



**THE FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGE STUDENTS'
MENTAL HEALTH BASED ON MASLOW'S HIERARCHY
OF NEEDS THEORY: A CASE STUDY OF NANJING
COMMERCIAL COLLEGE**

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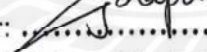
**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
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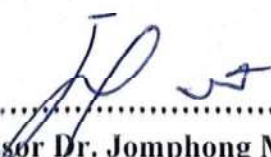
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This Independent Study has been approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

As social competition intensifies and academic pressure increases, paying attention to college students' mental health has become a key issue for enhancing educational quality and promoting students' overall development. Mental health issues are increasingly common among college students, yet the existing psychological support systems and intervention measures remain insufficient, necessitating in-depth research to improve the situation.

The research objectives of this study were: 1) To investigate the factors influencing the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College utilizing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory as a conceptual framework; 2) To propose practical suggestions for optimizing the mental health education system at Nanjing Commercial College.

This study adopted the qualitative research methodology, the study randomly selected 50 students from grades 1 to 5 at Nanjing Commercial College and adopted an interview method. Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, the study founded that physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs have significant and interrelated impacts on the mental health of students at Nanjing Business College. To improve the students' psychological well-being, the following four aspects should be addressed: 1) Comprehensive attention to students' needs; 2) Igniting learning motivation; 3) Cultivating self-actualization capabilities; 4) Strengthening mental health education.

Keywords: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, college students, mental health, Nanjing Commercial College

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Lin Hui

DECLARATION

I, Lin Hui, hereby declare that this Independent Study entitled “The Factors Influencing College Students' Mental Health Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory: A Case Study of Nanjing Commercial College” is an original work and has never been submitted to any academic institution for a degree.

(Lin Hui)

Oct 1, 2024



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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the early 20th century, college students' mental health issues did not yet receive widespread attention. The focus of mental health education was primarily on the initial establishment of psychological theories and the dissemination of mental health knowledge. College students' mental health problems were mostly categorized as mental illnesses, with treatment relying mainly on traditional psychiatric methods. In the mid-20th century, the rise of humanistic psychology and cognitive-behavioral therapy had a significant impact on mental health education (Foschi, 2022).

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Carl Rogers' Client-Centered Therapy emphasized personal growth and self-actualization, which advanced the theoretical development of mental health education. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the focus on college students' mental health issues became increasingly systematic. Mental health education began to be promoted on college campuses, and the establishment of psychological counseling centers and support services became widespread. Organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA) and other professional bodies advocated for the standardization of mental health education and encouraged colleges to build mental health support systems. In the 1980s, the content of mental health education became more diverse. College students' psychological issues now included not only traditional mental illnesses but also stress management, emotional regulation, academic pressure, and career planning. Psychological counseling services increasingly addressed these issues and provided targeted support (Canady, 2015).

Entering the 21st century, mental health education began to make full use of technological means. The proliferation of the internet and mobile applications made mental health resources more widespread and accessible. Emerging technologies such as online counseling, mental health self-help tools, and virtual reality therapy were introduced into interventions for college students' mental health (Huang, 2019).

The mental health of college students is crucial to their growth and development, as they face multiple pressures and challenges related to academics, employment, and interpersonal relationships. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, proposed by psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943, is a theory based on the study of human motivation, aimed at explaining how people's behavior and needs influence personal development and self-actualization (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs divides human needs into five levels, forming a pyramid structure. These five levels, from

bottom to top, are: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a systematic framework for mental health education, helping educators understand the hierarchical nature of college students' mental health needs (Lucas, 2019). By clarifying the levels of physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs, the theory guides mental health education to start with basic needs and progressively address students' various needs. This approach effectively promotes their overall mental health and personal growth. The theory not only aids in developing personalized intervention measures but also enhances the comprehensiveness and preventative nature of mental health education, ensuring that students receive comprehensive support in psychological, emotional, and social aspects (Fishbein & Dariotis, 2019).

1.2 Questions of the Study

In today's society, the mental health issues of college students are increasingly attracting widespread attention. As a unique social group, college students face a variety of challenges, including academic pressure, life adaptation, and interpersonal relationships, which have a profound impact on their mental health. Mental health problems are common among college students, including anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts. These issues are often closely related to their academic pressures, independence in daily life, social adaptation, and financial conditions.

Firstly, college students frequently encounter significant academic pressure. This pressure stems from heavy course loads, intense academic competition, and anxiety about future employment. Such pressure not only leads to fluctuations in academic performance but can also trigger anxiety and depression. Studies show that approximately 20% to 30% of college students may experience severe anxiety or depression at some point (Blanco et al., 2021). High levels of academic pressure are significantly associated with mental health issues, with many students feeling helpless and frustrated when facing academic challenges.

Moreover, college students also face numerous challenges in life adaptation. The independence of college life requires many students to manage their own lives, including finances, time, and interpersonal relationships. This sudden independence can lead to adjustment difficulties, especially for those who lack sufficient support from their families. Financial pressure is also a significant factor, with some students feeling anxious due to the burden of tuition fees and living expenses, which exacerbates their mental health issues.

Lastly, interpersonal relationships and social adaptation are important factors affecting college students' mental health. Although college offers opportunities to make new friends and build social networks, adapting to a new social environment can be challenging for many freshmen and international students. Feelings of loneliness and social isolation are quite common among some college students, especially when they first enter college or are in a foreign country. This sense of isolation not only impacts their mental health but can also lead to long-term psychological problems. The research questions are as following:

1. What factors according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory influence the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College ?
2. What does Nanjing Commercial College need to do with the mental health education system ?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This research primarily explores the mental health of college students based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory.

By examining these crucial aspects, this study aims to analyze the specific effects of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory on the mental health status of students at Nanjing Business School. Through an in-depth analysis of college students' experiences and issues across different levels of needs, this study seeks to uncover how fulfilling these needs can improve the mental health conditions of students.

1. To investigate the factors influencing the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College utilizing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory as a conceptual framework.
2. To propose practical suggestions for optimizing the mental health education system at Nanjing Commercial College.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on a segment of students from the first to fifth grades at Nanjing Commercial College, employing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory as a framework to analyze their mental health needs and issues from five dimensions: physiological needs, safety needs, and belonging needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs. To gain a comprehensive understanding, the research delved into 30 books or academic journals on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and mental health among college students.

Ensuring the representativeness of the sample, 50 students were selected, covering various grades, academic disciplines, and genders. One-on-one interviews were

conducted with these participants, during which an open and neutral attitude was maintained to encourage them to freely express their perspectives and feelings.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Value

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a significant theory in the field of psychology, uncovering the hierarchical and progressive nature of human needs. This theory provides a framework for understanding human behavior and motivation, exerting a profound influence on various fields such as psychology, management, and marketing (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). Applying this theory to the mental health education system of Nanjing Commercial School not only helps deepen the understanding of mental health education but also offers theoretical insights and practical references for other colleges and universities.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

(1) Guiding Mental Health Education

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides scientific guidance for the mental health education at Nanjing Commercial College. By identifying the hierarchical needs of students, the school can more targetedly carry out mental health education activities to meet the diverse needs of students. For instance, for students whose physiological and safety needs are not met, the school can provide material and psychological support; for students with a strong need for belonging and love, the school can organize various social activities to help establish social connections; for students with higher needs for respect and self-actualization, the school can offer more opportunities for display and growth platforms.

(2) Enhancing Mental Health Levels

By applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Nanjing Commercial College can more effectively elevate students' mental health levels. The school can promptly identify and address students' psychological issues, preventing the occurrence of psychological disorders. Additionally, by fulfilling students' diverse needs, the school can bolster their self-confidence and sense of well-being, thereby improving their psychological resilience and coping abilities.

(3) Promoting Comprehensive Development

Mental health education is an integral part of higher education and holds great significance for students' comprehensive development. By applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Nanjing Commercial College can more effectively facilitate students' comprehensive development. The school can help students clarify their life

goals and value pursuits, cultivate their innovative thinking and practical abilities, and enhance their overall quality and competitiveness.

1.5.3 Social Impact

(1) Promoting Social Progress

As a well-known university, Nanjing Commercial College's refinement and optimization of its mental health education system will have a positive impact on society at large. By cultivating talents with healthy minds and good qualities, the school can contribute to the progress and development of society.

(2) Enhancing Public Awareness

The writing of this paper will elevate the awareness of Nanjing Commercial College's faculty and students regarding the importance of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and mental health education. This will help promote greater attention and support from all sectors of society towards mental health education, contributing to the construction of a harmonious society.

(3) Promoting Educational Reform

The research findings of this paper can provide valuable insights for the reform of higher education. By drawing on the practical experience of Nanjing Commercial College, other universities can further refine their own mental health education systems, enhancing educational quality and effectiveness.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory: Meeting physiological needs (such as adequate sleep and nutrition) lays the foundation for mental health; satisfying safety needs (such as economic stability and a secure environment) can reduce anxiety and unease. Furthermore, fulfilling love and belonging needs (such as establishing harmonious social relationships) is crucial for preventing feelings of loneliness and depression; meeting respect (such as gaining recognition and self-respect) helps enhance self-confidence and self-esteem. Ultimately, pursuing self-actualization needs (such as achieving personal goals and growth) promotes psychological satisfaction and happiness. By considering these levels of needs comprehensively, mental health professionals can develop more targeted interventions to help individuals achieve balance across all need levels, thereby enhancing overall mental health.

(1) Physiological needs : The physiological needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs refer to a series of fundamental conditions that humans must meet to sustain their life activities and ensure the continuation of the species. These needs collectively constitute the basis for human survival. These physiological needs include, but are not limited to, breathing, water, food, sleep, sexual needs, a suitable living environment, and appropriate clothing. The satisfaction of these needs is a prerequisite for human survival

and engagement in other activities. Only when these basic physiological needs are adequately met can individuals aspire to pursue higher-level needs such as safety, social belonging, respect, and self-actualization. Therefore, physiological needs occupy a crucial position in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

(2) Safety needs: The safety needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs refer to the psychological state of stability, security, protection, orderliness, and freedom from fear and anxiety that an individual pursues after their physiological needs are met. This type of need involves concerns about personal physical safety, property security, health assurance, stability of the living environment, and freedom from threats and harm. When safety needs are fulfilled, individuals feel at ease and can focus on pursuing higher-level needs. Therefore, safety needs occupy an important position in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, serving as a vital bridge connecting physiological needs and higher-level needs.

(3) Belonging and love needs: The need for belonging and love in Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a desire for individuals to establish interpersonal relationships and obtain a sense of love and belonging after their physiological and safety needs are met. This need reflects the essential nature of humans as social beings, where people long to forge deep emotional connections with others, integrate into a group or community, and find their place within it. The need for belonging and love encompasses not only the pursuit of family, friendship, and romantic love but also the aspiration for social belonging and a sense of identity. When these needs are fulfilled, individuals feel accepted and understood, thereby gaining emotional satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, the need for belonging and love occupies an important position in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, serving as a significant driving force for individual growth and development.

(4) Respect needs: The need for respect in Maslow's hierarchy of needs refers to an individual's profound desire for self-worth and recognition from others after their physiological, safety, belonging and love needs are met. This need embodies humans' pursuit of self-dignity, status, achievement, and social identity. The need for respect encompasses not only an individual's recognition and confidence in their own value but also respect, praise, and acknowledgment from others. When these needs are fulfilled, individuals experience a strong sense of achievement and inner satisfaction, thereby enhancing their self-respect and self-efficacy. Therefore, the need for respect occupies

a pivotal position in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, serving as an important driving force for individuals to continuously strive for excellence and realize their self-worth.

(5) Self-actualization: The need for self-actualization in Maslow's hierarchy of needs refers to an individual's psychological need to pursue self-fulfillment, realize their potential, and attain an ideal state of being after their physiological, safety, belonging and love, and esteem needs are met. It is the highest level of need in Maslow's hierarchy and reflects humans' pursuit of self-improvement and comprehensive development. The need for self-actualization motivates individuals to uncover their own potential, achieve personal values and goals, and experience a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment in the process. This need serves as a significant driving force for individuals to continually strive for progress, transcend themselves, and is also an important source of human pursuit of happiness and fulfillment.

College students: College students refer to a group of individuals who are currently receiving basic and professional higher education and have not yet graduated, or those who have completed their higher education and have entered society. They typically fall within the age range of 18 to 25, representing the forefront of new technologies and ideas in society. They are also a crucial source of highly skilled professionals cultivated by the country. College students embody the young and vigorous generation, serving as the pillars of societal progress. Within the campus setting, college students not only acquire knowledge but also cultivate their interests, social skills, and independent thinking abilities, laying a solid foundation for their future careers and social lives.

Mental health: Individuals with mental health can effectively manage their emotions, such as joy, sadness, and anxiety, and appropriately cope with stress and setbacks. They are capable of logical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making, while possessing good self-observation and reflection abilities. They demonstrate strong adaptability to changes and difficulties in life, being able to quickly adjust their behaviors and ways of thinking, and take proactive actions. They maintain good interpersonal relationships, possess the ability to love and be loved. Additionally, they can function normally in life, study, and work without corresponding obstacles.

Nanjing Commercial College: Nanjing Commercial College, with its goal of "Capable of Succeeding Anywhere," focuses on practical teaching and vocational skills training. The College aims to cultivate application-oriented talents with professional abilities and comprehensive qualities, with notable strengths in business, management, and finance. College students are in a crucial transitional period, facing challenges such as academic pressure, career planning, and social adaptation. These challenges can lead to psychological stress, anxiety, and depression. Therefore, the implementation of mental health education at Nanjing Commercial College is particularly important to

help students cope with these issues, maintain a good psychological state, and promote their physical and mental health.



Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research objectives, conceptual definitions, theoretical foundation, and literature review. The primary focus is on exploring the physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs within Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Finally, the chapter offers a literature review that identifies theoretical gaps based on previous research findings and clarifies the theoretical contributions and research goals of this study.

2.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, proposed by psychologist Abraham Maslow in the 1940s, aims to explain the hierarchical structure of human motivation and needs. The application of Maslow's theory in the field of mental health provides an important perspective for understanding and enhancing individual psychological well-being. According to the theory, human needs are hierarchical, progressing from basic physiological needs to the highest level of self-actualization needs. In mental health interventions, understanding this hierarchy helps identify and address individual psychological issues (Holyoake, 2013).

2.2.1 Physiological Needs

Physiological needs represent the most basic level in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, forming the first level of human needs. These needs are fundamental for human survival and physical health and involve maintaining life and the normal functioning of the body (Corning, 2000). Physiological needs refer to the essential conditions required for the survival of a living organism, including nutrition, sleep, hydration, and air. These needs are the most fundamental, and only when they are met can individuals focus on higher-level needs such as safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Pinchuk & Serebriakova, 2023).

The satisfaction of physiological needs serves as the foundation for maintaining physical health, which is inseparable from mental health. When university students' basic physiological needs are met, they enjoy good physical condition and are better equipped to handle the pressures of study and life, thereby preserving their mental health. Physiological discomforts such as hunger and fatigue can directly lead to the emergence of negative emotions like anxiety and depression. When university students are able to ensure that their basic needs, including food and sleep, are met, they are

more likely to maintain emotional stability and reduce psychological problems stemming from physiological discomfort. Meeting these fundamental needs not only supports physical well-being but also mitigates negative emotions, enhances learning efficiency, strengthens self-awareness and self-worth, fosters social interactions and relationships, and ultimately elevates overall mental health.

The importance of physiological needs is manifested in the following aspects: The satisfaction of physiological needs is the foundation of human survival. Only when these basic needs are met can individuals have the capacity to pursue higher-level needs, such as security, social relationships, and so on; the long-term satisfaction of physiological needs contributes to maintaining physical health, preventing diseases, and enhancing the quality of life; the satisfaction of physiological needs is closely related to mental health. For example, malnutrition and sleep deprivation can lead to mood swings and declines in cognitive function.

Physiological needs serve as the cornerstone of all levels of needs. According to Maslow, only when physiological needs are met can individuals turn their attention to higher-level needs such as safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. The fulfillment of physiological needs provides individuals with the necessary physiological foundation and energy support to pursue these higher-level aspirations (Tripathi, 2018).

2.2.2 Safety Needs

Safety needs represent the second level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, coming right after physiological needs. These needs involve the individual's desire for stability, protection, and security, becoming particularly significant once basic physiological needs are met. The fulfillment of safety needs profoundly impacts psychological health and overall well-being, as it provides stability and predictability in life, allowing individuals to pursue higher-level needs such as belonging, respect, and self-actualization in a relatively secure environment. Safety needs can be divided into several key areas, including physical safety, economic security, health protection, and social order. Each of these aspects plays a crucial role in an individual's overall well-being (World Health Organization, 2003).

Firstly, physical safety is a primary component of safety needs, involving the desire to be protected from physical harm, violence, and danger. To fulfill this need, individuals require a relatively safe environment, which includes having secure housing, protection from crime through effective law enforcement, and measures to reduce the risks of natural disasters or accidents (Nhlapo, 2006). Ensuring physical safety allows individuals to engage in daily activities without fearing harm from external threats. For

example, living in a low-crime community with sturdy housing can significantly enhance an individual's sense of security, thereby reducing anxiety related to safety concerns.

Secondly, economic security is a crucial aspect of safety needs. Economic security means having a stable source of income and financial stability to meet daily needs and cope with unexpected financial pressures (Houben et al., 2004). This sense of security encompasses stable employment, adequate income, and sound financial management skills. The lack of economic security can lead to financial difficulties, unemployment, or poverty, which in turn can trigger anxiety and insecurity. Stable economic conditions enable individuals to plan for the future, make long-term decisions, and maintain a sense of stability in their lives (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2012).

Thirdly, health protection is another key area of safety needs. It involves the expectation of access to and quality of healthcare services. Health protection includes timely and effective medical services to prevent and treat illnesses and maintain overall health. Good health protection can significantly reduce individuals' concerns about health issues and enhance their quality of life. Insufficient health protection may increase health risks and add to financial burdens, thus negatively impacting mental health.

Lastly, the stability of social order is also a vital aspect of safety needs. Social order refers to the stability and fairness of laws, institutions, and social norms (Phillips, 2014). Individuals expect to live in a well-regulated and just social environment, which helps to minimize social unrest and uncertainty. A stable social order allows people to trust their environment and pursue personal goals with confidence (Ayim-Aboagye, 2018). Disruption or injustice in social order can lead to social unrest and erosion of trust, affecting individuals' sense of security and overall well-being.

Overall, fulfilling safety needs is crucial for psychological health. When physical safety, economic security, health protection, and social order are adequately met, individuals can focus more on pursuing higher-level needs such as belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Conversely, if these safety needs are not met, individuals may experience persistent anxiety, insecurity, and stress, which can not only affect their mental health but also diminish their overall quality of life. Therefore, providing a stable living environment, reliable economic support, quality health services, and a stable social order is essential for supporting individual psychological health and well-being.

2.2.3 Belonging and Love Needs

Belonging and love needs constitute the third level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, following safety needs. These needs involve the desire for social relationships, including forming deep emotional connections with others, experiencing love and being loved, and gaining a sense of belonging and social recognition (Baumeister & Leary, 2017). These needs reflect the fundamental human yearning to establish and maintain positive social relationships.

Belongingness refers to the desire to feel part of a group or community and to receive acceptance and recognition from others (Canlas & Williams, 2022). This sense of belonging can be achieved through establishing stable and supportive relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and community members. Individuals seek emotional support and recognition in social interactions, feeling their place within the social fabric. A lack of belonging can lead to loneliness, feelings of isolation, and insecurity in social interactions, which can negatively impact mental health.

Love needs include the desire for deep emotional connections and affection. This need is reflected in the wish to form and maintain close relationships with intimate partners, family, and friends. Individuals want to experience genuine care, understanding, and support in these relationships. Love needs encompass both receiving love from others and giving love to others. In intimate relationships, individuals experience the satisfaction of being loved and loving, which is crucial for mental health and well-being.

The fulfillment of belonging and love needs significantly impacts overall happiness. Meeting these needs can enhance self-esteem, confidence, and well-being, allowing individuals to feel warmth and support in social interactions. Positive social relationships and deep emotional connections provide psychological security and help individuals cope with life's challenges and stressors.

When belonging and love needs are not met, individuals may experience loneliness, isolation, and emotional frustration. These negative feelings can damage mental health, leading to low mood, depression, and other issues. Therefore, addressing and fulfilling individuals' belonging and love needs is crucial for promoting mental health, improving quality of life, and achieving self-fulfillment.

In summary, belonging and love needs occupy a significant place in Maslow's hierarchy, emerging as individuals start to focus on these needs after satisfying physiological and safety needs. By establishing and maintaining positive social relationships and experiencing love and affection, individuals can achieve emotional fulfillment and enhance overall well-being.

2.2.4 Respect Needs

Respect needs, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, constitute the fourth level, positioned above the need for belonging and love. This level focuses on an individual's desire for self-respect and respect from others and is a crucial component of psychological needs. The fulfillment of respect needs not only concerns personal self-esteem and confidence but also impacts an individual's social status and social recognition.

Self-esteem is at the core of respect needs, encompassing an individual's recognition and evaluation of their own abilities and worth (Isserow, 2023). Self-esteem is reflected in personal confidence, a sense of self-worth, and recognition of one's capabilities. When individuals feel that their value is acknowledged and respected by others, their self-esteem is reinforced. For instance, completing an important task, receiving a promotion, or achieving success in a particular field can enhance an individual's sense of self-esteem. The fulfillment of self-respect enables people to experience personal achievements and capabilities, thereby boosting their confidence and positive self-image.

Respect from others is also a significant aspect of respect needs, involving an individual's desire for respect and recognition from others. This respect includes acknowledgment, praise, and esteem in social and professional environments. Individuals seek to be respected and valued in their work, social interactions, and family life. Experiencing this kind of respect can enhance an individual's social status and sense of self-worth (Rothers & Cohrs, 2023). For example, receiving recognition and respect from colleagues, supervisors, or friends and family can boost an individual's confidence and increase their satisfaction with social and professional life.

The fulfillment of respect needs is crucial for an individual's psychological health and well-being. When respect needs are met, individuals can experience acknowledgment of their self-worth, leading to a positive self-image and increased confidence. This sense of fulfillment enables people to better cope with challenges and stress, thereby improving their quality of life.

Conversely, when respect needs are not met, individuals may experience self-doubt, low self-esteem, and emotional frustration. A lack of respect and recognition from others can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and social isolation, affecting personal mental health. Therefore, providing positive feedback, acknowledgment, and respect in family, work, and social settings is an important measure to support individual psychological well-being.

In summary, respect needs hold a key position in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, coming into focus after physiological, safety, and belonging needs are addressed. Through self-respect and receiving respect from others, individuals can achieve a sense of self-worth and social recognition, thereby enhancing overall happiness and life satisfaction.

2.2.5 Self-actualization Needs

Self-actualization needs represent the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, positioned above esteem needs. They focus on an individual's aspirations to fulfill their ideals and goals. This need encompasses the pursuit of creativity, growth, achievement, and meaning in one's life (Moran, 2020). It embodies the effort that an individual exerts to seek a sense of fulfillment and purpose in life. Satisfying self-actualization needs signifies that an individual is able to genuinely accomplish what they aspire to, fully utilizing their talents and potential.

Self-actualization needs are characterized by the following features:

1. **Personal Growth:** Individuals continuously strive to improve themselves by learning, developing new skills, and acquiring knowledge. This involves pursuing advanced degrees, enhancing professional skills, or engaging in personal hobbies and interests.
2. **Goal Achievement:** Self-actualization involves setting and achieving personal goals that are often aligned with one's core values and inner passions. Examples include completing a novel, building a successful career, or making a significant social impact.
3. **Meaning and Purpose:** This need includes seeking meaning and purpose in life. Individuals desire that their actions and efforts contribute positively to society or fulfill their ideals about life. This might involve engaging in philanthropic work, advocating for social reform, or creating influential artistic works.
4. **Creativity and Innovation:** Self-actualization also encompasses the pursuit of creativity and innovation. Individuals aim to showcase their unique talents through original ideas and solutions. For instance, artists may create new art styles, and scientists may conduct groundbreaking research.

Self-actualization manifests differently for each person but generally includes the following aspects:

1. **Pursuit of Excellence:** Individuals strive for excellence in their areas of expertise, aiming to reach the highest levels in their work, art, academics, or other fields.
2. **Intrinsic Satisfaction:** During the process of achieving their goals, individuals experience a deep sense of intrinsic satisfaction and accomplishment, beyond just external recognition or rewards.

3. Self-Expression: Individuals express their thoughts, emotions, and values freely through various means such as art, writing, or speaking.
4. Continuous Growth: The fulfillment of self-actualization needs is an ongoing process. Individuals maintain an open attitude towards personal growth and challenges, continuously exploring new possibilities.

Meeting self-actualization needs has a profound impact on an individual's overall well-being:

1. Increased Life Satisfaction: The sense of achievement and fulfillment that comes from self-actualization can significantly enhance an individual's life satisfaction, making them feel that life has meaning.
2. Enhanced Confidence and Motivation: Realizing one's potential and goals can boost an individual's confidence and inner motivation, driving them to pursue even higher aspirations.
3. Improved Mental Health: Success and accomplishment in the process of self-actualization can have a positive effect on mental health, alleviating anxiety and stress, and increasing overall happiness.

Despite the many positive effects of fulfilling self-actualization needs, the process may face challenges:

1. Personal Barriers: Individuals may encounter limitations related to their own abilities, resources, or environment, which can hinder the progress of self-actualization.
2. External Obstacles: Social, economic, or cultural factors may impose constraints on an individual's efforts to achieve self-actualization, affecting their opportunities to reach personal goals.
3. Inner Conflicts: In the pursuit of self-actualization, individuals might face internal conflicts or contradictions, such as struggles between personal ideals and practical limitations.

In summary, self-actualization needs represent an individual's desire to pursue their highest potential and ideal state after fulfilling physiological, safety, belonging, and respect needs. By striving for excellence, achieving personal goals, and expressing oneself, individuals can gain deep, intrinsic satisfaction and happiness. The process of achieving self-actualization is one of continuous growth and exploration, significantly enhancing overall well-being and life quality.

2.3 College Students

College students, as a specific social group, possess distinct characteristics and play significant roles. They generally refer to individuals who are currently enrolled in institutions of higher education (including universities, specialized colleges, vocational

and technical colleges, and colleges of higher professional education) and have not yet graduated, as well as young individuals who have graduated but have not yet entered the workforce and have received higher education (Siegel & Daumiller, 2021).

In terms of age composition, college students typically fall within the vibrant and creative period of life from 18 to 25 years old. They have gained the opportunity to receive higher education through college entrance examinations or other selective tests, entering the university campus to systematically learn professional knowledge and cultivate their overall qualities and abilities. During this stage, college students not only study textbook knowledge but also exercise their practical abilities, innovative abilities, and team collaboration skills through practical activities, internships, club activities, and other avenues (Mezzanotte, 2022).

In terms of knowledge structure and professional competence, college students have acquired high levels of cultural literacy and professional knowledge through systematic study and training. They not only grasp solid professional foundation knowledge but also broaden their knowledge horizons and enhance their professional competence by taking elective courses, participating in academic lectures, and engaging in research projects (LaBelle, 2023). This enables college students to competently handle various professional positions after graduation and contribute to the country's economic and social development.

Beyond professional knowledge and skills, college students also bear important social responsibilities and missions. They are the future and hope of the country and an important force driving social progress. College students should actively participate in social practice and volunteer service activities, understand society, pay attention to people's livelihood, and serve the people. Through participating in social practice activities, college students can deeply understand national and social conditions, strengthen their sense of social responsibility and civic awareness. At the same time, they can apply their learned knowledge to practical work, solve real problems, and contribute to society.

In terms of cultivation and development, ordinary institutions of higher education provide college students with abundant learning resources and growth opportunities through classroom teaching, practical teaching, scientific research training, and other methods. College students should fully utilize these resources to diligently study professional knowledge and enhance their self-qualities. Simultaneously, they should focus on cultivating their innovative spirit and practical abilities, daring to try new things and challenge traditional concepts. Through continuous efforts and practice, college students can gradually grow into high-quality talents with innovative spirit and practical abilities.

In summary, college students are a group full of vitality, potential, and a sense of mission. They are currently receiving or have received higher education and possess high levels of cultural literacy and professional knowledge. At the same time, they also bear important missions such as promoting social progress, disseminating advanced

culture, and fostering technological innovation. In future development, college students should continue to strive to improve their overall qualities and ability levels to make greater contributions to the country's modernization and social development.

2.4 Mental Health

Mental health refers to an individual's well-being or normal state in psychological, emotional, and behavioral aspects, characterized by normal intelligence, positive emotions, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and good social adaptability (Gao et al., 2022).

(1) Normal Intelligence

Normal intelligence is a fundamental psychological condition for individuals to live, study, and work normally (Zeidner et al., 2012). It generally revolves around thinking and encompasses various cognitive abilities such as observation, attention, memory, and imagination. A mentally healthy individual maintains curiosity and a thirst for knowledge in their work, fully utilizing their intelligence to acquire knowledge, master skills, and solve problems, thereby achieving success.

(2) Positive Emotions

Stable and positive emotions are important criteria for mental health. Mentally healthy individuals always maintain a happy, optimistic, and cheerful mindset, filled with hope for life and the future (Patnaik, 2021). Although they may also experience negative emotions such as sadness, worry, melancholy, and anger, these emotions generally do not persist for long. Additionally, they can appropriately express and control their emotions, neither being arrogant nor overly depressed, respecting themselves and others, and neither overestimating nor underestimating themselves in social interactions.

(3) Harmonious Interpersonal Relationships

Mentally healthy individuals enjoy interacting with others and maintain an independent yet complete personality in these interactions. They possess self-awareness, objectively evaluate others, take advantage of others' strengths to complement their own weaknesses, are forgiving and helpful towards others. In their interactions with others, they can maintain deep friendships with close friends while not excessively relying on or attempting to control others. When conflicts arise, they objectively analyze the problem and take the initiative to resolve it by taking responsibility, rather than shifting blame or complaining (Giolito, 2015).

(4) Good Social Adaptability

Mentally healthy individuals can face reality and adjust their expectations and cognitive styles according to the situation to adapt to complex and ever-changing environments (Barrett, 2014). They strive for progress in favorable environments and persevere in adversity. When faced with changes in the environment, they can promptly adjust their mindset and behavior to meet new demands.

(5) Integrity of Personality

Personality includes psychological elements such as character, temperament, and abilities. Mentally healthy individuals do not have obvious defects or deviations in these aspects. They have a proactive outlook on life as the core of their personality, maintain emotional stability, and maintain a good fit with their environment (Bakker et al., 2012).

In summary, mental health is a comprehensive and coordinated psychological state that enables individuals to actively cope with various challenges and pressures in life, achieving a harmonious unity of self-worth and social value. To maintain mental health, individuals can actively seek social support, establish harmonious interpersonal relationships, participate in beneficial activities, and seek professional psychological counseling.

2.5 Nanjing Commercial College

Nanjing Commercial College is a state-run public vocational school with a long history and solid strength, enjoying a high reputation in the field of vocational education (Zhou et al., 2018). Nanjing Commercial College fully recognizes the importance of mental health education for students' growth and success. With the rapid development of society and the increasingly fierce competition, college students are facing more and more psychological pressures and challenges. Therefore, strengthening mental health education, helping students establish correct mental health concepts, and mastering effective psychological adjustment methods are of great significance for promoting students' comprehensive development (Hess, 2020).

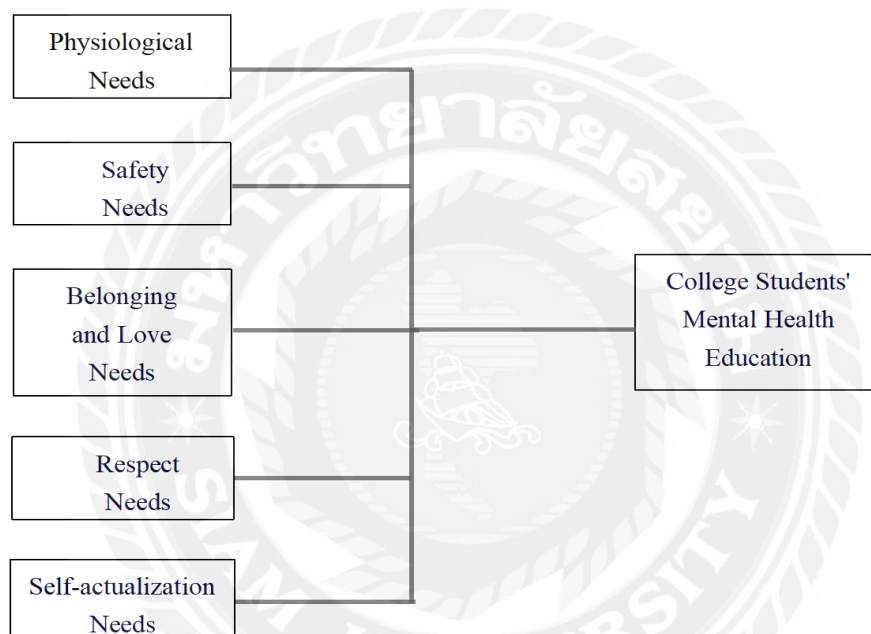
In addition to organizing a diverse array of mental health education activities, Nanjing Commercial College has also achieved notable success in establishing its mental health education system. The Mental Health Education Center at Nanjing Commercial College provides individual psychological counseling services to both teachers and students. It adopts a combined approach of teacher on-duty scheduling and student appointments, utilizing mental health counseling appointment cards and offering dual channels for WeChat appointments and appointments made by psychological committee representatives. Fixed counseling sessions are arranged every day after lunch and school dismissal, totaling 10 hours per week. Counseling teachers arrive punctually, strictly adhere to counseling principles, treat each visitor with care, and keep detailed records of the counseling process.

Furthermore, the school regularly conducts comprehensive mental health screenings and assessments for all students, conducting one-on-one interviews and providing long-term support to students who require special attention. Through these screenings and counseling efforts, the school promptly identifies and addresses students' psychological issues, effectively preventing the occurrence of psychological crises. The school has also refined its psychological committee system, selecting capable members to participate in the daily management and service work of the Mental Health Education Center. These committee members are responsible for submitting

class psychological "weather reports" to the center, participating in training sessions and group counseling activities to enhance their own psychological well-being and service capabilities (Higgen & Mösko, 2020).

Through the implementation of these diverse mental health education activities and the establishment of a comprehensive service system, Nanjing Commercial College has effectively elevated students' mental health levels and fostered a positive atmosphere for mental health education on campus. Looking ahead, the school will continue to strengthen its mental health education efforts, continuously innovate teaching methods, and provide a more solid foundation for students' comprehensive development and healthy growth.

2.6 Conceptual Framework



Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing keywords including "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," "college students," and "mental health" to conduct a comprehensive literature review, aiming to gain a thorough understanding of the current research landscape and relevant theories. Ultimately, a total of 25 questions were devised, encompassing five crucial dimensions, and interviews were conducted with 50 students.

3.2 Research Design

Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, an interview outline was crafted for this study. By examining the theoretical foundation of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and aligning with the research objectives of this study, five key dimensions were identified: Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Belongingness and Love Needs, Respect Needs, and Self-Actualization Needs. Consequently, the design of the 25 interview questions in this study revolves around these five crucial dimensions. The following interview questions were formulated:

Factors	Interview Questions
Physiological Needs	1.Can you ensure enough sleep and proper diet every day to maintain a good physical condition?
	2.Do you often feel hungry or fatigued, and what impact does this have on your study and life?
	3.Have you ever experienced economic difficulties that prevented you from meeting basic living needs, and what impact did this have on your mental state?
	4.How significant do you think the fulfillment of physiological needs is to your mental health?
	5.Do you find that when your physical condition is not good, your mood is prone to be low or anxious?
Safety Needs	1.Do you feel sufficiently safe at school or in your dormitory?
	2.Have you ever worried about the security of your property or personal safety? How has this affected your daily life?
	3.Have you ever experienced any events that made you feel unsafe, and what impact did this have on your psychology?

	4.How significant do you think a sense of security is to your study and life?
	5.When you feel unsafe, what measures will you take to protect yourself?
Belongingness and Love Needs	1.Do you feel that you have established good interpersonal relationships in university?
	2.Do you often participate in social activities, and what impact does this have on your mental health?
	3.Have you ever felt lonely or lost due to interpersonal relationship issues? What impact did this have on your study and life?
	4.How significant do you think the need for social interaction is to your mental health?
	5.When you feel lonely, what measures will you take to alleviate the feeling of loneliness?
Respect Needs	1.Do you feel that you have received sufficient respect in university?
	2.Have you ever received respect or praise from others for your performance or abilities? What impact did this have on your self-confidence?
	3.Have you ever felt inferior or depressed due to being belittled or criticized by others? What impact did this have on your psychology?
	4.How significant do you think the need for respect is to your mental health?
	5.When you feel respected, how do you feel emotionally?
Self-Actualization Needs	1.Do you have clear plans and goals for your future?
	2.Do you feel that your abilities and potential have been fully developed or utilized? What impact does this have on your self-confidence and sense of satisfaction?
	3.Have you ever encountered difficulties and setbacks while pursuing your goals and ideals? What psychological impact did this have on you?
	4.How do you think the need for self-actualization affects your mental health?
	5.In your pursuit of self-actualization, what challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

3.3 Population and Sampling

This study conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with 50 randomly selected students from diverse majors across grades 1 to 5 at Nanjing Commercial College. Building on the comprehensive collection and organization of interview data, the study delved into five dimensions influencing university students' mental health, utilizing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a conceptual framework. Through this semi-structured interview approach, the researcher gained a holistic understanding of respondents' satisfaction levels across various tiers of Maslow's hierarchy and their impacts on mental health. Furthermore, it enabled insights into the challenges students encounter in their pursuit of self-actualization, their coping strategies, and changes in their mental health status. This information serves as a valuable reference for devising effective mental health education strategies.

3.4 Data Collection

This study employed the interview method. To ensure the comprehensiveness and diversity of the interview results, 50 students from different majors and grades at Nanjing Commercial School were randomly selected for offline exchanges. A total of 25 questions were designed for this interview, and after fully collecting and organizing the interview data, the interview results from all 50 students were valid analyzed.

3.5 Data Analysis

Through interviews, a comprehensive understanding was gained of the various challenges faced by students at Nanjing Commercial College, including academic pressure, life adaptation, and interpersonal relationships, which have significantly impacted their mental health. The factors of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory on the mental health of college students were analyzed, and several suggestions and measures were proposed to improve the mental health status of students at Nanjing Commercial College.

In this research endeavor, the interview process involved obtaining the consent of participants to record their responses, which were then meticulously analyzed sentence by sentence. Effective excerpts were identified and annotated to facilitate subsequent analysis. Following the interviews, the collection of interview materials followed a coherent and meticulous workflow.

Firstly, all audio recordings and handwritten notes were ensured to be comprehensively gathered and securely stored in a safe location. Subsequently,

utilizing professional transcription tools or human services, the audio files were converted into textual format with utmost accuracy, particularly focusing on details that held significant implications for the research conclusions. Simultaneously, handwritten notes underwent digitization processes such as scanning or photographing for ease of subsequent data manipulation and analysis.

Upon obtaining the transcribed texts and digitized notes, content integration and organization commenced. This involved arranging the responses from different interviewees in a logical sequence, highlighting key information, viewpoints, and challenges. Furthermore, categorization and coding based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs were applied to gain insights into participants' satisfaction levels, feelings, challenges, and coping strategies across various need levels, thereby enriching the material for subsequent analysis.

To ensure data accuracy and consistency, a rigorous review and validation process was undertaken. During this stage, any errors or omissions identified were promptly corrected and supplemented to maintain data integrity and reliability.

Finally, the consolidated interview materials were archived in electronic format and regularly backed up to prevent data loss or corruption. Additionally, considering the option of printing crucial data and storing it on physical media enhanced data security. Throughout the entire process of collecting interview materials, maintaining data sensitivity and respecting participants' privacy remained paramount.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter conducts a detailed analysis of the interview data, reaching the conclusion about the impact of the five dimensions of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory on college students' mental health .

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Physiological Needs

Through interviews, it was found that fulfilling basic physiological needs (such as food, sleep, and shelter) has a significant impact on mental health. Students whose physiological needs are unmet often exhibit higher levels of stress and anxiety. Many emphasized that mental health education could potentially be more effective if it also addressed some practical issues, such as economic support and access to basic facilities.

At the level of physiological needs, the university campus, as the second home for students, its infrastructure and service quality directly correlate with students' quality of life and mental health. While most students can enjoy basic living guarantees, the specific needs of economically disadvantaged students cannot be overlooked. Universities can further optimize systems like scholarships, grants, and work-study programs to ensure that every student can pursue academic and personal development without worries. Additionally, in response to occasional health issues, universities should strengthen cooperation with medical institutions, providing convenient access to medical services and offering certain medical subsidies to alleviate students' financial burdens, thereby reducing mental health risks stemming from economic pressures.

4.2.2 Safety Needs

Students emphasize that a sense of security and safeguard are crucial to their mental health. Those who feel safe in both academic environments and personal lives report better mental health conditions and more positive attitudes towards mental health education. In contrast, students facing housing insecurity or campus safety issues report more anxiety and difficulties in concentrating.

In terms of safety needs, campus security serves as a vital safeguard for maintaining students' mental health. Apart from strengthening security measures and emergency response mechanisms within the College, universities should also actively carry out safety education to enhance students' awareness of security precautions and self-protection abilities. In response to emerging risks such as off-campus safety and cybersecurity, Colleges can offer relevant courses or lectures to help students identify potential threats and grasp coping strategies. Additionally, a comprehensive mental health early warning system should be established to promptly detect and intervene in psychological issues stemming from a lack of security, ensuring that students' mental health is protected in all aspects.

4.2.3 Belonging and Love Needs

Participants frequently mentioned the significance of social connections and a sense of belonging in their mental health. Many expressed that strong relationships with peers, family, and teachers contributed significantly to their mental wellbeing. Mental health education that fosters community and peer support networks was highly regarded. Students who felt isolated or encountered difficulties in establishing social connections often experienced heightened stress and loneliness, impacting their overall mental health.

The need for belonging and love lies at the heart of college students' emotional world. Strong interpersonal relationships and intimate emotional connections not only provide students with emotional support but also facilitate their social adaptation and the formation of self-identity. Universities should encourage students to participate in diverse social activities, such as clubs, volunteer services, sports and cultural competitions, creating platforms for them to showcase themselves and make friends. Simultaneously, efforts should be made to strengthen dormitory and class cultures, fostering a warm and harmonious living and learning atmosphere that enables students to feel a sense of belonging and love within the collective. For students who feel lonely or excluded, the College should provide personalized psychological support and intervention, helping them establish positive interpersonal relationships and emerge from the shadows of loneliness and negative emotions.

4.2.4 Respect Needs

Self-Respect: The interviews revealed a close correlation between students' levels of self-esteem and self-confidence with their mental health. Programs that enable students to recognize and celebrate their personal achievements while providing positive feedback are deemed beneficial. Students facing issues with self-esteem often report feelings of inadequacy and frustration, negatively impacting their mental health.

Respect from Others: Students also emphasized the need for recognition and respect from peers and mentors. Those who feel appreciated and respected are more likely to hold a positive attitude towards mental health education and exhibit better mental health. In contrast, students who feel underestimated or ignored often experience decreased motivation and increased stress.

The need for respect is a crucial manifestation of self-cognition and value identification among college students. Recognition and respect in academic, social, and professional realms significantly boost students' self-esteem and confidence. Universities should establish fair and impartial evaluation systems that encourage students to develop their strengths and showcase their talents, ensuring that everyone's efforts are rewarded accordingly. Meanwhile, teachers should pay attention to students' individual differences and unique values, offering them ample attention and support to help them establish a positive self-perception. Additionally, Colleges can organize various recognition ceremonies, experience-sharing sessions, and other activities to

make students feel seen and valued for their achievements, thereby stimulating their learning motivation and creativity.

4.2.5 Self-actualization Needs

Students who perceive mental health education as supportive of their personal growth and self-actualization report higher levels of satisfaction and happiness. Opportunities for self-exploration, creativity, and goal-setting are particularly valued. Those who feel that mental health programs contribute to their personal development report a stronger sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Self-actualization represents the highest level of mental health development among college students. Those pursuing self-actualization possess clear goals and aspirations, bravely challenging themselves and exploring unknown territories. Universities should provide students with diverse learning resources and practical opportunities, supporting them in exploring and developing according to their interests and strengths. At the same time, students should be encouraged to participate in research projects, innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives, and other activities that foster creative thinking and practical skills. In the process of pursuing self-actualization, students not only gain knowledge and skill enhancements but also experience a transformation in self-worth, which strengthens their psychological resilience and prepares them better for the complexities of the ever-changing social environment. Ultimately, the journey of self-actualization brings students lasting happiness and a sense of accomplishment, marking significant milestones in their life paths.

In conclusion, the various levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs exert profound and intricate influences on the mental health of college students. In mental health education for college students, we must comprehensively attend to and strive to meet their multilevel needs, promoting holistic mental health development. This necessitates not only ensuring adequate material support and resources but also attending to students' emotional needs, self-cognition, and value identification at the spiritual level. By constructing a comprehensive, multi-tiered mental health education system, we can help students establish positive and healthy mindsets and lifestyles, laying a solid foundation for their growth and development.

4.3 Discussion

The findings of this research underscore the significance of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory in shaping mental health education for college students. According to this theory, satisfying students' basic needs and creating a supportive and safe environment serve as the foundation for promoting mental health. Through this study, we discovered that mental health education programs that effectively address these basic needs, foster social connections, enhance self-esteem, and support personal growth are more likely to achieve success.

Specifically, meeting physiological needs (such as providing financial assistance and improving living conditions) and safety needs (like ensuring campus security) are crucial for students' mental health. Furthermore, emphasizing a sense of belonging and social connections, enhancing self-esteem, and supporting self-actualization are key factors in enhancing students' overall well-being. Mental health education programs that comprehensively consider these hierarchical needs can provide more comprehensive and effective support for students.

Incorporating elements of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory into mental health education programs can elevate students' overall well-being by satisfying their needs at multiple levels. For example, mental health education programs that integrate practical support (e.g., financial aid, housing resources) with opportunities for social engagement and personal development can create a more holistic approach to education. This methodology not only attends to students' physiological and safety needs but also values their social connections, self-esteem, and personal growth.

This research highlights the profound impact of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory on mental health education for college students. By deeply understanding and fulfilling students' needs across different levels of the hierarchy, educators and policymakers can devise more effective strategies to support students' mental health and well-being. Future research can further explore specific interventions aligned with Maslow's theory and assess their practical effects in diverse university settings. This will contribute to providing more precise and targeted mental health education support for students from diverse backgrounds and with varying needs.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study analyzes the factors influencing the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College from five aspects: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs. The conclusion of this study is that physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, and self-actualization needs have a significant impact on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College. By comprehensively addressing students' needs, stimulating learning motivation, cultivating self-actualization abilities, and strengthening mental health education, the mental health status of students at Nanjing Commercial College can be improved.

5.1.1 The impact of physiological needs on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College

As evident from the interviews, physiological needs have a profound influence on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College. When these basic needs, such as adequate nutrition, appropriate rest, and good health, are met, students tend to experience higher levels of happiness and are better equipped to cope with academic and personal challenges. Conversely, if physiological needs are not satisfied, it may lead students to feel stressed, anxious, or even depressed, thereby affecting their overall mental health and academic performance.

5.1.2 The impact of safety needs on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College

As revealed through interviews, safety needs play a crucial role in the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College. When students feel secure both physically and emotionally, they are more likely to experience feelings of calmness and stability, which in turn contribute to better mental health. Conversely, a lack of safety can trigger feelings of unease and fear, potentially leading to anxiety, stress, and adverse effects on their overall mental well-being.

5.1.3 The impact of the belonging and love needs on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College

As evident from the interviews, the need for belonging and love has a significant impact on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College. When students feel accepted, valued, and loved within their school community, they tend to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem and emotional resilience. This positive emotional support fosters a sense of belonging and connection, which is crucial for their mental well-being.

Conversely, a lack of belonging and love can lead students to feel isolated, lonely, and inferior, potentially exacerbating mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

5.1.4 The impact of respect needs on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College

Through interviews, it can be understood that respect needs have a significant impact on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College. When students feel respected by teachers, classmates, and the surrounding environment on campus, their self-respect and self-confidence are greatly enhanced. This respect is not only reflected in polite and friendly language but also in the recognition and appreciation of students' individuality, abilities, and efforts. In an atmosphere full of respect, students are more active in participating in school activities, bold in expressing their opinions and ideas, and more willing to listen to and accept others' views. This positive interaction and communication help cultivate students' social skills and teamwork spirit, further promoting their mental health development.

Conversely, if students do not feel sufficient respect on campus, their self-respect and self-confidence may be severely damaged. This may cause them to become solitary and introverted, or even develop feelings of inferiority and resistance. Over time, these negative emotions may accumulate and lead to more serious mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

5.1.5 The impact of self-actualization needs on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College

From the interviews, we can gain a profound insight into the far-reaching influence of self-actualization needs on the mental health of students at Nanjing Commercial College. Students whose self-actualization needs are met tend to be more proactive and enthusiastic in their learning. They enjoy exploring new knowledge, daring to try new things, and constantly challenging their own limits. In interpersonal interactions, they are also able to express their opinions and ideas more freely, establishing positive and healthy relationships. This positive mental state not only contributes to their academic performance but also has a profound impact on their future development and life planning.

Conversely, if students' self-actualization needs are not met, they may feel lost, helpless, and depressed. This negative mental state can lead to a lack of interest in learning, resistance to interpersonal interactions, and even doubts about their own abilities and value. Over time, this mental state may have a serious negative impact on students' mental health, leading to psychological issues such as anxiety and depression.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the analyzed issues and interview results, this study proposes corresponding recommendations that encompass four primary aspects:

5.2.1 Comprehensive Attention to Students' Needs

Comprehensive attention to students' needs is a vital aspect of educational work, requiring educators to not only focus on academic progress but also to deeply understand and fulfill their needs across various aspects of life. This holistic care not only contributes to students' healthy growth but also fosters a more harmonious and supportive learning environment. The following elaborates on this concept:

Physiological needs, as the most fundamental level in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, are directly related to students' physical health and survival state. Educators should recognize that students can only concentrate on learning when their physiological needs are met. Therefore, Colleges should provide nutritious and balanced meals to ensure students receive adequate energy and nutrients; improve accommodation conditions to ensure comfortable rest environments; and regularly organize health check-ups to promptly identify and address potential health issues.

Safety needs are indispensable for students' campus life, encompassing both physical and psychological safety. Physically, Colleges should strengthen campus security management, ensuring no hidden dangers, such as by improving surveillance facilities, tightening gate management, and regularly conducting safety drills. Psychologically, educators must create an open and inclusive learning atmosphere, encouraging students to express their thoughts and feelings, while promptly intervening and addressing conflicts and bullying among students, making them feel cared for and supported by the College and teachers.

The need for belonging refers to students' desire to be part of a group or community and to establish close connections with it. This need is crucial for students' emotional development and social skills cultivation. Educators can organize diverse extracurricular activities and club organizations to provide students with various communication platforms, helping them build profound friendships and a sense of belonging. Simultaneously, educators should attend to individual differences, respecting students' interests, hobbies, and personalities, so that each student can find a sense of belonging in their respective fields.

To comprehensively meet students' needs, educators must adopt a series of comprehensive measures. Firstly, establish a student needs feedback mechanism to regularly collect students' opinions and suggestions, understanding their genuine needs. Secondly, enhance the teacher workforce by improving teachers' professional competencies and educational abilities, enabling them to better understand and fulfill students' needs. Furthermore, strengthen communication and cooperation with parents to form a favorable home-Collegel collaboration, jointly promoting students' comprehensive development.

In conclusion, comprehensive attention to students' needs is a core task in educational work. Educators should deeply understand students' needs, particularly those at lower levels, and take measures to satisfy them. Only in this way can we provide a solid guarantee for students' healthy growth and all-round development.

5.2.2 Igniting Learning Motivation

In the vast arena of education, igniting students' learning motivation is a delicate yet profound task, involving the cultivation of a love for learning and a courage to explore within the minds of students. To achieve this goal, creating a safe, harmonious learning environment while offering students ample respect and support is paramount.

Firstly, a safe learning environment is the prerequisite for students to dare to try and express themselves. This encompasses not only physical safety, such as sturdy college buildings, well-equipped facilities, and hazard-free campuses, but more importantly, psychological safety. Students should feel that in this environment, their ideas, emotions, and attempts will be respected and accepted, and that mistakes will not be met with ridicule or punishment. Educators must adopt a gentle yet firm approach to build a fearless arena for experimentation, where students understand that every attempt is a valuable opportunity for growth.

A harmonious learning atmosphere, on the other hand, serves as a catalyst for igniting students' intrinsic motivation. This necessitates educators' attention not only to the imparting of knowledge but also to the cultivation of classroom culture, fostering positive interactions and mutual understanding among teachers and students, as well as among students themselves. Through organizing various teaching activities such as teamwork, role-playing, and group discussions, students can learn and communicate in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, feeling the warmth and strength of the collective. Furthermore, encouraging open-minded intellectual exchanges empowers students to question, explore, and navigate the vast ocean of knowledge, continually discovering new joys and possibilities.

Providing students with ample respect and support is the key to igniting their enthusiasm for learning and thirst for knowledge. Each student is a unique individual with distinct interests, abilities, and growth rhythms. Educators should respect students' individual differences, attend to their personalized needs, and offer tailored learning resources and support. When students encounter difficulties in learning, educators should listen patiently to their confusions and guide them wisely to find solutions. Additionally, acknowledging every bit of progress and effort made by students helps them feel valued and capable, thereby confronting learning challenges with greater confidence.

In summary, by creating a safe, harmonious learning environment and offering students ample respect and support, we can effectively ignite their learning motivation. Such an educational environment not only meets students' basic needs but also ignites the flame within them, driving them forward on the path of learning, relentlessly pursuing higher and farther goals.

5.2.3 Cultivating Self-Actualization Capabilities

In the grand scheme of education, fostering students' self-actualization capabilities is a core mission that aims to awaken their latent potential and guide them along the

path of self-discovery and growth. This process transcends mere knowledge transmission, emphasizing instead the ignition of students' intrinsic motivation, empowering them to self-motivate, self-manage, and self-transcend.

Firstly, guiding students to set clear goals and plans marks the starting point of their self-actualization journey. Educators must help students recognize that definitive goals serve as beacons in the ocean of life, guiding their direction and fueling their progress. This necessitates educators leading students to delve into their interests, strengths, and values, encouraging them to set ambitious yet achievable goals based on their current realities and long-term aspirations. Simultaneously, instructors should guide students in formulating detailed action plans, breaking down their grand objectives into manageable steps, ensuring each milestone is concrete and actionable, thereby enabling students to experience a sense of accomplishment and joy in their progress.

Secondly, encouraging students to boldly challenge themselves and explore uncharted territories is crucial to self-actualization. In this endeavor, students must confront inner fears and uncertainties, step out of their comfort zones, and embrace novel experiences and challenges. Educators should serve as steadfast allies, providing essential support and encouragement, fostering students' belief in their potential and abilities. Furthermore, by creating diverse learning environments and opportunities, educators can expose students to various fields of knowledge, broadening their horizons and stimulating their curiosity and thirst for learning. In the process of exploring the unknown, students will continually discover new facets of themselves, tapping into hidden talents and potential, thereby solidifying their commitment to the path of self-actualization.

Lastly, the continuous enhancement of self-actualization capabilities drives this process forward. This necessitates not only the establishment of clear goals and plans but also the cultivation of lifelong learning and self-reflection skills. Educators must guide students in developing sound study habits and mindsets, teaching them how to efficiently acquire knowledge, think critically, and solve problems effectively. Additionally, fostering self-reflection and evaluation encourages students to scrutinize their growth processes, extracting lessons from both successes and failures, and adjusting their goals and strategies accordingly. Through this process, students will gradually develop a personalized growth system, continually refining their self-actualization capabilities, ultimately maturing into independent, high-achieving individuals.

5.2.4 Strengthening Mental Health Education

Enhancing mental health education is an indispensable component of the educational system, as it concerns the mental well-being and growth of students, laying a solid foundation for their life journey. This process extends beyond the confines of classroom knowledge transmission, integrating diverse activities and practices to promote students' psychological resilience and maturity from all angles.

Firstly, mental health education courses should be made mandatory for students, providing them with systematic learning of psychological knowledge and skills training. The curriculum should encompass various aspects such as emotion recognition and management, stress coping and regulation, interpersonal relationship building and maintenance, self-awareness, and personal growth. Through a blend of teaching methods including case studies, role-playing, and group discussions, students can actively engage in understanding psychological phenomena and mastering coping strategies. Additionally, emphasizing the integration of theory and practice encourages students to apply their learned knowledge in daily life, fostering positive and healthy psychological behaviors.

Secondly, mental health education activities should permeate throughout students' academic life, adopting flexible and diverse formats to ignite their participation. Colleges can organize Mental Health Awareness Month, psychodrama performances, psychological lectures and salons, inviting professional counselors or psychologists to address students' concerns, share insights, and disseminate knowledge. Furthermore, experiential activities like outdoor expansion exercises and team-building training can be conducted, enabling students to experience the strength and warmth of collectivity amidst challenges and collaboration, thereby strengthening their psychological resilience. These activities not only enrich students' extracurricular lives but also foster communication and understanding among them, cultivating a positive campus atmosphere.

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