia China Rehabilitation, 14(2), 1.
- [9]Hu Bin (2012). Calligraphy psychotherapy Jinan University Press
- [10]Dong Xingping, Jia Jimin, Wang Jun, Cui Zhonglan,&Zhang Rongxing (2006). A comparative study of calligraphy training combined with Bolexin in the treatment of anxiety disorder Chinese Behavioral Medicine Science, 15(5), 2.
- [11]Li Jingguang, Li Chunkai,&Zhou Bin (2009). A review of empirical research on calligraphy practice promoting positive psychological change Psychological Science (3),4
- [12]Li Chengzong (2018). An analysis of the psychological value of calligraphy art - centered on the positive impact of calligraphy practice on psychology Chinese calligraphy, No.330(10), 152-155.
- [13]Lu Zhuolin (2019). Master's thesis on experimental research on individual physiological and psychological responses to practicing different book styles, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.
- [14]Ma Huixia, Fei Xiaoyue (2022). Research progress on calligraphy therapy for mental disorders and its mechanisms Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology (1)
- [15]Zhuang Yunlong (2014). The influence of Qin seal script's "Yishan Stele" and Wang Duo's cursive script "Wang Wu Tu Shi Juan" on heart rate variability and emotional state (Doctoral dissertation, Southwest University)
- [16]Xin Jing (2006). A study on the impact of calligraphy hobbies on individual mental health and quality of life (Doctoral dissertation, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine)