

A Study on Mental Health Status of Postgraduate Freshmen in Normal University

Chen Liang

Teacher Education College,
China West Normal University,
No.1 Shida Road, Shunqing District, Nanchong City , 637002
Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China

Abstract

To understand the mental health status of postgraduate students as freshmen from normal colleges and universities, this paper adopted SCL-90 to test 654 postgraduate students. The results of the study showed that: the mental health status of postgraduate students as freshmen from normal colleges and universities is modest so that we need to strengthen concern about them. The mental health of postgraduate freshmen from normal universities is not significantly related with their majors, but there is some relation with their genders. The scores of every factor of postgraduates as freshman from normal university have significant differences with university students, national norm and normal people.

Keywords: postgraduates; mental health; SCL-90

Introduction

With the expansion of the scale of normal university postgraduates, the postgraduates are going to be more and more. But the pressure of social competition is fierce so that postgraduates' psychological pressure is much bigger. And there are more psychological problems and more attention should be paid to. By using the symptom checklist (SCL-90), this study investigates the mental health status of postgraduates as freshmen of 2015 in a normal university of Sichuan province to know their mental health and analyze the mental health.

1. Objects and Approaches

1.1 Objects: The postgraduate freshmen in Grade 2015 of a normal university in SiChuan province. There were 700 people who were involved in this questionnaire survey, and after discarding useless questionnaires, we took back 654 ones, which made effective rate 93.4%. Among those objects, there are 280 men, 372 women, 458 graduate students of art and 179 of science.

1.2 Approach: Symptom checklist 90, also named SCL-90. It consists of 90 items, adopting five-dimensions scoring system (1= none, 2= light, 3= moderate, 4= much serious, 5= severe). And the factors assessed are somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, psychoticism and others. Finally, all data were imported in SPSS17.0, being analyzed through descriptive statistics and T-tests etc.

2. Results

2.1 The Mental Health Status of Postgraduate Freshmen in Normal University

According to SCL-90 selection criteria, we treated 2-pointed factor positively, and we've also kept all factors' positive predictive value statistics. Statistics showed that the positive predictive value of obsessive-compulsive, 27.8%, is the highest one, and the interpersonal sensitivity, anxiety and depression are in the next place whereas somatization and phobic anxiety are much lower. It manifested that among postgraduate in normal university, the problems of obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression and anxiety are obvious. As showed in Table 1.

Table 1 The Distribution of People Who Have Positive Symptom in SCL-90 (n=654)

	somat izatio n	Obsessi ve-comp ulsive	Interperso nal sensitivity	depr essio n	anxi ety	hosti lity	Phobc anxiet y	Parono id ideatio n	Psych oticis m	Othe rs	Tota l scor es
n	35	182	116	72	81	64	40	67	51	70	99
%	5.35	27.8	17.74	11.0	12.4	9.79	6.12	10.24	7.80	10.7	15.1
				1							4

2.2 The gender difference in postgraduate freshmen's mental health status in normal university.

As Table 2 showed, males' scores in all factors are than females', and the difference in interpersonal sensitivity and psychoticism is most obvious.

Table 2 Comparison of Every Factor of SCL-90 between Males and Females as Postgraduates in Normal University

	gender		F	T
	(n=281) Male (n=281)	(n=373) Female(n=373)		
somatization	1.31±0.35	1.29±0.31	1.281	0.836
obsessive-compulsive	1.77±0.49	1.71±0.43	0.137	1.570
interpersonal sensitivity	1.60±0.51	1.52±0.42	1.569	2.149*
depression	1.49±0.47	1.46±0.43	0.078	0.861
anxiety	1.48±0.46	1.44±0.40	1.097	1.117
hostility	1.41±0.44	1.37±0.39	0.880	1.175
phobic anxiety	1.30±0.39	1.28±0.37	1.446	0.552
paranoid ideation	1.41±0.44	1.39±0.36	2.598	0.772
psychoticism	1.44±0.42	1.37±0.33	5.640	2.446**
others	1.46±0.43	1.44±0.37	0.701	0.625

Notes: * means $p < 0.05$, and ** means $p < 0.01$

2.3 Major Difference in postgraduate freshmen's mental health in Normal University According to the majors the postgraduates as freshmen have, it going to compare every difference in SCL-90 between postgraduates majoring in Arts and postgraduates majoring in Science. The statistics indicated that the

scores of postgraduates majoring in Arts were all more than that of the postgraduates majoring in Science except the hostility, but the differences were not significant. As showed in table 3.

Table 3 Comparison of Every Factor of SCL-90 between Majors in Postgraduates from Normal University

	Subjects		F	T
	(n=350) Arts(n=350)	(n=304) Science(n=304)		
somatization	1.31±0.35	1.29±0.31	0.619	0.836
obsessive-co mpulsive	1.75±0.46	1.72±0.45	0.004	0.645
interpersonal sensibility	1.57±0.49	1.54±0.44	0.432	0.863
depression	1.48±0.46	1.46±0.44	0.005	0.443
anxiety	1.48±0.49	1.44±0.39	0.603	1.209
hostility	1.38±0.44	1.40±0.38	0.051	-0.769
phobic anxiety	1.30±0.39	1.28±0.33	1.209	0.884
paranoid ideation	1.40±0.41	1.38±0.38	0.720	0.912
psychoticism	1.40±0.39	1.39±0.36	0.447	0.388
others	1.47±0.42	1.42±0.37	0.871	0.351

Notes: * means $p < 0.05$, and ** means $p < 0.01$

2.4 The Differences of Mental Health of Postgraduates as Freshmen Compared with the College Norm scale, National Youth Norm and Normal Persons Norm

The scores of postgraduates as freshmen were significantly lower than the college norm in every factor of SCL-90 indicating that the mental health of postgraduates was better than university students on the whole. Compared with the National Youth Norm, postgraduates had lower scores except that they had higher scores in obsessive-compulsive, anxiety and psychoticism. Compared with the norm of normal persons, factors had significantly differences expect for depression and phobic anxiety as showed in table 4.

Table 4 comparison of Scl-90 among Postgraduate Freshmen, the College Norm, and the National Youth Norm

	Postgraduate freshmen	The college norm	The youth norm	Noramol persons norm	t1	t2	t3
sotimization	1.30±0.33	1.45±0.49	1.34±0.45	1.42±0.44	-11.769** *	-3.218***	-9.437***
obsessive-com pulsive	1.74±0.45	1.99±0.64	1.69±0.61	1.66±0.52	-14.187** *	2.595**	4.273***
interpersonal sensibility	1.56±0.46	1.98±0.74	1.69±0.61	1.51±0.49	-23.431** *	-11.290**	2.507**
depression	1.47±0.45	1.83±0.65	1.57±0.61	1.50±0.47	-20.610** *	-5.760***	-1.762
anxiety	1.46±0.42	1.64±0.59	1.42±0.43	1.34±0.39	-10.879** *	2.436**	7.278***
hostibility	1.39±0.41	1.77±0.68	1.50±0.57	1.49±0.51	-23.797** *	-7.014***	-6.393***
phobic anxiety	1.29±0.36	1.46±0.53	1.33±0.45	1.27±0.39	-11.962** *	-2.786**	1.448
paranoid ideation	1.40±0.39	1.85±0.69	1.52±0.60	1.44±0.47	-29.524** *	-8.073***	-2.872**
psychoticism	1.40±0.37	1.63±0.54	1.36±0.47	1.33±0.39	-16.020** *	2.430**	4.480***

Notes: ** means $p < 0.01$, *** means $p < 0.001$

3. Discussion

3.1 General Analysis on mental health status of freshmen in Normal University

The survey found that in some normal universities the psychological health of postgraduate freshmen was moderate. According to SCL-90, the students who suffered from obsessive-compulsive and interpersonal factors ranked the highest proportion. With the expanding enrollment of postgraduates, society's requirement varied correspondently. Consequently, these talents were not badly needed as before, which makes them lose the sense of superiority gradually. Meanwhile, they do feel at a loss as they were confronted with severe academic and research pressure, and some other external factors, which aggravated their mental pressure. On the other hand, postgraduates are in their early youth, the end of delay compensation, and postgraduates have own opinions on their future marriage life. However, due to the shortage of a solid financial foundation, they were prone to get frustrated on emotional affairs. They may do some crazy things for the failure of handling interpersonal affairs. What's worse, they may tend to vent their outrage to themselves or the people around them, thus affecting the relationship with others. They suffered from tremendous pressure from the external and internal world, but failed to find appropriate ways to vent their angry, as a result, lots of mental health problems appear.

3.2 Analysis of gender differences in mental health status of freshmen in Normal University

The survey indicated that the mental health of female students in normal colleges is better than that of male students, and there are some remarkable differences between their interpersonal relationships and mental illness.

In the traditional concept, men should shoulder more responsibilities than that of women. Postgraduates are in the early youth and the end of delay compensation, and they begin to think about their future life planning. Male postgraduates have a general idea about their ability-promoting, finding a well-paid job, and bearing the responsibility of supporting the family after getting married. While most female postgraduates enjoy the comfortable campus life thus are reluctant to go to work. Compared with male students, who are full of ambition, female students would like to find an easy and comfortable work. Undoubtedly, more future responsibilities will exert heavier pressure on male postgraduates, and pressure to some extent is detrimental to their mental health.

In addition, in traditional concept, men have long been held as the embodiment of bravery, it is somewhat shameful for men to cry in public. They are unwilling to share their troubles with others and they tend to face the problem alone, consequently they failed to find some appropriate ways to relieve stress. Since women are the embodiment of weakness, they are more forgivable than that of men. Admittedly, females are vulnerable and they are more liable to be affected by the emotional problems, however, they can find many ways to solve it, like asking for help from others, thus find some appropriate ways to solve them one by one, which has also been confirmed by the analysis of data, supplying by the consultation center of the University. The data showed that most of the visitors are female. Influenced by traditional social concept, longing for further education and different orientation of social roles, males are under greater pressure than females. Meanwhile, males seldom find appropriate ways to relieve themselves so that male postgraduates suffer more psychological problems than that of females’.

3.3 Analysis of Major differences of the mental health status of the postgraduate freshmen in normal universities

The scores of the arts postgraduate freshmen were higher than the scores of the science postgraduate freshmen in every factor of SCL - 90, which showed the mental health of the arts college freshmen of postgraduate was better than the science college freshmen of postgraduate, but no significant difference. On the one hand, the measured time is the first month when the new students arrived at college and most of them are outsiders and not completely adapt to the life of the school environment. The average scores of the arts postgraduate freshmen were higher than the science postgraduate freshmen, and the scores were also related to the personality characteristics of the arts postgraduate freshmen. The arts postgraduate freshmen are generally more delicate and sensitive, focusing on the emotional exchanges and concern about the future employment. Compared with the science postgraduate freshmen, the arts postgraduate freshmen are more difficult to find a job. Because finding a more satisfying work takes more energy, the scores of the arts postgraduate freshmen are higher than the science postgraduate freshmen.

3.4 The Analysis of the mental health status among the postgraduates as freshmen in normal universities, normal college students, normal people, and national youth.

Compared with college students, the postgraduate freshmen in normal universities have lower scores than college students in 9 factors of SCL - 90 and other factors. The difference is significant, which indicates that the mental health status of the freshmen in normal universities graduate students is better. On the one hand, it may be caused by the development of one's own psychological. Along with the increase of age, mental maturity and social experience, their ability to deal with the problem are significantly higher than undergraduate. It's difficult to adapt to the environment for the undergraduate students, which leads to a lot of psychological problems. Compared to undergraduate students, normal universities graduate students have experienced a stage to adapt to the environment and have the stronger adaptive ability. Even if they go to another strange place to live and learn, they also can have more experience and methods. In addition,

through the university study and the efforts to the postgraduate entrance exam, graduate students have their own perseverance and emotional stability.

Compared with the national youth, postgraduate freshmen from normal universities have lower scores except for the obsessive-compulsive, anxiety and psychoticism. This suggests that even though the postgraduate freshmen from normal university are in early youth, they also are in school, in the terminal stages of a suspended to delay payment and not into the real social role. And the school environment is relatively simple and has no interest and burden. And after the youth work, their social roles undergone some changes and they have more responsibilities to consider the various problems of marriage, buying a house, family, etc. The freshmen in normal universities graduate students have not fully realized that before. So the mental health status of the new graduate is slightly better than the mental health status of Chinese youth. However, due to the change of the employment situation, most of the normal university graduate students worry whether they can find a suitable job after graduation. But the working youth don't have to consider similar problems. So the new graduate has the higher score in terms of anxiety. Compared with the normal people, normal university graduate students have significant differences except for two factors, depression and phobic anxiety.

4. Conclusion

Study found that the mental health status of the postgraduate freshmen in normal universities is general, and the obsessive-compulsive and interpersonal sensibility issues are more prominent. In general, the mental health status of the postgraduate freshmen in normal universities is better than the mental health status of the college students. The mental health of the male is lower than the mental health of the female for the postgraduate freshmen in normal universities. The mental health status of the postgraduate freshmen majoring in arts is better than that of the mental health of the postgraduate freshmen majoring in science.

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