

A Study on College Students' Sense of Psychological Satisfaction and Positive Behaviors Under the Guidance of Practice-Oriented Education

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Practical education serves as a pivotal approach for higher education to fulfill its fundamental mission of fostering moral development, playing a central role in enhancing college students' overall competence and shaping positive personalities. Psychological fulfillment refers to the subjective value recognition and emotional experiences developed by students during practical engagement, which directly influences the emergence and maintenance of positive behaviors. Drawing on self-determination theory and social learning theory, this study employs a combination of literature review, questionnaire surveys, and case analysis to explore the intrinsic relationships among practical education, psychological fulfillment among college students, and positive behaviors. It examines the mechanisms through which practical education affects psychological fulfillment, as well as the mediating role of psychological fulfillment between practical education and positive behaviors. The study proposes optimization strategies to enhance the effectiveness of practical education and improve students' levels of psychological fulfillment and positive behaviors, providing theoretical insights and practical guidance for innovating practical education initiatives in universities and promoting comprehensive student development.

Keywords: practice-based education, college students, psychological fulfillment, positive behavior, fostering virtue through education.

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I. Introduction

(1) Research Background

As higher education enters a phase of high-quality development, cultivating socialist builders and successors with well-rounded development in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education has become the core mission of universities. Practical education, as a key component

of the "five-dimensional education" system, transcends the limitations of traditional classroom teaching. Through diverse approaches such as volunteer services, social practice, professional internships, and innovation and entrepreneurship activities, it provides college students with a platform to transform theoretical knowledge into practical skills and achieve a balance between personal and societal values. In recent years, the



government has repeatedly issued policies emphasizing the importance of practical education; the "Several Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools in the New Era" explicitly states the need to "uphold the unity of theory and practice, cultivate individuals using scientific theories, and prioritize practical education."

Meanwhile, contemporary college students face multiple challenges including academic pressure, employment competition, and interpersonal relationships. Some students exhibit issues such as negative attitudes, lack of motivation, confusion about personal values, and weakened sense of social responsibility. The cultivation of positive behaviors and the healthy development of psychological well-being have thus become critical concerns in university talent development. Psychological fulfillment, as an individual's subjective experience of receiving what they deserve through social interaction and practical engagement, serves not only as a key indicator for evaluating the effectiveness of practice-based education but also as an intrinsic motivator for students to actively engage in positive behaviors. In this context, investigating the relationship between psychological fulfillment and positive behaviors among college students under the framework of practice-oriented education holds significant practical importance and theoretical value.

(II) Research Significance

1. Theoretical Significance

This study enriches the interdisciplinary research findings between practical education theory and positive psychology. While existing studies primarily focus on developing models for practical education or examining individual factors influencing psychological fulfillment, integrating these three dimensions within a unified analytical framework enables a thorough investigation of how practical education affects psychological fulfillment and the mediating role of psychological fulfillment between practical education and positive behavior. This approach contributes to refining the theoretical

framework of practical education, broadening the research perspectives on the relationship between psychological fulfillment and positive behavior, and providing solid theoretical foundations for future studies in this field.

2. Practical Significance

This study provides practical guidance for universities to optimize practical education initiatives and enhance their effectiveness. By identifying key factors influencing college students' psychological sense of fulfillment and positive behaviors during practical learning experiences, it offers references for designing targeted educational programs, improving support mechanisms, and strengthening process management. These measures help students strengthen their psychological well-being, actively engage in positive behaviors, and achieve comprehensive personal development, ultimately cultivating high-quality talents with a strong sense of responsibility, practical skills, and a positive mindset for society.

II. Definition of Core Concepts

(1) Education through Practice

Practical education is a fundamental educational philosophy and practical approach in higher education, referring to the educational process by which universities, with fostering virtue and nurturing talent as their core objective, utilize various practical platforms and activities to guide students beyond the classroom into society, thereby deepening theoretical understanding, enhancing practical skills, shaping correct values, and cultivating a sense of social responsibility [1]. Its core characteristics lie in the integration of practicality, subjectivity, and value orientation; practical forms encompass diverse types such as volunteer service, social research, professional internships, innovation and entrepreneurship practices, and red culture engagement, serving as a vital bridge that connects theoretical instruction with societal needs and promotes the comprehensive development of university students.

(II) Psychological sense of achievement

Psychological sense of achievement refers to the subjective emotional experience and cognitive evaluation that individuals develop when their needs are met and their values recognized during participation in specific activities, goal attainment, or interpersonal interactions, representing an organic integration of objective fulfillment and subjective perception. For college students, this sense primarily manifests as: enhanced self-awareness of personal capabilities, satisfaction of personal needs, recognition and respect for efforts, and alignment between personal value and social value—a multifaceted psychological experience encompassing a sense of accomplishment, belonging, identity, and well-being [2].

(3) Positive Behavior

Positive behavior is a core concept rooted in positive psychology theory, referring to patterns of positive conduct exhibited by individuals in social life that contribute to their personal growth, the well-being of others, and societal development. Considering the characteristics of college students, positive behavior primarily encompasses proactive engagement in learning and practice; resilient coping strategies when facing challenges; cooperative and supportive behaviors in interpersonal interactions; volunteerism and responsibility fulfillment in social contexts; as well as self-improvement and innovative actions in personal development. Its essence lies in representing the external manifestation of an individual's positive psychological state, reflecting their sense of responsibility, empathy, and awareness of self-development [3].

III. The Internal Relationship Between College Students' Sense of Psychological Fulfillment and Positive Behaviors Under the Practice-Oriented Education Approach

(1) Practical education serves as a crucial vehicle for enhancing college students' sense of psychological fulfillment.

Practical education creates essential conditions for fostering psychological fulfillment by providing

college students with diverse practical scenarios and development opportunities. Firstly, it emphasizes the central role of students, granting them autonomy in selecting practice content, participating in the process, and demonstrating initiative—thereby meeting their needs for self-directed decision-making and personal growth, which lays the foundation for psychological fulfillment. Secondly, through practical activities, students apply classroom-acquired theoretical knowledge to solve real-world problems; by completing specific tasks and overcoming challenges, they transform knowledge into practical skills while gaining a sense of achievement and self-efficacy, which constitutes the core source of psychological fulfillment [4]. Finally, the interactive teacher-student dynamics, peer collaboration, and societal recognition of students' practical endeavors enhance their sense of self-worth and belonging, further strengthening their psychological fulfillment.

(2) Psychological fulfillment serves as the intrinsic motivation driving college students' positive behaviors.

According to the theory of self-determination, satisfying individuals' needs for autonomy, competence, and belonging is key to stimulating intrinsic motivation, with psychological fulfillment being the subjective experience resulting from the satisfaction of these needs [5]. When college students experience strong psychological fulfillment through practical activities, their intrinsic motivation is fully activated, leading them to engage more proactively in subsequent learning and practice and exhibit positive behavioral tendencies. On one hand, the sense of achievement and self-efficacy derived from psychological fulfillment bolster students' confidence in their abilities, encouraging active participation in various initiatives, willingness to embrace new challenges, and greater initiative and resilience in learning and practice. On the other hand, the sense of belonging and social value identification inherent in psychological fulfillment motivate students to align personal development with societal needs, actively engaging in positive behaviors such as volunteer service and collaborative efforts,

fulfilling social responsibilities, and demonstrating care for others and society.

(3) Practical education influences positive behaviors through the mediating effect of psychological fulfillment.

The impact of practice-based education on college students' positive behaviors is not direct but mediated through psychological fulfillment [6]. As an external educational environment and activity platform, practice-based education first addresses students' needs for autonomy, competence, and belonging, fostering a sense of psychological fulfillment. This psychological fulfillment serves as an internal motivator that further transforms into positive behavioral motivation, driving students to exhibit proactive behaviors in academic, practical, and social contexts. For instance, volunteer service activities organized by universities enable students to engage with communities and assist others, allowing them to recognize their personal value and thereby sustain their enthusiasm for volunteering; professional internship programs provide students with a sense of achievement through applying knowledge and enhancing skills, encouraging greater engagement in academic studies and career development planning. These three components form a transmission pathway: "practice-based education → psychological fulfillment → positive behavior," where psychological fulfillment plays a pivotal mediating role.

IV. Key Factors Influencing College Students' Sense of Psychological Fulfillment and Positive Behavior in Practical Education

(1) The rationality of the practical activity design

Whether the theme, content, and format of practical activities align with college students' professional characteristics, interests, and developmental needs directly influences their participation enthusiasm and sense of psychological fulfillment [7]. If the activities are hollow in content, monotonous in format, disconnected from students' actual needs, or excessively difficult or overly easy,

they may fail to spark sufficient engagement, hinder the development of a sense of psychological fulfillment, and consequently undermine positive behavioral outcomes. Conversely, practical activities with clear themes, substantial content, diverse formats, and appropriate difficulty levels can effectively stimulate students' motivation to participate, enable them to leverage their strengths, achieve skill enhancement and recognition of personal value, strengthen their sense of psychological fulfillment, and foster positive behaviors [8].

(II) Support and Feedback During the Implementation Process

External support and timely feedback during the practice process are crucial factors influencing college students' sense of psychological fulfillment. On one hand, the practical platforms provided by universities, collaboration and support from various sectors of society, as well as peer cooperation and mutual assistance create essential conditions for students to participate effectively in practical activities, reduce obstacles, feel valued and supported, and enhance their sense of belonging. On the other hand, timely guidance, encouragement, and evaluation from instructors, along with positive feedback from both participants and society, enable students to clearly understand their practical outcomes, recognize the value of their efforts, strengthen their sense of achievement and self-efficacy, thereby motivating them to persistently engage in positive behaviors [9].

(III) Individual Characteristics and Participation Attitudes of University Students

The individual characteristics and participation attitudes of college students significantly influence their sense of psychological fulfillment and positive behaviors. Students with an outgoing personality, proactive mindset, strong stress resilience, and cooperative spirit are more inclined to actively engage in practical activities, better cope with

difficulties and challenges during practice, and experience greater psychological satisfaction. In contrast, students who are introverted, passive, negative, or have low self-efficacy demonstrate insufficient enthusiasm for participation; even when involved, they struggle to fully realize their potential and exhibit weaker psychological fulfillment. Additionally, students' perception and attitude toward practical activities are crucial: those who fully recognize the value and significance of such activities and participate proactively are more likely to gain positive experiences and exhibit positive behaviors; conversely, a negative or resistant attitude adversely affects both the quality of participation and the psychological outcomes.

(IV) Evaluation and Incentive Mechanisms for Practical Education

A scientific and rational evaluation and incentive mechanism serves as a crucial foundation for enhancing college students' sense of psychological fulfillment and sustaining positive behaviors. Currently, some universities overemphasize outcome-based assessments in practical education evaluations, neglecting process-oriented assessments and individual differences, which leads students to participate merely to complete tasks rather than develop genuine psychological satisfaction. Moreover, the absence of effective incentive mechanisms prevents students' positive behaviors from receiving timely recognition and encouragement, hindering the development of sustained motivation. Conversely, establishing an evaluation system that integrates process and outcome metrics along with quantitative and qualitative approaches—while comprehensively assessing students' engagement attitudes, skill enhancement, and value development—and employing incentives such as commendations, credit recognition, and awards can effectively strengthen students' sense of psychological fulfillment and motivate them to persistently engage in positive behaviors.

V. Strengthening the effectiveness of practice-based education and optimizing pathways to enhance college students' psychological satisfaction and positive behaviors

(1) Optimize the content and formats of practical education to enhance its relevance and appeal.

Universities should tailor the design of practical education programs to align with students' academic specialties, developmental needs, and contemporary characteristics. On one hand, they should strengthen the integration between practical activities and theoretical instruction by designing practice tasks focused on cultivating core professional competencies, enabling students to deepen their theoretical understanding and enhance knowledge application skills through hands-on experience. On the other hand, they should develop practice themes that address social issues and real-world demands, featuring relevance, public benefit, and innovation, allowing students to realize their value through societal service. Additionally, diverse practice formats should be adopted—combining online and offline approaches, centralized and decentralized activities, as well as short-term and long-term engagements—to meet varying participation needs, increase program flexibility and appeal, and stimulate student engagement [10].

(2) Improve the support system for practical education to provide fundamental support for psychological well-being.

Universities should strengthen the development of support systems for practical education to provide a solid foundation for students' participation in practical activities and their sense of psychological fulfillment. First, enhance the construction of practice bases by establishing long-term, stable partnerships with enterprises, communities, government agencies, and red education sites, thereby expanding diversified practice platforms that offer students authentic scenarios and ample opportunities. Second, improve faculty development by appointing instructors who possess both theoretical expertise and practical experience as practice supervisors, providing comprehensive

guidance throughout the process to help students address challenges while offering psychological support and encouragement. Third, increase financial investment to ensure smooth implementation of practical activities by providing necessary resources such as materials, transportation, and accommodation, thereby alleviating students' concerns regarding participation.

(3) Strengthen interaction and feedback during the practical process to enhance psychological satisfaction.

In the process of practice-based education, emphasis should be placed on enhancing interaction and feedback to ensure college students experience respect and recognition during their practical engagements. On one hand, teacher-student interaction and peer collaboration should be encouraged to foster an equal, open, and supportive practical environment, enabling students to develop interpersonal skills and strengthen their sense of belonging through cooperation. On the other hand, a timely and effective feedback mechanism must be established: instructors should regularly communicate with students, provide objective evaluations of their performance, acknowledge strengths and progress, and offer targeted improvement suggestions to help students clearly understand their achievements and areas for growth. Additionally, feedback from participants and various sectors of society should be actively collected and promptly shared with students, allowing them to recognize the social value of their practices and enhance their sense of accomplishment and identity [11].

(4) Improve the evaluation and incentive mechanisms for practice-based education, and strengthen positive behavior orientation.

Universities should establish sound and rational evaluation and incentive mechanisms for practical education, fully leveraging their guiding role. Regarding evaluation systems, they should move beyond a single outcome-based approach by developing a comprehensive framework that

integrates process-oriented and outcome-oriented assessments, as well as quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Evaluation criteria should cover multiple dimensions—including attitudes toward practical engagement, enhancement of practical skills, cultivation of social responsibility, and psychological fulfillment—to comprehensively reflect students' practical achievements and personal growth. For incentive mechanisms, diversified approaches should be adopted; in addition to traditional recognition and credit awards, practical performance can be linked to honors, employment recommendations, and further academic opportunities. This fully acknowledges students' efforts and positive behaviors, thereby fostering their intrinsic motivation to persistently engage in practical activities and demonstrate proactive actions.

(5) Guide college students to develop correct perceptions and positive attitudes, thereby activating their intrinsic motivation.

Universities should prioritize strengthening ideological guidance for students, helping them develop a correct understanding and positive attitude toward practice-based education. Through various approaches such as ideological and political theory courses, themed class meetings, and practice mobilization conferences, they should communicate the significance of practice-based education, enabling students to recognize it as a crucial pathway for enhancing personal capabilities and achieving the alignment of individual and social values. Simultaneously, universities should guide students to properly acknowledge the difficulties and challenges involved in practical activities, foster perseverance and an optimistic mindset, encourage active participation and willingness to experiment with new experiences, thereby continuously surpassing their limits through practice. Additionally, emphasis should be placed on cultivating students' self-reflection skills, encouraging them to promptly summarize lessons learned after practical engagements, deepen their insights into practice, enhance their sense of achievement, and sustain positive behaviors.

VI. Conclusion and Prospects

(I) Research Conclusion

Practical education serves as a vital approach for universities to cultivate moral character and nurture students, demonstrating a close intrinsic connection with college students' psychological fulfillment and positive behaviors. It provides a crucial platform for fostering psychological fulfillment by addressing students' needs for autonomy, competence, and belonging, thereby enhancing their sense of satisfaction. This psychological fulfillment acts as an internal driving force that further motivates students to engage in positive behaviors. Through the mediating role of psychological fulfillment, practical education indirectly influences the emergence and maintenance of positive behaviors. Key factors influencing this relationship include the design of practical activities, support systems and feedback mechanisms, individual characteristics and participation attitudes, as well as evaluation and incentive frameworks. By optimizing the content and formats of practical education, strengthening support systems, improving interaction and feedback processes, refining evaluation and incentive mechanisms, and guiding students toward adopting positive attitudes, the effectiveness of practical education can be significantly enhanced, ultimately elevating both students' psychological fulfillment and levels of positive behavior.

(II) Research Prospects

While this study has conducted a preliminary investigation into the relationship between college students' psychological sense of fulfillment and positive behaviors under the practice-oriented education approach, it still presents certain limitations. Methodologically, the sample size could be expanded, and a longitudinal tracking study design employed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the dynamic relationships among these three dimensions. Content-wise, further research should examine how different types of practical experiences (such as volunteer service, professional internships, and innovation/entrepreneurship activities) influence

psychological sense of fulfillment and positive behaviors, as well as the moderating role of individual characteristics. Future studies should integrate contemporary developments and evolving trends in university practice-based education to deepen understanding of these issues, thereby providing more targeted theoretical insights and practical guidance for enhancing practical education programs and promoting the holistic development of college students.

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