

Moral Inquiry of Cultural Preference Among Contemporary College Students

DONG Gang^{[a]*}; YI Lianyun^[a]

[a]Professor, Southwest University, Chongqing, China.

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Abstract

According to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, culture is blood vessel for national and spiritual home for people. Under the influence of cultural environment, the cultural preference of undergraduates is reflected as the contradiction between decreasing cognition of traditional culture and blind worship of western culture, between weak mainstream ideology and popularity of multi-culture. Through survey and moral inspection about cultural preference of contemporary college students, the effective ways to realize moral redemption of cultural preference of contemporary undergraduates are to guide mainstream value of undergraduates with Chinese traditional culture, to cultivate cultural confidence of undergraduates, to build good atmosphere for propagating Chinese traditional culture.

Key words: Undergraduates; Cultural preference; Morality

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural preference is cultural orientation with interest identification, including cultural taste, style and interest preference concealing in individual (Gao, 2012). The cultural preference of undergraduates is greatly influenced by the cultural environment. To a great extent, cultural preference can reflect cultural value orientation and moral level of contemporary college students. Through the survey and moral inspection of cultural preference among contemporary college students, moral inquiry has been urgent affairs.

1. CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE GROWTH OF CONTEMPORARY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Culture is the sum of material wealth and spiritual wealth created by human beings during the development process of social history. From the perspective of cultural type, it's suitable to consider culture as an indefinite-form entity with core and multiple peripheries. From outside to inside, it can be divided into material culture, system culture, behavior culture and mental culture, etc.. (Feng et al., 2005) The growing process of contemporary college students confronts with distinct cultural environment of former college students.

1.1 Globalization Age

Globalization is a new phenomenon increasingly prevailing in the world since 1980s and it is a basic feature of the contemporary age. In general, globalization is a diversified concept with economic globalization as the core, including mutual contact, influence and restriction among different countries, nations and regions on multilevel and multi-field such as politics, culture, technology, military, security, ideology, life style and value, etc. under the background of globalization, various cultures in the world forms global cultural integration through mutual integration and exchange in different ways. However, the cultural issue brought by globalization is not just simply a cultural issue (Li, 2013). Under the effect of various

^{*}Corresponding author.

factors such as politics and economy, cultural integration will certainly lead to cultural contradictions among different nations, which mainly reflect as the conflict between cultural hegemony and national culture, between foreign culture and local culture, between virtual internet culture and actual culture (Yang, 2007).

1.2 Network Age

With the development and popularization of computer and network technology since 1980s, the occurrence of internet culture is accompanied by the network age. Internet culture develops with information technology especially network communication technology. It is the sum of material wealth and spiritual wealth created by human beings during network activities with information, network technology and network resource as pivots. Besides, it owns three basic features, namely openness, virtuality and uncontrollability (Yang, 2007). According to Statistical Report about Status of Internet Development in China, the amount of Chinese netizens reached 0.546 billion in the end of December 2012 and newly increased amount was 50.9 million all year round. The adolescents have become the main group surfing the internet and they occupy above half of total amount of netizens, among which the adolescents from 10 to 39 years old occupy 79.7% of total amount, and contemporary college students are the largest netizen group in network age.¹

1.3 Transformation Age

At present, China is in a critical period of building welloff society in an all-round way. The Chinese society is also undergoing a profound transformation of the economic system, significant adjustment of benefits pattern, great change of social structure and a drastic variation of ideology. Besides, social problems and social contradictions are also frequent. The transformation of any society is inevitably accompanied with cultural conflict; vice versa, cultural conflict certainly runs through the whole social transformation. In modern China, social transformation will certainly lead to prominent cultural conflict. Numerous contradictions produced during social change in China can't be truly solved in actual social aspect, and people begin to ponder over the issues on idea and significant aspect, so cultural issues seem to be the focus among people again (Zhao, 2013). Under the influence of the market economy and impact of foreign culture during the transformation process, multiple ethos and concurrent values of multiple subjects occur in society. Besides, confused thought and psychological imbalance exist among numerous people, as they are powerless for value evaluation and behavior selection, while the undergraduates are also beyond exception.

1.4 One-Child Age

Since the implementation of the one-child policy in China, the amount of only child increases gradually and current city family reaches above 95%. The family structure with one child is simple and wealthy, which ensures healthy growth of children on the material aspect. However, the family with one child brings about multiple negative factors, including athymia, loneliness and fragile character, etc. Besides, the children have weak independence, strong dependence, powerful pride, reverse psychology and caprice. Meanwhile, due to excessive favor, the children are lack of self-discipline spirit and team spirit without considering the feelings of other people. From the perspective of blood relationship, family affection and human relations, only child can just stay with parents all day long without any brothers and sisters, so their natural instincts can be inhibited and unfavorable for healthy growth.2

2. INVESTIGATION ABOUT BASIC SITUATION OF CULTURAL PREFERENCE AMONG CONTEMPORARY COLLEGE STUDENTS

In order to know well about the basic situation of cultural preference among contemporary college students, the thesis designed a questionnaire to investigate and analyze cultural preference of college students, thus enhancing the innovation and effectiveness of ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

2.1 Investigation Objects and Method

Six key universities in Wuhan were selected as investigation objects. By randomly selecting undergraduates from 24 natural classes at different grades in Wuhan University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Central China Normal University and Hubei University, the thesis combined questionnaire and interview to carry out investigation about cultural preferences of college students. The contents mainly involve cognition of traditional culture and pursue of popular culture among contemporary college students. 960 questionnaires were granted, 916 of which were collected and collection rate was 95.4%. Besides, 892 questionnaires were valid and effective rate was 97%. SPSS17.0 was adopted to make statistical analysis about survey data.

¹ Youth Website. Amount of Chinese netizens reach 0.564 billion and adolescent netizens reach 0.449 billion. Retrieved from http://it.youth.cn/it/201301/t20130116 2809270.htm

² Committee members appeal to release two-child policy and one-child policy has finished mission. (2010, March 10). *Yangcheng Evening News*.

2.2 Findings About Cultural Preference of Contemporary College Students

2.2.1 Contradiction Between Decreasing Cognition of Traditional Culture and Blind Worship for Western Culture

With integration of the world economy and constant depth of opening-door policy, people's ideology and value are greatly impacted. The undergraduates are still in an important period to form and develop a world view, view of life and value. Besides, their social experiences are insufficient and thoughts are not mature, so they may be confused by some presentations of western culture and even assume falsely that advanced science and technology equal to advance culture, thus leading to blind worship for western culture. However, multiple negative factors exist during Chinese traditional culture, so weak traditional culture consciousness, inadequate national confidence and weak cultural sense of identity are ubiquity in China.

According to the investigation, sense of identity towards traditional culture among current undergraduates decreases obviously. In the perspective of "identity", only 41% of students view that traditional culture is of great importance for current Chinese society and only 16% of students hold optimistic attitude towards future development trend of Chinese traditional culture. which reflect that contemporary college students are not optimistic about the present and future of traditional culture. In the perspective of "knowledge", 7.6% of students "never read" and "never plan to read" four great classical novels in Chinese traditional culture, 16% of students "read all" and 36% of students "read one or two". The survey result of opera in Chinese traditional culture is beyond expectation, as 88% of students are not interested with opera, 35% of students show "no interest to watch", 13% of students indicate "watch with little interest" and even 46% of students are "unable to understand". Furthermore, the survey result of "attitude" is more worrisome. In general, the students own inadequate understanding about traditional culture and little interest, and weak trend of traditional culture awareness exists among students. Besides, only 12% of students view that it's necessary to learn and know about tradition culture and historical knowledge in China.

Contrast decreases cognition towards traditional culture, blind worship of western culture among undergraduates grows gradually. Under the environment of opening to the outside world and world culture, numerous youthful students know little about national culture and nature of western culture due to inadequate life experience, and they are inevitably shocked and impacted by western culture. Therefore, they just focus on themselves and neglect ethic relation; focus on power and neglect obligation (Shi & Liang, 1996), so many excellent traditions in Chinese nation are despised. The investigation indicates that 76% of students eat

western fast food at least once in every week and 27% of students are fond of dressing foreign brands. With regard to knowledge for sports brands, Nike and Adidas rank top two. As for festival culture, 55% of students prefer Valentine's Day and 73% prefer Christmas Day. The affinity and identification towards western culture will certainly lead to alienation and rejection of national culture, which also reflects abnormal deviation of cultural preference among contemporary college students.

2.2.2 Fading of Mainstream Ideology and Popularity of Multi-Culture

Nowadays, China is in a critical period of social transformation, so there will be multiple ethos and multicultural values, all of which offers various and even conflicted choices of cultural concepts for undergraduates. From the point of political belief, some undergraduates are impacted and tempted by western value. Therefore, they shake their original mainstream ideology, loss correct idea, faith and value pursuit, money worship and hedonism to prevail, while the advocated social responsibility and moral ideal are forgotten.

Fading mainstream ideology is correspondent to gradual pursuing trend of multi-culture. Therefore, cultural forms with obvious influence on undergraduates are investigated, involving popular culture, internet culture and plebeian culture, etc..

According to the investigation, 54% of students "like very much" about popular culture. The undergraduates are always happy to pursue new matters with their strong curiosity, thirst for knowledge and great enthusiasm for popular culture. In the aspect of thought, they always pursue abundant and personalized individuality, and they are able to accept some open thoughts in western culture, so utilitarianism trend may occurs, which is unfavorable to promote traditional virtues of the Chinese nation. With regard to behavior, the label meaning is more important than actual meaning. In another word, they just pursue the symbol of their identity and image brought by label.

The rapid development of network has generated great influence on people's ideology and lifestyle. For those undergraduates with great enthusiasm and rapid acceptance of new things, network brings about greater influence on their study and life. According to the investigation, the students in colleges and universities occupy 21% of total netizens, and internet rate in colleges and universities increases from 10% in 1990s to above 95% today. The amount of undergraduates frequently surfing the internet in Shanghai reaches 0.3 million, among which 44.3% of students spend 10-20 hours on internet every weak, 29.7% of students spend 5-10 hours, 20.4% spend above 20 hours and the rest spend less than 5 hours.³ The openness of network culture makes

³ Sohu.com. Undergraduates have become largest internet group and above 95% of undergraduates in Shanghai surf the internet. Retrieved from http://it.sohu.com/20120729/n240204472.shtml

multiple values coexist on internet. Influenced by network culture, individual differences will inevitably exist among undergraduates to confirm life goal and evaluate goal achievement, which inflect diversified value orientation (Huang, 2008).

Plebeian culture is also called as grass-rooted culture, namely the common term of low threshold and vulgarity. Through the programs with top audience rating such as Voice of China and Super Girl, affection degree toward plebeian culture and plebeian features can be found, which also reflects new proposition that plebs lead entertainment. During the rising process of plebeian culture, undergraduates are not only participants of plebeian culture, but important promoter. The investigation indicates that 88% of students focus or know about "Super Girl", 21% of students participated in this program. Undeniably, replacing elite culture with plebeian culture is consistent with popular higher education, and its development means that subject consciousness of undergraduates enhances constantly.

3. MORAL INSPECTION AND REDEMPTION OF CULTURAL PREFERENCE AMONG CONTEMPORARY COLLEGE STUDENTS

3.1 Moral Inspection of Cultural Preference Among Contemporary College Students

Undergraduate culture can not only reflect ideology situation of contemporary college students, but reflect their cultural value orientation. Through the above investigation about growing cultural environment of undergraduates and the basic situation of cultural preference among contemporary college students, it has been observed that there is a positive aspect of their cultural preferences, but moral worry is more obvious.

3.1.1 Alienation of Value

Trend transformation of traditional culture and popular culture among undergraduates can be the differences of cultural preference among contemporary college students superficially, but it reflects alienation of value among undergraduates. Observed from cultural preference of undergraduates, the popular culture pursued by undergraduates is positive as mainstream trend, but it brings great impact to traditional cultural value orientation. On one hand, the value of undergraduates with trends to weaken the moral ideal and less individuality. Under impact of popular cultural thoughts, value rationality of undergraduates such as value system and emotional conscience are cleared, so they always blindly imitate and follow some behaviors that they may not recognize, including so-called liberalization ideology in western countries. Besides, they contradict moral education value advocated by school, neglect mainstream value criterion in society and weaken recognition for traditional moral concept. On the other hand, utilitarian trend of undergraduates' value is obvious. Each culture is spread and conveved through its suitable carrier. With rapid change of high-tech in modern society, constantly changing high-tech products have become major objects of popular culture among undergraduates (Leng, 2014). Under the influence of this popular culture thought, people will inevitably pursue material and can't extricate themselves from materialism. Besides, practicability becomes the sole measure to measure value and fetishism produces. Thirdly, the value tends to present the features of individualism and weak social responsibility. Under the influence and impact of foreign culture, when dealing with the relationship between individuality and collectivity, the undergraduates always select their behaviors and value orientation from their own benefits, while neglect the contribution to collectivity and society.

3.1.2 The Missing of Misery Consciousness in Culture

The apparent fusion, collision and communication between the eastern and western culture are affected by the popular culture. The mutual agitation of western popular culture thoughts and the different thoughts and cultures around it within the world scope makes unprecedented challenge to the traditional cultural concepts. The undergraduates are indulged in the mediocre entertainment, boring pastime and comfortable enjoyment, and stop to make further improvement. They are self-centered and concerned with their own feelings, fade out the serious thinking on great ideal and the meaning of life, neglect the positive factor of traditional culture, as well as take the secular concept as the essence of life values. They will confront with the missing of misery consciousness on culture.

On one hand, they are lack of confidence in the Chinese culture. From the point of external factors, the cultural globalization also affects the historic course of the world development in the process of integration of the world economy. In the cultural exchanges and contacts of all nationalities in the world, the culture communication is not equal and harmonious due to the influence of economic development and political factors. Especially in the exchange of eastern and western culture, Chinese culture has always been in a disadvantage state affected with the influence of ideology and economic power. From the point of internal factors, foreign culture surges into our country with the deepening of reform and opening up in China. With the influence of foreign culture, many people breeds the comment in the nature of national nihilism, they think "the pre-Qin dynasty cannot compete with ancient Greek", "contemporary era is not better than postmodernism", and so on, as well as think the western culture and thoughts is better than that of China. These error comments and proposition subtly penetrates in each link of the university education, and makes great influence to the cultural value concept of several teachers, which results in the disdain of Chinese traditional culture, as well as it is difficult to arouse students' cultural confidence and inner motive power of learning traditional culture.

On the other hand, they blindly praise high on the foreign culture. With opening-up policy in China, a large number of foreign cultures always in the package of business surge into China. Much of the contents not conductive to the moral construction of undergraduates cater to the entertainment mentality of undergraduates, which make the undergraduates indulged in it. Besides, its value concept is penetrating into the Chinese undergraduates' ideology and greatly impact on the value concept and lifestyle of contemporary undergraduates. An important performance in this respect is the excessive worship to the West festivals, entertainments, lifestyles and other aspects. The research shows that 82% of undergraduates are much more interested in the West Christmas Day, April fool's Day, Valentine's Day and Thanksgiving Day, and celebrate these festivals in different ways. But quite few students have much interest in Chinese traditional festivals such as Tomb sweeping day, Dragon Boat Festival and Moon cakes Day, only 26% of undergraduates said they want to go home to celebrate these traditional festivals. On the respect of entertainment, more than 50% of undergraduates show no interest in Chinese movies, but have s special favorite to the American Hollywood blockbuster. They are also significantly influenced by the West value concept of the lifestyle. They take individualism as highest. The concept of money and enjoyment worship is prevailing, the money and right are the standard to measure the value of everything. Their understanding to the west culture is neither comprehensive nor rational which presents the trend of blind worship.

3.1.3 Lose of Cultural Confidence

Cultural confidence refers to full affirmation for self cultural value and firm belief for self cultural vitality by a nationality, a nation and a political party (Shan, 2010). Enhancing cultural confidence is essential to carry forward national spirit and reinforce identification for national culture. As the main body of higher education, the mental outlook and cultural literacy of undergraduates are directly related to the hope and future of nation. However, with mutual impact of multi-culture in the world since 21st century, various thoughts in western developed countries surge in China with their powerful economic strength and through controlled media (Wang, 2008), so the traditional culture, mainstream ideology and cultural concept in China are impacted. Besides, ideological cognition of undergraduates is inadequate, and all of these lead to loss of cultural confidence.

The loss of cultural confidence among undergraduates mainly reflects as cultural inferiority to underestimate positive value of Chinese traditional culture. Chinese traditional culture has a long history with above 5,000 years, during which many thoughts gather much intelligence of ancient sages, Korea and Japan also absorb the cultural essence positively. It's regrettable that under the influence of growth environment and popular trend, the undergraduates haven't understood the value and importance of Chinese traditional culture. They even neglect harmonious and Great Unity thought advocated by Chinese traditional culture, as they thought that these values go against with individual value and hedonism pursued by them.

3.2 The Moral Redemption of Cultural Preferences Among Contemporary

How to reduce the negative impact of cultural preference among undergraduates, guide undergraduates to review the positive value in traditional culture thought is the problem that is worth to rethink.

3.2.1 Guide the Main Value Concept of Undergraduates With Chinese Traditional Culture

The socialist core value system is the mainstream value concept advocated in contemporary society. It is necessary to take the Chinese traditional culture as an important carrier to promote the construction of socialist core value system. On the one hand, the Chinese traditional culture is taken as an important source of constructing undergraduates' values. The Chinese traditional culture as the national spiritual nourishment nourished Chinese people from generation to generation and inspired Chinese nations to go forward bravely during the development of Chinese culture for several thousand years. Today, the essence of the traditional culture as an important material can also guide the undergraduates' values. The striving spirit of "as heaven maintains vigor through movements, a gentle man should constantly strive for selfperfection", the wishes of "when the Great Way prevails, all the people under heaven are dedicated to public-wellbeing" to maintain social order, the crisis awareness of "hardship will lead to prosperity, while comfort will incur destruction", the spirit of "self-cultivation, family management, national administration and the maintenance of the whole social order," sought for personal ideal, the responsibility of "be the first to worry about the troubles across the land, the last to enjoy universal happiness", the way of the doctrine of the mean to solve the contradiction, all of these excellent Chinese traditional cultural wealth are integrated in the spirit of Chinese nationality and the spirit of Times through transformation, and they are necessary spiritual sources for the growth of contemporary undergraduates. On the other hand, around the core of patriotism, it is essential to guide the value concept of undergraduates by the model demonstration effect of historic figures such as Chu Yuan, Lu you, Yue fei, and the educational significance of such traditional festivals and holidays as Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Day,

etc., as well as to help them fully recognize the essence of excellent traditional culture. On the third aspect, it is necessary to help the undergraduates to cultivate the cultural foundation and enhance the discrimination ability to culture through the cultural comparison of multiple levels and multiple perspectives in order to avoid undergraduates excessively close to the foreign culture, network culture but alienated to the classic of national traditional culture, as well as to guide the undergraduates' cultural preference to normal condition.

3.2.2 Cultivate the Undergraduates' Confidence in Culture

The confidence in culture is a mental expression of a nation or a country to keep its traditional culture and face the foreign culture of the world calmly. It does not require blaming the erosion of alien culture too much and the deep-rooted bad habits of traditional culture (Gu, 2006, December 6) as to the loss of the undergraduates' confidence in culture, but it's essential to have a deep reflection on the misery weakening of culture consciousness of contemporary undergraduates. The value concept of undergraduates is still not finally established, the judgment to the taste of a variety of cultures is not enough, and deviation in the value orientation and political belief may exist. These will definitely affect the undergraduates' confidence in Chinese traditional culture. Therefore, improving the cultural self-confidence of undergraduates under the multicultural background is the inevitable choice of education in colleges in the new period.

For one hand, it is necessary to improve the cultural appreciation ability of undergraduates. It is required to guide undergraduates to analyze which traditional culture has a positive value to the modern society, which is the federal dross, which foreign culture is the valuable cultural legacy and which reflects the utilitarian decadent ideas of Western society. It is also essential to guide undergraduates to criticize and inherits Chinese and foreign cultures by Marxist Approach, get rid of its shortcoming and take its advantage, and form the advanced socialist culture with Chinese characteristic. For another hand, it needs to cultivate the undergraduates' multicultural judgment ability. With the integration of world economy and the promoting of opening up in China, the penetration of Western cultural value concept is bond to weaken the value identity of contemporary undergraduates to Chinese culture in a certain extent. But it should not give up eating for fear of choking by this reason, but shall help undergraduates to understand, embody, protect, enhance, promote and disseminate national culture under the multicultural and multifarious environment (Gu, 2006, December 6), guide undergraduates to treat Chinese traditional culture in neither inferior nor conceited attitude on the basis of fully absorbing the result of advance culture, as well as evaluate the foreign culture objectively and fairly, refuse the narrow nationalism and cultural closed doctrine, and set up cultural confidence in a more open mentality.

3.2.3 Build Good Atmosphere of Chinese Traditional Culture

There are two important ways for inheriting national excellent traditional culture. The first is good social atmosphere because the value concept, custom and habit are generally transmitted by social channel. The second is school that transmitting national culture by way of education and this is an important way. The university is undertaking the obligation of transmitting scientific and cultural knowledge and bearing the important mission of carrying forwarding national culture and cultivating a national spirit, which is the important power of transmitting Chinese civilization.

For one hand, it is possible to propose a good atmosphere of the whole society to pay attention to traditional culture. The harmful cognition of undergraduates to Chinese traditional culture is fundamentally influenced by the larger environment of the whole traditional culture. The preservation of one form of culture is depended on the vast and heavy soil of people. The formation of cultural environment under the attention of people is the important factor of passing on the traditional culture. It requires proposing the society to pay attention to the good atmosphere of traditional culture, fully recognize the importance of traditional culture and utilize the important resource of traditional culture appropriately. On the contrary, it is difficult to cultivate and strengthen national cohesion if neglecting traditional culture. For another hand, it is necessary to make efforts to promote the traditional culture into the campus. As the key position of traditional cultural education, universities shall make great efforts in the aspect of course building related to traditional culture, or employ more related experts to hold the lecture of traditional humanities to widen undergraduates' cultural view comprehensively. Meanwhile, it's essential to widely publicize Chinese excellent traditional culture among undergraduates through the campus network, campus broadcasting, campus newspaper, periodical of students association, etc., and give full play to the educational function of campus media and present lasting appeal of traditional culture in every place of campus. The third aspect is that it requires attaching more attention to the function of media in the developing and transmission of traditional culture, and enhancing the guidance of public opinion in the mass media. The mass media shall focus on the overall situation, look at the future, and overcome sectionalism and the tendency of seeking quick success. take the publicity and public welfare in the first position, pay attention to the problems of traditional culture, introduce and publicize the elite of traditional culture, bear

the responsibility of humanities education to teenagers, improve the whole society's cognition to traditional culture, and let more and more undergraduates walk into Cultural Venues, get close to the classic and be near to tradition.

CONCLUSION

The cultural preference of undergraduates is greatly influenced by the cultural environment. Cultural preference can reflect cultural value orientation and moral level of contemporary college students. Findings about cultural preference of contemporary college students: Contradiction is between decreasing cognition of traditional culture and blind worship of western culture, fading of mainstream ideology and popularity of multi-culture. Undergraduate culture can not only reflect ideology situation of contemporary college students, but reflect their cultural value orientation. It will lead to the alienation of values, the missing of misery consciousness in culture and loss of cultural confidence. Therefore, we have taken measures, for example guide the main valuconcept of undergraduates with Chinese traditional culture, cultivate the undergraduates' confidence in culture and build good atmosphere of Chinese traditional culture.

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