

# The Current Situation and Optimization Path of College Students' Life Values in the New Era

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**Abstract:** Life values are people's attitudes, opinions and evaluations of life, and a concrete manifestation of human values. It is closely related to personal values and reflects an individual's outlook on life, values and world view. As the backbone of our country's future, contemporary college students' life values have become an important social issue. In the New Era, with the rapid development of society, people's world view, values and even outlook on life have been strongly impacted by society, and college students who have been given hope by society are also deeply affected. In recent years, many college students have impulsively ended the lives of others and themselves because they do not have a correct outlook on life, bringing great sorrow and regret to their families and society. Therefore, it is urgent to explore the causes behind this phenomenon and propose the correct optimization path.

**Keywords:** Life Values, Mental Health Education, Family Education

## 1. Introduction

College students in the new era live in a rapid economic development, globalization, and widespread application of information technology. At the same time, they are also facing pressures such as interpersonal relationships, study, and employment. Therefore, their life values are deeply affected. Life values refer to people's overall value judgment on the form of life. It refers to the impact of all life activities of living entities on life itself and on other living entities under certain social and historical conditions. Chen Wanbai and Zhang Yaocan pointed out that "Life values are people's fundamental views and attitudes towards the value of life".<sup>[1]</sup> It is also a life attitude and life ideal. College students are an extremely important group in the contemporary social group structure. They have excellent scientific and cultural accomplishments, a strong sense of social justice and responsibility, and rare passion and vitality. They are in the growth stage of personality and concept, however their physiology and psychology are not mature enough. The rapid changes in society have caused the most obvious, intense and turbulent waves in their hearts. Therefore, the life values of college students have always been a hot topic of social concern. In the new era, cultivating college students' life values is conducive to promoting the all-round development of college students, promoting the development of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, and maintaining the harmonious development of society".<sup>[2]</sup>

## 2. Problems Existing in College Students' Life Values

College students lack respect and value for life. Many college students have misunderstandings about life. They value themselves too much and lack sympathy for the things around them. Some even regard life as child's play. When faced with difficulties or challenges, they lack the courage and determination to persevere and often choose to escape or give up. In recent years, it is common for college students to harm others, harm themselves, and even commit suicide. According to reports, the phenomenon of college student suicide is becoming increasingly serious around the world, which has attracted the attention of many countries and regions. Not only that, the prevalence of depression among Chinese college students is as high as 31-38%, and is showing an upward trend, reflecting the seriousness of psychological problems among college students. According to incomplete statistics, in 2008, 63 college student suicides occurred in colleges and universities directly under the Ministry of Education alone. In Guangdong, 26 college students committed suicide and 5 others attempted suicide. In the first half of 2009, a total of 63 college student suicides occurred in Beijing. There were 14 cases

of college students committing suicide; in 2010, there were as many as 52 cases of college student suicides that were hotly discussed on the Internet. Relevant data show that suicide has replaced sudden illness and traffic accidents as the number one cause of accidental death among college students. These are all manifestations of college students' lack of awareness of life. In their daily lives, contemporary college students often lack sufficient respect and value for their own lives and the lives of others. This is reflected in their neglect of physical health, frequent staying up late, irregular diet, lack of exercise, and disrespect for others. For example, they are not obeying traffic rules and they do not save others when they are in danger.

College students are confused about the meaning of life and don't know what they are really pursuing. College students' attitude towards life is not positive enough. Their attitude towards life is often negative and they lack enthusiasm and expectation for life. They are less willing to take the initiative to pursue and discover the meaning and value of life, but are more inclined to pursue short-term happiness and excitement. In this society, people's living environment and understanding of the meaning of life are undergoing profound changes. The natural attributes of human beings are undergoing tremendous changes. Many contemporary college students are confused about the meaning of life and lack accurate concepts of life value and life. University is not only a palace for learning knowledge, it should also be a place to cultivate life concepts and determine life goals. However, the phenomenon of arriving late and leaving early, skipping classes, playing online games all night, and failing courses and being demoted frequently occurs in various universities. The virtual world of the Internet not only provides a new space for the existence of life, but also creates "traps" for the real existence of life. Some college students waste time in Internet cafes and chat online all day; some college students are intoxicated in the dream of love; and some college students have nothing to do all day long, wandering around, waste time. Educators lament that the current college students' academic style is not strong, their examination style is not correct, and they lack ideals. Such behavior of contemporary college students is a manifestation of their lack of awe of life. Therefore, the phenomenon and behavior of playing with life was born, and many students were abandoned because of this. Lost the qualification to continue to be a college student. This kind of lack of life goals occurs frequently. Decadent life leads some students to be confused and give up themselves, thereby denying their own value and being unable to create value for society.

College students excessively pursue power and social value. In this society, power and social value have become the pursuit of many people. Some contemporary college students also put the pursuit of power and social value first, while ignoring the pursuit of their own value. Excessive pursuit of these cannot help them truly achieve a win-win situation of self-worth and social progress. Excessive pursuit of power may lead to their failure in learning and personal development, and even breed problems such as vanity and impetuosity. This kind of pursuit not only easily leads to self-esteem and arrogance, but also is likely to cause psychological imbalance and maladaptation. It can have a huge impact on an individual's mental health. The growth of college students' knowledge comes at the expense of neglecting emotional intelligence education which ultimately leads to individual students feeling confused and questioning about the value and meaning of life. Generally speaking, downplaying the expression, speech and behavior of life has misled college students' life values to a large extent. At the same time, the education model of "valuing intelligence and despising emotional intelligence" has also had a significant impact on the shaping of contemporary college students' life values. College students' excessive pursuit of power may lead them to neglect their academic and personal growth. They may spend too much time and energy on socializing, club activities, or other non-academic matters, thereby missing out on real learning opportunities. Excessive pursuit of power can cause them to become isolated and unhealthy. They may have conflicts or even antagonistic emotions with classmates or teachers, which affects their social and interpersonal development. Excessive pursuit of power may also affect their future career development. When college students devote too much time and energy to the pursuit of power, they may neglect their career planning and skill development, causing their future careers to suffer.

### **3. The Reasons for the Formation of College Students' Life Values**

Firstly, the unprecedented development of science and technology in modern society has brought endless material wealth to mankind, and at the same time it is constantly changing people's ideas. According to Max Weber's point of view, modern human rationality has experienced an evolutionary process in which instrumental rationality continues to expand and value rationality continues to shrink. "Instrumental rationality has become the organizing principle of contemporary society. It has penetrated into the overall structure of society and all aspects of social life, and has become the deep

foundation and tool for society to comprehensively rule, control and manipulate individuals, thus putting people on the edge. As for the purpose, meaning, humanistic spirit and ultimate value of human life, they are abandoned. "[3] The emergence of new media such as the Internet and social software has provided college students with sufficient channels for communication and information acquisition. However, there are often some negative factors on the Internet, such as vulgar information, bloody violence and extremist ideas which will have a negative impact on the formation of college students' life values. They need to adapt to the changing social environment to improve their adaptability and resilience. The complexity and uncertainty of the social environment increase the difficulty for college students in obtaining information and resources. College students also face more troubles when dealing with social relationships. They need to deal with a variety of interpersonal relationships, which puts higher demands on their communication skills and interpersonal skills.

Secondly, in the increasingly materialistic social environment, education has become alienated. In the heated discussion caused by a certain college in Shaanxi, the "slump" that was regarded as uncivilized behavior by the school actually reflected the school's negative impact on the value of college students' lives. There may be many problems hidden behind this behavior, such as the hidden dangers of college students in daily life, interpersonal communication, entrepreneurship and innovation, and mental health, including safety management risks, simple thinking, risk prevention, and stress. The purpose of education emphasizes the one-sided pursuit of knowledge and skills rather than the all-round development of people. However, university education that focuses on knowledge and technology has few courses involving life education among the various university courses in college students' lives. School education is basically dominated by the examination-oriented education model which places too much emphasis on knowledge transfer and cultural learning, and basically ignores the development of student other qualities, especially the lack of thinking about the value and meaning of life, and even the lack of education on basic common sense about life. There are problems such as insufficient understanding of life value education for college students, lack of scientific and effective educational methods, and lack of targeted educational content. Schools may overemphasize discipline and systems and ignore the personality development and needs of college students. In the process of growing up, college students need to actively deal with various hidden dangers and give full play to their strengths, but excessive restrictions from schools may hinder their growth. The negative impact of schools on college students' life value may lead to problems such as limited personality development of students, neglect of students' all-round development, and insufficient understanding of life value education.

Thirdly, there are big problems in the family education of many children. Family has a profound influence on college students' life values. Family factors such as lack of family relationships, authoritative or authoritarian family relationships may also affect their values, and thus their reverence for life. Children with a very tense family atmosphere find it difficult to get close to others. They are sometimes hostile to others and are prone to extreme behaviors. Some family members have values that conflict with those of college students. For example, if a student comes from a family that places great emphasis on education and success, but his family does not provide sufficient financial resources to support his studies, this may have a negative impact on his life values. For another example, if a student's family has a negative attitude towards suicide or homicide, but he has suicidal tendencies, this will also have an impact on his life values. Psychological trauma in the process of growing up will have a negative impact on the formation of college students' life values. Parents' excessive demands on their children will increase the psychological pressure of college students. Parents' overprotection of their children can also lead to a lack of responsibility in them. It can easily make college students develop cowardly and selfish characters. When they face with difficulties and setbacks, they often chose to give up.

#### **4. The Optimized Path to Help College Students Establish Correct Life Values**

Firstly, create a good social atmosphere. Life values education is not only a kind of education in colleges and universities, but also a kind of social education. Human society should be a people-centered society that always puts human development first. It should be a society that respects human life and provides broad development space for the realization of the value of human life. Therefore, cultivating and improving the life consciousness of modern people requires the whole society to pay attention to human existence and human life, and form a social atmosphere that loves life, respects life, and reveres life. Only in a society that values life can people form True life consciousness realizes the value of life to the greatest extent. It is necessary to purify the social environment closely related to college students, strengthen supervision of social environments such as entertainment and the

Internet, and create a healthy and positive development environment for college students. We must pay more attention to the management and supervision of online platforms, and at the same time, we must also improve students' information discrimination and information acquisition abilities. Media practitioners should strengthen their ideological and professional qualities, pay attention to the essence of news, and dig out the depth of news in accordance with relevant laws, regulations and professional ethics. They should not exaggerate the truth in order to gain clicks and create eye-catching headlines. More is needed It digs into the deep-seated reasons behind the incident and plays a positive role in making people think deeply and arouse resonance. At the same time, college students' awareness of environmental protection should also be improved so that they understand the impact of their actions on the environment and thus value their living environment more. Only in a clean and tidy environment can life be better protected.

Secondly, strengthen life values education in colleges and universities. Education is essentially an activity that cultivates people. In the process of education, there will inevitably be interference from various encounters, so pedagogy should regard encounters as natural things. Because encounters are unpredictable and their handling cannot be prepared in advance, all education can do is to prepare them for the encounter, especially psychological preparation. Death can be said to be a serious encounter that is both certain and uncertain in a person's life. The death of others, relatives and friends, and oneself is unavoidable in life, but the cause, method, and time of death will be different. Therefore, in this regard, it is impossible for education not to include the education of outlook on life. Universities should focus on the cultivation of moral ethics, social responsibility and humanistic quality education, and increase the setting of relevant courses to help college students understand the meaning and value of life. Universities should set up independent education courses on life values, coordinate class arrangements, set reasonable educational tasks and goals, and ensure that every college student can deeply master the course content. We should establish a healthy mental health diagnosis and treatment system to promptly discover and solve psychological problems of college students, and help college students form a good outlook on life and psychological values. Establish students' mental health files and conduct regular personality health examinations on students. Through scientific measurement methods, students are diagnosed, students with problems are found, and guidance and help are provided in a timely manner. Establish a psychological counseling center to provide guidance and comfort to the problems encountered by college students in their own development, so that their psychology can be transformed in a healthy direction. It is also important to strengthen the construction of teaching staff. Colleges and universities can train teachers based on the advantages and characteristics of their own discipline construction, so that teachers can thoroughly understand and grasp the psychological development characteristics and mental health conditions of contemporary college students.

Thirdly, family education has a great influence on the life values of contemporary college students. In the process of education, parents should give their children enough love and care, focus on cultivating their autonomy and independence, and pay attention to their children's mental health problems. These will help college students form correct life values. Parents should choose scientific life values education methods. Good parenting style can effectively prevent the occurrence of suicidal ideation. In daily life, parents must cultivate their moral character, love life, cherish life, treat themselves and others with an optimistic and open-minded attitude, and deal with the setbacks and difficulties encountered in daily life, in order to infect their children with consistency. Parents should strive to avoid structural defects in the family. Families should maintain equal status between parents and children, and value communication between parents and children. Parents should communicate with their children frequently, learn to listen to their children's voices, and respect their children's wishes. In the process of raising children, parents should insist on analyzing specific issues and avoid blindly making one-size-fits-all decisions. "The more positive the parenting style, the more positive and healthy the life values of college students."<sup>[4]</sup> Parents should follow their children's life growth patterns, combine their children's own hobbies and interests, and gradually cultivate and improve their children's abilities in all aspects. College students can establish correct life values only in a harmonious and friendly family atmosphere. In short, in order to help college students establish correct life values, parents and schools need to work together to create a harmonious and healthy family environment and adopt scientific education methods so that college students can receive good education and guidance at home.

Fourthly, college students are the main target of life values education. They must enhance their awareness of respecting life and actively explore the value and meaning of life. College students can gradually clarify their strengths and weaknesses by reflecting on their behaviors, thoughts, and values, thereby better understanding themselves, and building a healthier and more comprehensive personality on this basis. They should take the initiative to increase their enthusiasm for learning and improving

their understanding of life values. They must carefully study the relevant courses offered by the school and work hard to learn the relevant theories of life values. At the same time, they must also learn to reject temptation, often reflect on themselves, correct their bad behaviors, and consciously cultivate the awareness of cherishing and protecting life. College students should maintain a positive attitude in their daily study and life. When encountering difficulties and setbacks, they should not be paranoid and willful. They should learn to regulate their emotions, vent their emotions reasonably, and improve their emotional control ability and comprehensive psychological quality. They must actively participate in social practice activities and hone their will in practical activities, thereby improving their own life values. They should clarify their values and goals while remaining rational and calm. Only in this way can true self-worth and a happy life be achieved. They should devote more time and energy to their studies, career planning and interpersonal relationship development, while also working hard to develop their own leadership and social responsibility. Only in this way can they become people who contribute to society while also achieving personal development and growth. College students need to establish positive interpersonal relationships. College students can gain emotional support and encouragement by establishing good relationships with classmates, teachers and family members. At the same time, they can also learn and draw on their excellent qualities and values through communication and interaction with them, so as to better cultivate their own life values. At the same time, college students need to pay attention to the practical cultivation of life values education and improve their own quality of life. This is not only a way to improve how colleges and universities cultivate correct life values among college students, but is also an important part of implementing life values education.

## 5. Conclusion

In the new era, strengthening life education has become an important part of the national education strategy. As Lu Lan mentioned that "the course of life must be sublimated by faith".<sup>[5]</sup> The state encourages colleges and universities to pay attention to students' life safety and health, develop students' potential, promote students' all-round development, put people first, and realize students' life development. At the same time, the school also needs to establish a comprehensive and efficient education mechanism, promote the education of all employees, and establish a systematic and comprehensive motivation mechanism to ensure that the number and quality of the life education team for college students in the new era are sufficient and stable. As college students in the new era, they should also actively participate in the study and practice of life values and improve our knowledge and understanding of life values through self-study and practical activities. They should respect life, care for others, be grateful for life, cherish time, realize self-worth, and at the same time make their own contributions to the country, society and mankind. In general, the life values of college students in the new era should be positive, progressive, grateful and responsible, and at the same time full of life tension, life ideals and life responsibilities.

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