Construction of a Systematic Model for "Academic Stagnation" among Chinese Adolescents and a Preliminary Exploration of the "Mental-Behavioral Dual-Practice" Intervention System

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Abstract

Abstract: [Purpose] Addressing the profound learning difficulties among Chinese adolescents that are often misinterpreted as "school aversion," this paper aims to propose a systematic explanatory model and intervention framework. [Method] Based on observation and analysis of hundreds of in-depth clinical cases, this study employs a "grounded-theory-like research approach + model induction method" to construct the "Academic Stagnation Dynamic Spectrum" theory, and pioneers a "Dual-Mind Co-action" collaborative intervention system centered on breaking the "psychological-academic vicious cycle." [Results] The study proposes that "Academic Stagnation" is a dynamic spectrum of learning system dysfunction, with its core driving mechanism being a mutually reinforcing vicious cycle of psychological energy depletion and academic capability decline. The "Dual-Mind Co-action" system, through dual-teacher joint assessment, four-tier response, and collaborative intervention, demonstrates preliminary effectiveness in breaking the cycle and restoring system function in clinical practice, enabling adolescents to transform into "non-depleted explorers." [Limitations] Conclusions are based on model induction from in-depth cases, with data in the paper being derived data for revealing patterns; the generalizability of the model requires further validation through large-sample empirical studies. [Conclusion] "Academic Stagnation" is a complex issue requiring systematic understanding. The "Dual-Mind Co-action" approach provides a systems-view-based solution, calling for a paradigm shift from "attitude correction" to "system restoration," aiming to offer a localized systematic solution with both theoretical innovation and practical value for the complex learning difficulties of Chinese adolescents.

Full Text

Preamble

A Preliminary Study on the Systemic Model of "Academic Stagnation" and the "Dual-Track Mind" Intervention System for Chinese Adolescents

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[**Objective**] In response to the profound learning difficulties among Chinese adolescents that are frequently misinterpreted as mere "school aversion," this paper proposes a systemic explanatory model and intervention framework that moves beyond superficial motivational attributions.

[**Methods**] Based on observation and analysis of hundreds of in-depth clinical cases, this study employs a "grounded theory-like research approach combined with model induction" to construct the "Dynamic Spectrum of Academic Stagnation" theory and pioneers a "Dual-Track Mind" collaborative intervention system centered on disrupting the "psycho-academic vicious cycle."

[**Results**] The study conceptualizes "academic stagnation" as a dynamic spectrum of learning system dysfunction, with its core driving mechanism being a self-reinforcing vicious cycle where psychological energy depletion and declining academic competency become mutually locked. The "Dual-Track Mind" system, through dual-teacher joint assessment, a four-tiered response mechanism, and collaborative intervention, has demonstrated preliminary effectiveness in clinical practice for breaking this cycle, restoring system functionality, and facilitating adolescents' transformation into "unexhausted explorers."

[**Limitations**] Conclusions are based on model induction from deep case studies; quantitative descriptions in the paper are deductive data intended to reveal patterns rather than statistical findings. The generalizability of the model requires validation through large-sample empirical research.

[**Conclusion**] "Academic stagnation"is a complex issue requiring systemic understanding. The "Dual-Track Mind" approach provides a systems-based solution, calling for a paradigm shift from "attitude correction" to "system repair," and offers a localized, systematic solution for Chinese adolescents' complex learning difficulties with both theoretical innovation and practical value.

Keywords: Academic Stagnation; Dual-Track Mind; Psycho-Academic Vicious Cycle; Systemic Intervention; Adolescents

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Currently, the phenomenon of Chinese adolescents being "unable to study, unwilling to study" has become increasingly prominent, often broadly labeled as

"school aversion." However, this label merely describes an emotional attitudinal tendency and fails to explain why adolescents from different starting points may all fall into the predicament of "wanting to learn but being unable to." The deep reason why many intervention measures have limited effectiveness lies in oversimplifying such complex issues by attributing them to willpower, attitude, or single psychological problems. Based on long-term, in-depth clinical practice observations, this paper aims to break through this cognitive limitation.

This study adopts the theoretical construction method in qualitative research. Based on hundreds of in-depth clinical cases and through a grounded theory-like research pathway, we have induced and iteratively developed the following core models.

1.1 Proposing "Academic Stagnation": A Systemic New Definition

To more precisely describe the functional dysfunction of learning systems, this paper proposes and defines "academic stagnation" for the first time. It is not a static label but a dynamic spectrum describing the state in which an adolescent's learning system (including subsystems such as motivation, emotion, cognition, and behavior) experiences a persistent decline or interruption in overall effectiveness due to chronic overload, impact, or poor fit. This spectrum ranges from mild "system lag" (declining motivation, reduced efficiency) to severe "system crash" (termination of learning behavior accompanied by multi-functional impairment). Its core indicator is that the individual's learning ecosystem can no longer operate effectively through original patterns or simple external incentives, requiring targeted repair of the system function itself.

1.2 Dynamic Spectrum Model of Academic Stagnation

This model categorizes academic stagnation into three typical states (see Table 1), revealing its dynamic evolution process. Core findings include: (1) Regardless of whether the origin is in the psychological system (emotional exhaustion) or the academic system (knowledge fragmentation), both paths eventually converge into the academic stagnation spectrum; (2) The "critical state" represents the final effective intervention window for breaking the vicious cycle; (3) This model provides families with a cognitive navigation tool, shifting from "what's wrong with him" to "what stage of the spectrum is the system in."

Table 1 Dynamic Spectrum Model of Academic Stagnation

Spectrum Level	Emotion-First Pathway	Subject-First Pathway
L1: Observation & Optimization	Psychological trauma/stress triggers low mood, capabilities remain intact	Knowledge gaps trigger learning frustration, emotions remain stable
L2/L3: Professional Intervention Needed	Emotional exhaustion → cognitive decline → academic decline	Continuous frustration → self-doubt → emotional symptoms emerge
L3/L4: Systemic Deep Intervention & Reconstruction	Psychological energy depletion → severe cognitive impairment → academic failure	Severe knowledge chain rupture → intense self-denial → emotional breakdown

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2 Core Mechanism and Ecosystem Model of "Academic Stagnation"

2.1 Core Engine: The "Psycho-Academic Vicious Cycle" Model

This paper is the first to explicitly construct the mutual influence between psychology and academics into an intervenable "psycho-academic vicious cycle" dynamic model (Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]), which serves as the core engine driving the formation and solidification of academic stagnation. This cycle is self-driven and self-reinforcing, making it difficult to break through single-dimensional interventions.

Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper] The "Psycho-Academic Vicious Cycle" Model
(Note: This model illustrates a self-reinforcing closed loop composed of six interlocking components: psychological energy depletion, cognitive function decline, academic performance decline, persistent frustration and stress, collapse of self-worth, and intensified knowledge chain rupture)

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[Psychological Energy Depletion] $\rightarrow$ [Cognitive Function Decline] $\rightarrow$ [A
     ↑                                                                              ↓
[Collapse of Self-Worth] $\leftarrow$ [Persistent Frustration and Stress] $\leftarrow$ [Inte
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2.2 Exacerbating Ecosystems

This core cycle is profoundly influenced by three external systems: (1) **Family System**: As the most direct stress source or charging station, high-anxiety and low-support family environments accelerate psychological depletion; (2) **Socio-Cultural System**: The "finish-line culture" that treats "getting into college" as the ultimate goal fosters "exhaustion-type stagnation" and deprives learning

of intrinsic meaning; (3) **Bio-Physiological System**: Adolescent development, sleep deprivation, and other physiological factors constitute the hardware foundation of system operation, directly affecting cognition and emotion.

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3 The "Dual-Track Mind" Intervention System: Methodology and Framework

Based on the above systemic model, either psychological counseling alone or academic tutoring alone is insufficient. Therefore, this paper constructs the "Dual-Track Mind Escort System," aiming to precisely break the vicious cycle through deep collaboration between a psychological systems planner and an academic systems rebuilder.

3.1 Diagnostic Revolution: Joint Assessment and System Fault Mapping

The system achieves systemic perspective through "joint assessment" : simultaneous evaluation of the psychological system (emotion, motivation, family dynamics) and the academic system (knowledge chain, learning methods), followed by cross-analysis by dual teachers, ultimately producing a "system fault map" that identifies core vicious cycle nodes, key psychological blockages, and their connections to academic breakpoints. This map serves as the foundation for personalized intervention plans.

3.2 Four-Level Response Escort Roadmap

Based on the severity of systemic imbalance, a tiered intervention framework is established (see Table 2) to achieve scientifically matched intervention intensity.

Table 2 Four-Level Response Escort System

Level	System State	Intervention Focus	Goal
L1	Early signals appear, system function basically normal	Learning method optimization, stress management, family education guidance	Preventive, nip in the bud
L2	Emotional overload obvious, requires temporary academic pressure relief	Emotional first aid, stress source isolation, preliminary location of academic breakpoints	Emergency decompression, stabilize system
L3	Vicious cycle formed, both systems significantly damaged	Break cycle, repair psychological trauma and knowledge chain, reconstruct family support	Break cycle, restore function

Level	System State	Intervention Focus	Goal
L4	System collapse, long-term school absence, social function impaired	Deep psychological and academic identity reconstruction, long-term growth path planning	Reshape identity, reintegrate into society

3.3 Dual-Teacher Collaborative Intervention Logic

"Dual-Track Mind" is not simple cooperation but precise "pincer" cutting directly acting on the vicious cycle chain. For example: when the academic teacher locates frustration triggered by knowledge breakpoints, the psychological teacher simultaneously intervenes in the student' s rigid "ability attribution" ; when the psychological teacher addresses perfectionist anxiety, the academic teacher designs "error-tolerant" tasks to provide success experiences and shake irrational beliefs. Through joint consultations, dynamic strategy mapping, and unified family communication, dual teachers ensure coordinated and consistent intervention.

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4 Case Studies and Core Findings

(To protect privacy, cases have been anonymized)

4.1 Case Profiles and Model Mapping

Case 1 (Emotion-First Stagnation): From System Crash to Goal Reconstruction
High school student A fell into comprehensive self-negation after a major subject competition failure, subsequently dropping out for months, exhibiting reversed sleep cycles, refusing communication, and complete cessation of learning behavior. Joint assessment revealed: severe anxiety and strong perfectionist tendencies with typical "academic trauma" in the psychological system; an understanding-based conceptual gap in a specific physics section in the academic system; and a family system where the father held extremely high expectations with harsh expression, creating tense communication.

Intervention Process (Corresponding to L3 System Reconstruction Phase): Psychologically, priority was given to establishing an emotional safety zone through empathy to process frustration, separating the "competition failure event" from "overall personal value," and specifically intervening in perfectionist cognition. Academically, a "interest-based entry, detour reconstruction" strategy was adopted, starting from physics principles in sci-fi movies he enjoyed, cleverly bypassing the trauma-triggering school textbook system. By designing

"minimum success units," he gained micro-confidence through understanding. Family work focused on guiding the father to shift from a "results judge" to a "resource consultant," reducing outcome criticism and increasing strategic support for the process.

Intervention Results: After months of intervention, the student not only successfully repaired critical physics knowledge chains and significantly reduced anxiety, but more importantly, reconstructed intrinsic interest in scientific exploration. His personal goal shifted from vague "get into college" to clear "future participation in frontier scientific research." He transformed from a "crash-avoiding escapist" to a "goal-oriented active explorer" and successfully returned to school.

Case 2 (Dual-System Synchronous Damage): From Knowledge Bloating to Autonomous Inquiry

Middle school student B in a key class experienced significant grade decline, followed by somatic symptoms (stomach pain, insomnia, daily crying) and emotional collapse. Joint assessment revealed: psychological system with "catastrophic thinking" that completely bound self-worth to ranking (e.g., "if I don' t test well, I' m finished"), and an academic system with "knowledge bloating" — rote memorization in humanities and weak conceptual understanding in science, making him unable to cope when difficulty increased in third year.

Intervention Process (Corresponding to L2/L3 Response): Psychologically focused on cognitive reconstruction to break catastrophic thinking and establish a growth mindset. Academically implemented "knowledge mine-sweeping" and foundation rebuilding, particularly using the Feynman Technique to test and solidify conceptual understanding in science. Family work guided the mother from excessive score-focus to "descriptive encouragement" and "non-anxious companionship."

Intervention Results: Somatic symptoms completely disappeared, emotions stabilized, and he could calmly view test fluctuations. More importantly, his learning mode fundamentally shifted from "passive reception-memorization"to "active inquiry-understanding," developing autonomous research interest in interdisciplinary social issues and becoming a true "autonomous learner."

Case 3 (System Mismatch Stagnation): From Misdiagnosis Label to Strength Development

Middle school student C was once misdiagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) due to zoning out in class and homework procrastination, but medication proved ineffective. Joint assessment revealed deeper causes: psychological system with high creative thinking, natural intolerance for repetitive mechanical tasks, and strong autonomy needs; academic system with no major knowledge chain breaks but severe mismatch between his kinesthetic (hands-on) learning style and traditional lecture-based classroom teaching; physiological sleep disorder further exacerbating attention issues.

The assessment concluded the core problem was "system mismatch between innate learning style and teaching environment," not primary neurodevelopmental

disorder. *Intervention Process (Corresponding to L1/L2 Response):* Psychological work focused on "strength confirmation and value reshaping," affirming the value of his creative thinking and relieving his "problem child" self-label. Academically, the learning path was completely adjusted, drastically reducing repetitive paper homework and introducing project-based learning, hands-on experiments, and practical investigations matching his kinesthetic style, creating outlets for creativity. Family work synchronized sleep rhythm adjustment and provided necessary exploration resources.

Intervention Results: After environmental and learning style adjustments, the "symptoms" previously attributed to ADHD (attention dispersion, procrastination) naturally disappeared, and academic performance steadily improved. His self-perception fundamentally shifted from "defective problem child" to "special talent with unique thinking and creative potential." This case powerfully confirms that many problem behaviors are merely "distress signals" from complex system dysfunction, and precise system matching and strength-based intervention can effectively unlock individual potential.

4.2 Core Findings

These cases confirm that symptoms such as school absence, avoidance, and somatization are "distress signals" emitted when the system is overloaded or malfunctioning. Intervention success lies in reading these signals and repairing the system that generates them. The ultimate goal is cultivating "unexhausted explorers"—an ideal developmental state characterized by intrinsic drive, metacognitive capacity, and lifelong learning potential.

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5 Discussion

5.1 Summary and Significance

The "academic stagnation" systemic model and "Dual-Track Mind" intervention system proposed in this study provide a new theoretical framework and practical pathway for understanding and addressing adolescents' profound learning difficulties. They promote a cognitive shift from blaming individual attitudes to understanding system function, and from seeking single solutions to designing collaborative interventions.

This framework possesses distinct localized characteristics, incorporating China-specific socio-ecological factors such as "high family anxiety" and "finish-line culture"into the systemic model, distinguishing it from Western theories that primarily focus on individual motivation and providing a more appropriate perspective for understanding Chinese adolescents'learning difficulties. The "Dual-Track Mind" system' s advantage lies in its precise targeting of the "psycho-academic vicious cycle" core mechanism and its scientific matching of intervention intensity through tiered responses. Its model requires no complex conditions and

holds potential for integration into school mental health systems.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study is based on qualitative research and model induction from deep clinical observations; quantitative descriptions cited are deductive data intended to reveal patterns rather than statistical conclusions. Although the joint assessment tools and intervention effects have undergone preliminary clinical validation, the system' s efficacy, generalizability, and long-term effects urgently require validation through rigorous prospective research and large-sample empirical studies.

5.3 Future Outlook

We look forward to collaborating with academic colleagues to conduct rigorous empirical research, refine assessment tools, and verify intervention effectiveness. The long-term vision is to combine "system repair" with "ecological reconstruction," exploring education support models more aligned with adolescent development patterns, and providing clinically-informed reflections for educational reform.

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Author Contributions

Bai Lin: Proposed the "Academic Stagnation" theoretical model, "Psycho-Academic Vicious Cycle" model, and core framework of the "Dual-Track Mind" intervention system; Led research design and paper conceptualization; Responsible for psychological system assessment and intervention strategy design; Drafted and revised the final manuscript.

Li Wen: Developed and practiced the "Academic Reconstruction Engineering" methodology; Responsible for academic system assessment and reconstruction pathway design; Participated in case intervention, data collection, and analysis.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.