

Analysis and Suggestions on Modern Teenage Life Education in China

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Abstract: Life education focuses on cultural and value world. Youngsters life education should be taken into action. The urgency of teenage life education. Teens are facing unprecedented challenges in the new era. Trends of becoming instrumented “rational” people. The essay focused on why life education is becoming increasingly more important in youngsters’ life, and how to promote high quality life education in the society. This paper was supported by both literature review, which could be checked in the references down below, and quantitative research, such as 337 pieces of feedbacks of self-designed questionnaire. This paper found life education was needed because of teenagers’ loss in life meaning and corruption in beliefs, relevant to the contemporary era. This paper is devoted to explore the origins and carry out possible solutions on the topic of life education, so that teenagers and society in the future could benefit. Eventually, appreciation to the help of professors offered.

Keywords: life education, teenagers, society, values, pursuits

1. Introduction

In 2020, COVID-19 swept all through the world. In China, not only deaths attributed to the disease and its syndromes increases, but also cases of suicides are rising in a striking speed. What comes to attention in the society is the concept “life”. Meanwhile, a system of courses called life education has received much attention.

Life education is the education that helps the be educated gain answers to “how to be a man”, “what is the value and meaning of life” through exploration on topics of generation, existence, development and ending of lives. This education is particularly important for teenagers. For quite a long time, the necessity of teenage life education isn’t evaluated correctly in China. Modern Chinese education focuses on education of knowledge, but lose sight of educating the youth why and how to live. Without recognizing it, teens tend to find themselves bewildered.

Life education is a process seeking wisdom, which is more fundamental than simply seeking knowledge. As an essential part of caring, nourishing and developing life, life education must be further and deeper proposed worldwide. This paper mainly focuses on the flaws of existing life education policies, ways to improve them, and further feasible attempts. Quantitative research is used.

Teenagers are the future of humanity. However, their loss in direction does not seem auspicious considering human development. Life education should be proposed adequately so that youngsters could receive efficient guidance. In order to achieve this goal, we should seek out the exact factors of

causes that leads to teenage bewilderment. This paper is designed to explore both reasons and solutions to the question.

2. Youngsters Are Facing Perplex Dilemma

Nowadays, many Chinese teenagers are obsessed with fancy food and sensual pleasures. They consider these their life pursuit. In the long run, individualism and utilitarianism are likely to cause the expansion of selfishness. Not only traditional virtues of the Chinese nation, such as compassion, love and empathy will slip away, but also values tend to distort.

2.1. Alienation Within Life

Living in the information era, people are tightly attached to “merits” brought by modern technology. Unfortunately, the rationality of highly developed instruments tends to lead to impairment in life nobility.

Spoiling one’s own life. Scholar Y.H. Wan and his teammates have made researches on 17,622 high school students in 8 provinces in China. The research shows that 3001 (17.03%) students in total admitted self-hurting behaviors in the past year [1]. According to a 2019 report by WHO, suicide has already become the second and third major attribution of teen girls and boys aged from 15 to 29 respectively. This series of explosive information keep alerting people to introspect their attitude toward life and life education.

Overlooking others’ lives. According to relative media, 60 cases of campus violence had taken place in 2015. Among those, 75.0% happened in high schools, among teenagers aged between 12-18 [2]. The fast rhythm and high frequency of modern society leave human beings with little space for thinking. Along with ignorance of life noumenon, indifference between one and another increases progressively. Various violent incidents have been questioning people’s reflection on the term life.

Destructing natural lives. Contemporary teenagers are filled with an urban sense. Since teenagers’ affinity with nature is nowhere near like before, they lack awe of natural lives. Trampling on the lawn, destroying flower beds... Similar cases are easily found. Even animal abduction committed by teenagers are common occurrence. Live cases in reports are indicating absence of revere toward nature in teenagers.

2.2. Corruption of Value Rationality in Social Beings

Social beings refer to the width of life, that is the value one can bring to society. At present, planning one’s life utilizing scientific technology has become a common trend. The phenomenon also took place within schools, among both teachers and students. However, such dependency on information techniques is likely to cause an adverse impact in the long run. As students are left with little space to think independently, they lose direction in finding their values to live. This pushes teens into the corruption of value rationality.

Dissimilation of social beings. “Traditional society’s asceticism is converting into modern society’s hedonism and materialism. Men’s lives are thus processing along the culture of desire” [3]. In school education, students are affected by mortal education instrumentalization on one hand. Mortal education is controlled by instrumental rationality, gradually becoming mechanized, hollowed and tamed. Students’ mortal life loses vitality. On the other hand, classroom courses are full of technology admiration. Nation call, era inevitability, occupation appeal all prompt taking information technology as dominance. In the long term, as teenagers lack of emotional communication and triggers, their quality of inner growth is out of guarantee.

Distortion of life value. Meritocracy leading social trend has already become an indisputable fact. Nowadays, individuals, families, schools, and society are all under the control of “efficiency”. In the

education field, people also focus on economic efficiencies such as maximizing learning feedback. What they neglect are students' spiritual pursuits and feelings. In fact, parents and society evaluate education on the basic index of efficiency the student generates after graduation. Viewing lives on the fundamentals of social values is an act of distorting life values. Cultivated under such standpoints, teenagers lose independent reflections on life pursuits.

2.3. Loss of Life Meaning in Spiritual Life

Spiritual life means the realm of life, that is individual reaches freedom by breaking through material lives. The meaning of life refers to people's cognition and pursuit of their life targets [4]. In the modern world, the major problem of lives can be summarized as deficiency in life values [5]. The problem mainly reflects at two different dimensions. The loss of life vitality, meaning, and spiritual dilemma are all closely related to the topic.

Dullness of spiritual world. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" [6]. Nowadays, people immerse themselves in the joy brought by hedonism. However, they forget to explore and change the world, they forget the most initial belief and spiritual pursuit [7]. Teenagers are also facing lives with a "gaming" attitude. Modern teens lack deliberation, but learn to ride free and drift along. Also, because the market economy system is carried out after the Reform and Opening up, people are busy gaining more benefits, and "utilitarian" appears in the social life. If things won't be changed, they tend to grow up into flattened, mono-directional adults.

Desolation of spiritual virtues. As Neil Postman promoted, this is an age of amusement until death. The main factor of spiritual virtue desolation is directed to the morbid general cultural environment. Teenagers are addicted to such "peak moments" that serve for casual, negative intentions [8]. Attributed to the absence of rational thinking, teens devote themselves to hollow entertainment and thus leading to broken spiritual values. Desolation in spiritual virtues causes loss of life meaning in teenagers.

3. Teenagers Needs Life Education: The Present Deficient Stage of Life Education

3.1. Generalization Degree Less than Ideal

Currently, life education is not having an ideal generalization rate.

This paper collected 337 pieces of answers to a self-designed questionnaire on November 11, 2022. The feedbacks are from teenagers aged between 12 to 18 years old, mostly Chinese. Among them, 41.84% haven't heard of "life education" yet (see donut below, left). Only 32.05% of participants have taken life education courses or lectures at school, while 48.96% of them have never felt any sign of life education in school life (see Figure 1(b)).

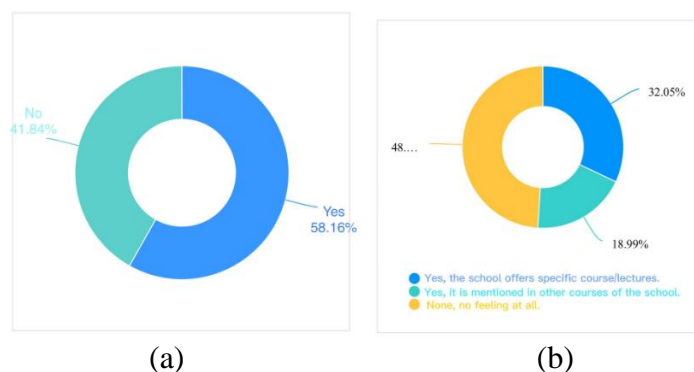


Figure 1: (a) Statistics on whether if teens have heard of life education; (b) Statistics on whether have teenagers heard of life education at the school level.

However, data shows that still lots of teens need life education in their lives. 75.68% of them have suffered from negative emotions like depression (see Figure 2(b)). Relating to the previous session, these feelings can be attributed to bewilderment into personal values, indicating that teenagers truly need some guidance on philosophical thinking into their lives. The questionnaire also require the participants to grade significance level of life education from 1 to 5. 71.87% of them grade it 4 or above, directly showing that life education is demanded.

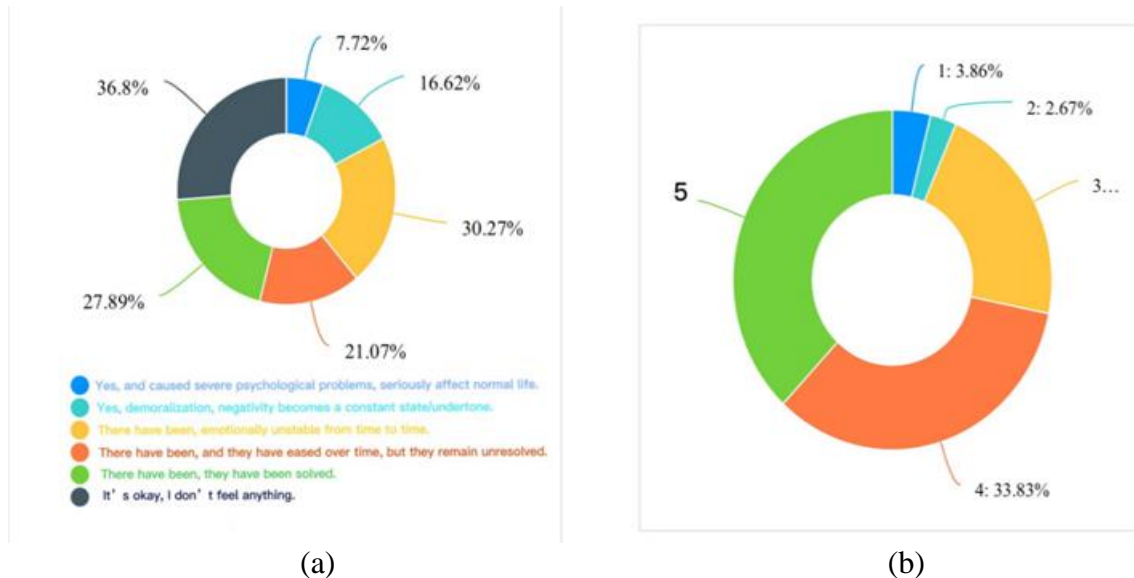


Figure 2: (a) Statistics on had teenagers ever been in a state of confusion about the meaning of life during the three years of epidemic; (b) Statistics on how important do teenagers think life education is? (Rate from 1-5)

3.2. Education Form Needs to Change

On the other hand, existing forms of life education are not welcomed by youngsters generally. Youngsters are forming a “useless, formatted, compulsive” stereotype toward value sublimation fused in school courses. The writer interviewed one of the participants of the questionnaire, Chen, after getting in contact. “Take the subject Morality and Legality as an example,” Chen claimed, “deliberate positive value guidance, especially indubitable compliments toward the society, are all through the text. It seems way too fake. I end up questioning and detesting the course instead of learning and appreciating it.” Just like Chen, many other teens consider such guidance superficial. So-called efficiency pursuit by the Education Ministry sometimes caused inverted effects.

4. Teenage Life Education’s Expectations

Currently, teens’ life education has been gaining some outcomes, but deficiency still exists. This provides a new direction to further development.

4.1. Form of Promoting

Corresponding to 3.2, the existing life education’s forms need to be introspected.

Fusing perspectives into school courses can be preserved, but how to make the message more receptive should be discussed. Lessening absolute values, admitting subsistent negativities, encouraging independent thinking [9]. Authorities should take the public’s suggestions into

consideration, focus on the actual perplexity and discontentment of youngsters, and think of practical solutions that do help.

In addition, new ways of promoting life education should be invented. People should capture era trends and youngsters' favors, so that promotion can be implemented in appropriate ways. The right path always makes more. For instance, video games, instant movies and art galleries are all broadly welcomed by new media. Teens get more attracted to these. Generally, they also resonate with topics taken as themes in those events easier. Relevant life education topics can be proposed in those forms.

4.2. Content of Promoting

In the future, deeper, more private research that focuses on individual perspective can be implemented. Just like incorporating one's characteristics, then dig into the relationship between life education and positive mental variable from a psychological perspective, utilize positive mental emotions while guiding the individual at independent thinking, and eventually promote him to form a positive life attitude.

In addition, lots of current life education are psychological researches based on mental health and connotation of lives. It focuses too much on individual values, while life education includes higher gradations, such as philosophical rumination. Deeper studies are expected to be inspiring in the future.

Finally, current life education focuses on cross-sectional studies, longitudinal studies are hoped to be focused on in the future [10]. Research focusing on sub-topics like life education attitudes' change and evolution through an individual's life span, development and influence of one's quality, study, career, and family relations brought by a positive life attitude should be learned. So that judgement of cause and effect is shown, and thus more valuable research can be done.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, teenagers are currently suffering from bewilderment to their future, caused mainly by turbulent social environment. Continuing such confusion would cause severe mental problem and even anti-society behaviors in the long term. As consequence, life education is necessary. However, in the past, life education didn't receive enough attention, and thus haven't developed into a mature state especially in China. To sum up, it is urgent to inject new ideological connotation and power source into life education from the aspects of the coordination of educational objectives, the integration of educational content, the dredging of educational methods, the construction of educational atmosphere and the integration of teachers. In order to improve the situation, and to help modern teenagers, the essay provided accessible solutions based on detailed, practical analysis into youngsters' point of view. It would be decent if the essay could be helpful in future development of teenage life education.

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