

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIFE SATISFACTION AND PARENTING STYLE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OF HUNAN PROVINCE, CHINA



¹Yue Wu and ²Yan Ye

Stamford International University, Thailand

¹1399909619@qq.com, ²yan.ye@stamford.edu

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Abstract

This study mainly explored the relationship between life satisfaction and parenting style of private college students at private universities of Hunan Province, China. A total of 381 private college students from Hunan province, China participated in this study, and 371 valid questionnaires were finally collected and analyzed. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were applied to analyse the relationship between college students' life satisfaction and parenting style at private colleges in Hunan province, China. The research results showed that: the parenting style and life satisfaction of college students in private universities in China and Hunan were above the average level; as for parenting styles, the emotional warmth dimension scored the highest, while the rejection dimension scores the lowest, which was lower than the theoretical median. There was a significant correlation of college students parenting style and life satisfaction at private colleges in Hunan Province, China. Discussion and recommendations were provided by the end of the study

Keywords: College Students, Life Satisfaction, Parenting Style, Private Universities

Introduction

Under the background of modernization, the number of college students in many countries around the world is increasing, the employment competition is more intense, and the social environment is more complicated. College students are faced

¹Master Candidate in Educational Administration, Stamford International University

²Assistant Professor, Director of PG program in Education, Stamford International University

with greater family pressure and social pressure, which often leads to various psychological problems. Cases of dropping out of school due to mental health factors are also increasing, and at the same time, various school violence incidents often occur. According to the statistics of Washington Post, in 2021, 498 campus violence cases were reported in American colleges and universities. Shooting, abuse, pushing, fighting, beating teachers and other campus violence cases were staged in many American colleges and universities. Among all kinds of cases, the impact of shooting incidents was the worst, and it had reached more than 100, resulting in 26 deaths. According to the 2021 school bullying report released by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan, there were more than 540,000 school bullying incidents in Japan. According to the survey of the Korean Campus Violence Prevention Foundation, it shows that more than 15% of students have been subjected to violence on campus, including abuse and beating, which pose a serious threat to students' mental health. At present, the mental health of college students is worrying all over the world. Unhealthy psychology has become the inducement of all kinds of campus violence cases, and at the same time, it has caused a serious negative impact on social security, and gradually aroused widespread concern from all walks of life. Some college students are not satisfied with their real life, and parenting style is the main reason for their mental health problems. Many college students grow up in unhealthy family relationships and lack of normal communication with their parents, which leads to their unhealthy mental state. Many perpetrators of school violence cases also say that they "don't feel warm and affectionate".

Currently, Chinese college students are faced with greater family pressure and social pressure, which often leads to various psychological problems. Unhealthy psychology has become the inducement of all kinds of campus violence cases. In China, various recent reports of violence cases in colleges and universities show that the mental health of college students is poor. College students' mental health problems have an important impact on both college students themselves and different families and society. In recent years, China's private colleges and universities have developed rapidly, but due to the more complicated student source structure and the uneven quality of running a school, private college students may have feelings of inferiority or anxiety, which is not conducive to the improvement of their life satisfaction. There is a close relationship between parenting style and individual growth environment and personality characteristics, and directly related to the physical and mental health development of college students.

In Hunan Province of China, the mental health problems of private college students have also aroused social concern. For example, in 2018, freshmen in Hunan Vocational College of electronic technology had a fight in their dormitories, and the victims were rescued and died. Parenting style is the main factor that affects the personality and behavior of college students. Different families adopt different parenting styles. Under the influence of different parenting styles, college students will form a unique mode of thinking, and their physical and mental health status will be different. This study mainly explored the relationship between parenting style and life satisfaction of private college students in Hunan Province, China, to understand the main factors affecting college students' life satisfaction, and from the perspective of parenting style, gave some corresponding suggestions to help private college students better cope with various difficulties in campus life and improve college students' life satisfaction.

Research Objectives

Based on the above research questions, the specific research objectives were designed as follows:

1. To identify the demographic information of private college students at private universities of Hunan Province, China.
2. To assess the overall level of parenting style and life satisfaction of private college students at private universities of Hunan Province, China
3. To determine the relationship between parent style and life satisfaction at private universities of Hunan Province, China.

Literature Review

Theoretical Basis of Parenting Style

The theoretical research on parenting style includes:

1. Psychoanalytic Theory. The theory of psychoanalysis emphasizes that all kinds of behaviors of individuals in the process of social survival and development will be driven by their inner subjective emotions. There is a close relationship between parenting style and individual's inner driving force, especially in the process of children's growth. If parents and children can establish equal communication and practice good relationships, it is conducive to the growth of children's physical and mental health. Psychoanalysis theory holds that parents should pay attention to both material and emotional content in the process of child rearing, and respect the reasonable needs of children, and choose a more scientific way of parenting.

2. Social Learning. Supporters of social learning theory emphasize that individual's behavior will be affected by many factors in the process of social development, but the decisive factor for individual behavior is not human's internal driving force, but external factors the individual's behavior is realized through self-learning from the external environment. Therefore, to achieve the progress of their own behavior, the key is to accept good external environment education. For children, parents are an indispensable part of the process of individual growth. Children's early language and behavior will imitate their parents. If parents show some improper behaviors in their daily communication with their children, they will directly affect their children and lead them to imitate them inappropriately, thus forming a negative impact.

Measurement of Parenting Style

At present, scholars at home and abroad have also carried out extensive discussion on the measurement of parenting styles. Scholars from a quantitative point of view measure parenting styles in different dimensions. Javier (2017) developed a parenting style questionnaire in the process of research, pointing out that parenting styles can be divided into four dimensions: emotional warmth, overprotection, rejection, and preference. At the same time, Chinese scholar Zhao (2019) combed the items of the relevant scale according to the current social development and specific national day in the process of research, and finally got six factors: 1). parents'

emotional warmth; 2). punishment; 3). excessive interference; 4) in favor of; 5). refuse. Finally, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were proved by the test. The measurement of the parenting style of private college students is based on the simplified Parenting Style Questionnaire Revised by Jiang (2010). It mainly measured the parental rearing style of private college students from three dimensions of rejection, emotional warmth, and overprotection. At present, there were 21 questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire adopts the 4-point scoring method, which never counts for 1 point but always counts for 4 points.

Concept of Life Satisfaction

The concept of life satisfaction appeared earlier, and it first appeared in the field of psychology. Later, scholars at home and abroad carried out in-depth research and Discussion on life satisfaction. In the process of research, Kvitova (2016) pointed out that if the gap between the expectation of life and the ideal state in social survival is small, the higher the individual's satisfaction with life will be. If the individual finds that there is a big gap between the actual situation and their psychological expectations or goals in life, then the level of individual satisfaction with their existing life will be relatively low, often not satisfied with the status quo. Therefore, life satisfaction can be defined as the subjective feeling of various things experienced under different circumstances in the process of social survival, and the individual needs to evaluate this feeling.

In the process of research, domestic scholars also discussed the concept of life satisfaction, pointing out that life satisfaction can represent the individual's well-being in the process of social life, which also reflects an individual's comprehensive evaluation of their own quality of life and living standard in their daily life. Life satisfaction contains a wide range of contents. It not only refers to a kind of cognition formed in the process of individual's growth, but also includes the different emotions of individuals in the face of various situations. This study adopted Meng's (2008) definition of life satisfaction, which is to measure a social group's subjective feelings about the overall living conditions to reflect their adaptability to life in the body and psychology and their expectations for the future.

Measurement of Life Satisfaction

Since the end of the 19th century, the concept of life satisfaction has been widely studied and discussed in the field of psychology. The single dimension model mainly measures the individual's overall life satisfaction from a single dimension. Usually, the number of items is small, and the content involved is relatively small, including I am very satisfied with my life. The scope is relatively wide, and there is no specific classification item. The total score of all questions is the total score of the questionnaire, and different score status also represents different life satisfaction. For example, the life satisfaction scale developed by Neugarten (1961) was a comprehensive evaluation and measurement from the perspectives of individual's enthusiasm for existing life, achievement of task goals and physical and mental health.

Multi-dimensional model, that is, in the process of measurement, it can not only make in-depth analysis from a special angle that affects life satisfaction, but also

objectively measure the satisfaction of an individual in a certain aspect of life and understand the overall life satisfaction of an individual according to the situation of different aspects of life satisfaction. This method is more detailed and comprehensive for the measurement of individual life satisfaction. In the process of research, Richa (2017) developed a multidimensional student life satisfaction scale according to the actual situation of the respondents, including six dimensions affecting family, school, friends, self, life, and environment. This study is based on the student life satisfaction scale developed by Zhang (2004). From friendship, family, school, study, freedom, environment six dimensions of private college students' life satisfaction were measured. At present, there are 36 questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire adopts the 5-point scoring method, totally inconsistent with the total score of 1 point, completely consistent with 5 points.

Previous Studies on the Relationship between Parental Style and Life Satisfaction

At present, there are few research on the relationship between parental rearing style and life satisfaction of private college students at home and abroad. Wan & Chen (2021) studied the parenting style and life satisfaction of adolescents in the process of research and points out that adolescents are very vulnerable to the influence of the surrounding environment in the process of development. The economic status of the family, the relationship between parents, the way of communication between parents and children, and family atmosphere will have a certain impact on children. If children can grow up in a high economic level, positive, healthy, and harmonious family atmosphere, the level of life satisfaction is often higher, while the level of life satisfaction of teenagers growing up in a more negative family atmosphere such as divorced families is lower.

In the process of research, Zhao (2019) mainly takes high school students as the research object, explores the mediating effect of self-esteem between parental rearing style and life satisfaction, and points out that harmonious personal relationship and scientific parental rearing style can help high school students improve their self-esteem level, and they often choose to meet challenges and actively respond to difficulties in life or academic life, Satisfaction with existing life will also be high. Under the strict parenting style, parents are often affected by their own subjective factors, and it is difficult to adjust the negative emotions and affect the children. In addition, they often overregulate the children's words and deeds, which violate the normal growth rules. This way tends to lead to children's lack of security, and it is easy to produce tension in the process of communicating with others, anxiety, and other emotions.

Zhang (2021) said that there is a positive correlation between parental rearing style and life satisfaction. Ma (2020) also commented that if parents are more democratic and open in the process of raising their children, they can listen to their children's voice carefully, and are willing to put themselves and their children on an equal footing, conduct full communication and communication, and meet the reasonable needs of children, The higher the level of life satisfaction shown by children; If parents are too strict or indulgent in their children's words and deeds in the process of education, they may impose strict restrictions on their children's normal

behaviors or meet their unreasonable requirements, which will lead to the decrease of children's life satisfaction. There is a positive correlation between the two.

Thus, there was a close relationship between parent style and life satisfaction. In the process of research, this study will further explore the relationship between parental style and life satisfaction of college students in private universities from the relationship between them.

Methodology

Participants

This study selected Hunan International Economics University, Xingxiang College of Xiangtan University, and Foreign Affairs College of Central South University of Forestry and Technology for investigation. These three colleges are the top three private colleges in Hunan Province, China at present, which have great influence in teaching quality, talent cultivation and superior discipline construction, and have strong comprehensive strength. According to the requirements of Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) using purpose sampling, 381 questionnaires were distributed, and 371 valid ones were collected, with the valid return rate reaching 97%.

Research Instrument

The research questionnaire included three parts:

1. Basic Information of Participants. In this study, students from Hunan International Economics University, Xingxiang College of Xiangtan University and Foreign Affairs College of Central South University of Forestry and Technology were investigated to find out their basic information, including gender, grade, discipline, place of origin and whether they are only children.

2. Parenting Style Scale In this study, the measurement of parenting style of private college students was based on the "Parenting Style Questionnaire" revised by Jiang (2010), which mainly measured the parenting style of private college students from three dimensions: rejection, emotional warmth, and overprotection, including 20 questions.

3. Students' Life Satisfaction Scale In this study, the measurement of life satisfaction of private college students was based on the student life satisfaction scale compiled by Zhang (2004). At present, the questionnaire includes a total of 36 questions, and the questionnaire adopts the 5-point scoring method.

Reliability

1. Reliability test of parenting style questionnaire

From Table 1, it could be reflected that Cronbach's α coefficients of all dimensions of parenting style were above 0.8 respectively. Cronbach's α coefficient of the total parenting style questionnaire is 0.908, both of which were greater than 0.8, which indicated that the parenting style questionnaire had good reliability.

Table 1 Reliability of Parenting Style

| Dimension | Cronbach's α coefficient |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Refuse | 0.885 |
| Emotional Warmth | 0.875 |
| Overprotection | 0.892 |
| Aggregate Score | 0.908 |

2. Reliability test of college students' life satisfaction questionnaire

From Table 3.5, it can be found that Cronbach's α coefficients of all dimensions of college students' life satisfaction were above 0.8 respectively. Cronbach's α coefficient of the total questionnaire of college students' life satisfaction was 0.901, both of which were greater than 0.8, which shows that the questionnaire of college students' life satisfaction had good reliability.

Table 2 Reliability of College Students' Life Satisfaction

| Dimension | Cronbach's A Coefficient |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Friendship Satisfaction | 0.883 |
| Family Satisfaction | 0.842 |
| School Satisfaction | 0.864 |
| Academic Satisfaction | 0.853 |
| Freedom Satisfaction | 0.839 |
| Environmental Satisfaction | 0.861 |
| Total | 0.901 |

From Table 3, it can be found that Cronbach's α coefficients of all dimensions of college students' life satisfaction were above 0.8 respectively. Cronbach's α coefficient of the total questionnaire of college students' life satisfaction was 0.901, both of which were greater than 0.8, which shows that the questionnaire of college students' life satisfaction had good reliability

Results

1. Demographic information of the Participants

In the process of the study, 381 private college students from Hunan International Economics College, Xingxiang College of Xiangtan University and Foreign Affairs College of Central South University of forestry science and technology were randomly sampled, and the online questionnaire survey was conducted. A total of 375 questionnaires were collected in this survey, 370 valid questionnaires, and the effective questionnaire recovery rate was 97.11%. Detailed information of participants' demographic information was shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Distribution of Demographic Variables of the Sample (N = 370)

| Demographic Variables | Category | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 197 | 53.24 |
| | Female | 173 | 46.76 |
| Grade | Freshman | 93 | 25.14 |
| | Sophomore | 91 | 24.59 |
| | Junior | 95 | 25.68 |
| | Senior | 91 | 24.59 |
| Major | Liberal Arts | 178 | 48.11 |
| | Science | 192 | 51.89 |
| Place of Origin | Town | 214 | 57.84 |
| | Countryside | 156 | 42.16 |
| One Child Only | Yes | 142 | 38.38 |
| | No | 228 | 61.62 |

2.The overall level of parenting style and life satisfaction of college students

In the process of research, this study mainly measured the overall level of parenting style of college students in three private universities. According to the statistical analysis, it reflected the mean scores of parenting style of college students in private universities was high, and the mean scores in three dimensions were also high, among the three dimensions, parental emotional warmth was regarded as the highest. The statistical results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Overall Level of Parenting Style of Private College Students (N=370)

| Parenting Style | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|------------------|------|-------|----------------|
| Refuse | 2.89 | 0.478 | Moderate |
| Emotional Warmth | 3.54 | 0.513 | High |
| Overprotection | 3.53 | 0.376 | High |
| Total | 3.58 | 0.691 | High |

From Table 5, it reflected that the mean score of friendship satisfaction is the highest, with an average score of 4.47, which is at the highest level. This shows that at present, college students in private universities in Hunan Province, China can correctly handle the relationship with their classmates, have good interpersonal relationships, and get along well with their classmates. Secondly, family satisfaction, with an average score of 4.38, shows that most students can communicate with family members normally, and are relatively satisfied with family atmosphere or economic situation; The score of academic satisfaction dimension is the lowest, with an average score of 3.25, which is at the lowest level. This shows that most students are not very satisfied with their existing academic achievements and have higher requirements. From this point of view, at present, college students in private colleges and universities in Hunan Province, China have high satisfaction with friendship, family, environment, and other factors, but low satisfaction with their studies and freedom. At present, the life satisfaction of college students in private colleges and universities in Hunan, China was high.

Table 5: Overall Level of Life Satisfaction of Private College Students (N=370)

| Life Satisfaction | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|----------------------------|------|-------|----------------|
| Friendship Satisfaction | 4.47 | 0.837 | High |
| Family Satisfaction | 4.38 | 0.625 | High |
| School Satisfaction | 3.89 | 0.722 | High |
| Academic Satisfaction | 3.25 | 0.837 | Moderate |
| Freedom Satisfaction | 3.36 | 0.684 | Moderate |
| Environmental Satisfaction | 4.31 | 0.815 | High |
| Total | 4.18 | 0.799 | High |

3.The correlation between parenting style and life satisfaction of private college students

According to Table 6, it can be found that there is a significant correlation between parenting style and life satisfaction of private college students. First, there is a significant negative correlation between the dimension of rejection and all dimensions of life satisfaction and the total score of life satisfaction, and the parenting

style of rejection has a negative impact on the life satisfaction of private college students; Secondly, there is a significant positive correlation between the dimension of emotional warmth and the dimensions of life satisfaction and the total score of life satisfaction. Emotional warmth parenting style has a positive impact on the life satisfaction of private college students. Thirdly, there is a significant negative correlation between the overprotective dimension and the dimensions of life satisfaction and the total score of life satisfaction. The overprotective parenting style has a negative impact on the life satisfaction of private college students.

Table 6 Correlation Analysis between Parenting Style and Life Satisfaction of Private College Students

| | Friendship Satisfaction | Family Satisfaction | School Satisfaction | Academic Satisfaction | Freedom Satisfaction | Environment Satisfaction | Life Satisfaction |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Refuse | -0.284** | -0.204** | -0.177** | -0.187** | -0.173** | -0.192** | -0.186** |
| Emotional Warmth | 0.177** | 0.188** | 0.215** | 0.276** | 0.108** | 0.146** | 0.144** |
| Overprotection | -0.198** | -0.104** | -0.202** | -0.216** | -0.211** | -0.162** | -0.167** |
| Parenting Style | -0.165** | -0.113** | -0.198** | -0.195** | -0.189** | -0.182** | -0.173** |

Note: *P<0.05; **P<0.01

Discussion

The mean score for parenting style of college students in private universities in China was 2.18, which is above the average level, which was consistent with the view of Fan (2015). In this study, through investigation and research, it found that the emotional warmth dimension scores the highest, most parents are more democratic, the rejection dimension scores the lowest, and few parents are too strict. This showed that at present, the parents of most college students in private universities in Hunan, China can make their children feel warm and care and understanding from their parents. In such a growing environment, children can learn to live in harmony with people around them and express their own ideas. The parents of a small number of private college students in China and Hunan are more likely to make their children feel severe and punished (Guo & Huang, 2017). The number of these students was small, but it was unfavorable for their physical and mental health development as Hao & Li (2020) pointed out. Some private college students were concerned by the overprotection from their parents, which also leads to their dissatisfaction (Qi, Chen & Xu, 2018).

There is a significant correlation between parental rearing patterns and life satisfaction of college students in private universities in China. Refusal parenting style has a negative impact on the life satisfaction of private college students; Emotional parenting style has a positive impact on the life satisfaction of private college students; Over-protective parenting style has a negative impact on the life satisfaction of private college students, which is consistent with Syed (2020). Under the influence of rejection parenting style, the communication between children and their parents is difficult, and their self-evaluation is relatively negative, so the level of life satisfaction is low (Zhang, 2022). Under the emotional warm parenting style, parents and children can establish a relatively healthy relationship, and children often

feel their parents' care and understanding for themselves, and they are often more positive and optimistic in life, brave in dealing with various challenges, and have higher satisfaction with life (Wang & Li, 2022). Under the influence of overprotective parenting style, parents often interfere with their children too much, which leads to their children's feeling that they are not free, and they often lack their own opinions, and they hesitate to meet things, especially in the face of difficulties and challenges in life, and they often show a tendency to escape and have low life satisfaction (Hui, Zhen & He, 2021).

Conclusion

Through the analysis of two variables of parenting style and life satisfaction of private college students, the main conclusions are as follows:

From the descriptive analysis, the overall level of the parenting style and life satisfaction of college students in private colleges and universities are above average; Among parenting styles, the emotional warmth dimension scores the highest, while the rejection dimension scores the lowest, which was lower than the theoretical median; In life satisfaction, friendship satisfaction scores the highest, while academic satisfaction scores the lowest.

From the correlation analysis, there was a correlation between parenting style and life satisfaction of college students in China and Hunan private colleges. Refusal parenting style is negatively related to the life satisfaction of college students in private universities; Emotional parenting style is positively related to the life satisfaction of private college students; The overprotective parenting style is negatively related to the life satisfaction of private college students.

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