Characteristics of Role Model Identification and Education Path for Elementary School Students

Chaojun Liu[1]

[1] Southwest Center for Ethnic Education and Psychological Research, Southwest University, Chongqing, 400715

Correspondence: Chaojun Liu, Southwest Center for Ethnic Education and Psychological Research, Southwest University, Chongqing, 400715.

Abstract

This study mainly uses the content analysis method, supplemented by the interview method, to explore the identification status of role models of elementary school students today. The study shows that the characteristics of elementary school students' role model character identification are: high identification with life role models that meet the characteristics of the times, coexistence of confusion between spiritual identification and behavior implementation of role model characters, coexistence of blind obedience and rationality of entertainment stars' trust, reinforcement of individual value and academic achievement, and weakness of revolutionary spirit cognition. To address the problems of role model identification of elementary school students, we explore positive and reasonable ways of role model education from five aspects: society, teaching materials, teachers, parents and students.

Keywords: elementary school students, moral education, role model characters

1. Introduction

The subject of morality and rule of law is ideological, humanistic, practical and comprehensive, and it is an important vehicle for national identity education (Liang Faxiang & Han Xingru, 2012). Education is the most important plan for a hundred years; students are the first to be educated. Based on the immature physical and mental development of elementary school students, they often have strong curiosity and outstanding imitation ability in the face of things. The arrangement and selection of the content of teaching materials reflect the mainstream value system advocated by the society and the national consciousness (Wu Yongjun, 1999). Sukhomlinsky strongly advocates the use of advanced role models as typical examples to educate students and believes that using role models to teach is the best and most direct method of education (Sukhomlinsky & Translation by Du Dengkun, 1984). If the behavior and qualities of the role models in the textbook are not recognized by students, it is difficult to inspire them to change their thinking or behavior, and the role of role models is lost.

This study analyzes the characteristics of role models in students' minds to find out the status of elementary school students' identification with role models of ideology and morality, the factors affecting the selection of role models for elementary school students, and thus proposes countermeasures to promote the identification of role models for elementary school students in order to help them develop comprehensively and healthily.

2. Primary School Students' Identification with Role Models

Elementary school C in Beibei District, Chongqing, contains grades 1-6, with 4 parallel classes in one grade. According to the needs of the study, students were given the following essay topics:

Essay topic: Role model figures in your heart

Requirements: (1) Who is your idol? (2) Write the reasons for choosing him/her as your role model; (3) Express your ideas smoothly and accurately; (4) Have a word count of at least 300 words. (Note: This essay will not be scored, so please feel free to say what you want.)

After analyzing the contents of 98 students' essays, 9 essays did not clearly indicate the role models in their hearts, which did not meet the needs of the study. The remaining 89 essays can be used for the analysis of "role models in primary school students' hearts".

2.1 Occupational Characteristics of Role Models in Primary School Students' Minds

By counting the occupations of the role models written in students' essays, the statistical results are shown in the figure 1.
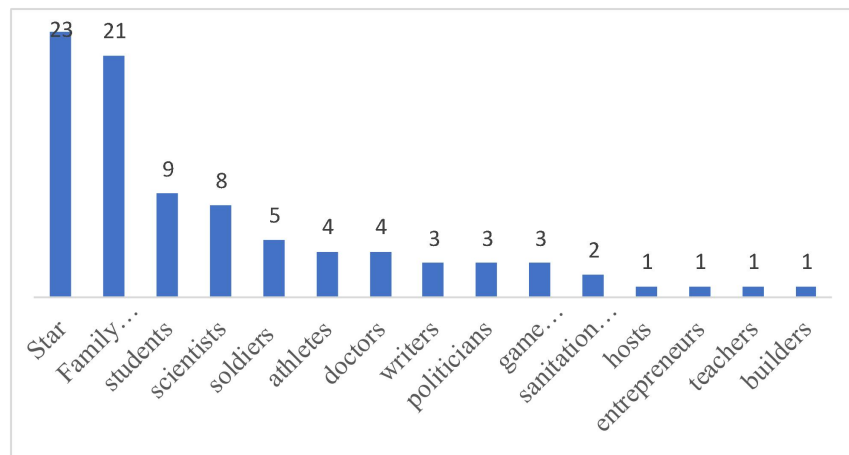

Figure 1. Occupational distribution of role models in elementary school students' minds

Students' role models' careers are broadly divided into four categories: the first category of entertainment stars; the second category of ordinary people around them such as parents, classmates and sanitation workers[1]; the third category such as scientists, athletes (Olympic champions), politicians and other people with outstanding contributions in related fields; and the fourth category of new professions in recent years such as e-sports players and game commentators.

2.2 Quality Characteristics of Role Models in Primary School Students' Minds

The qualities of role models in primary school students' minds are mainly summarized from the direct descriptions of role models in students' essays or their behaviors and deeds, as shown in Figure 2.
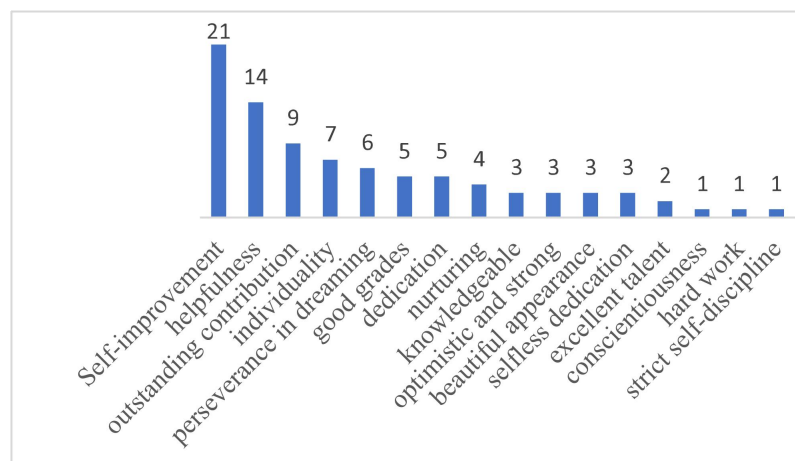

Figure 2. Distribution of role model characters in primary school students' minds

The qualities of role models in primary school students' essays are more than or equal to 5: self-improvement, helpfulness, outstanding contribution, individuality, persistence in dreams, excellent performance, and dedication.

2.3 Analysis of the Value Orientation of Role Models in Primary School Students' Minds

The values of the ideal role models for elementary school students are diversified, but their core values are to obtain "personal success", which is highlighted by the fact that most of the role models under elementary school students' pen are striving for self-improvement and persevering in their dreams in order to realize their own values and obtain personal success. Even the descriptions of outstanding people with outstanding contributions to society also focus on the stories behind their success. Take Neymar, a soccer player, who was initially ridiculed and questioned by others, but he trained hard to achieve his ideal of being a good soccer player, and finally gained many honors for his country because of his hard work and efforts. It is mentioned here that Neymar has achieved social value, but it is only an understatement, and students focus more on the breakthrough that Neymar himself has gained. In addition, in the minds of most students, idol stars do not contribute much to the development of the country, but they still train hard day in and day out for their dreams, and this value of striving for personal success is generally recognized by students. In the minds of elementary school students, not only those who can make outstanding contributions to the country can be respected, but also those who work hard and achieve success in their own positions are worthy of respect.

3. Analysis of Elementary School Students' Identification Characteristics with Role Models

Through the analysis of the characteristics of the role models selected by the students, we found that elementary school students' identification with role models is mainly manifested in the following aspects.

3.1 High Identification with Life Role Models

First of all, elementary school students generally identify with role models around them, such as family members, teachers and classmates. On the one hand, elementary school students' main activity areas are home and school, and their families, teachers and classmates are closely related to them; on the other hand, because their families, teachers and classmates are right under their eyes, they are more easily seen and touched by them. Second, elementary school students identify with scientists and other outstanding people who have made outstanding contributions in the field of science. Among the eight essays that chose scientists, five chose Yuan Longping, and the rest, one each from Zhong Nanshan, Einstein, and Copernicus. Among them, Yuan Longping and Zhong Nanshan are both unusual scientists living in modern times, which students can learn about through various multimedia devices and platforms, so students tend to choose scientists who are "closest to life". For the ordinary soldiers, they chose the comrade Lei Feng, who is helpful in life, rather than the soldier who fights and kills on the battlefield.

3.2 Spiritual Identity and Behavior Implementation Confusion Coexist

On the one hand, the textbook and primary school students are highly identified with role models with good inner qualities. Both the textbook and the students mentioned such intrinsic qualities as dedication, helpfulness, honesty and trustworthiness, which are generally in line with the characteristics of "moral nobility", indicating that moral nobility is highly recognized by both. On the other hand, elementary school students think that some of the qualities of role models covered in the textbook are unattainable for them. For qualities like "courageous sacrifice", they think that life is precious, and that the scenes of war in the textbook are too far from their life situations for them to feel them, so they cannot empathize with them.

3.3 Blind Obedience and Rationality of Entertainment Stars Coexist

On the one hand, from the current cultural expressions of elementary school students, their cultural values are far away from the social values advocated by the mainstream culture. The mainstream culture tends to promote social values, such as textbooks listing many role models such as Qi Jiguang and Wang Jinxi who sacrificed their small selves for the sake of the collective and the nation, advocating elementary school students to establish social values of contributing to society from a young age. However, a large number of elementary school students choose popular celebrities as role models, which shows the great influence of pop culture such as celebrities on elementary school students. On the other hand, a large portion of the values students identify with deep down are consistent with socially accepted cultural values, and traditional Chinese virtues are still highly recognized by the students. Prominently, they choose traffic stars as role models because of their beautiful qualities such as self-improvement, perseverance in dreams, and willingness to do good. The good qualities such as self-improvement and helpfulness have always been advocated by the mainstream culture.

3.4 Personal Value and Academic Achievement Are Reinforced

First of all, personal value is reinforced. This is reflected by the fact that elementary school students choose entertainment stars as role models instead of mainstream culture, which reflects their pursuit of individuality. In

addition, a certain proportion of elementary school students chose role models with the quality of "individual self". Secondly, academic achievement is reinforced. On the one hand, elementary school students chose the quality of "excellent academic performance" as the role model. On the other hand, when describing the role model, even if students did not directly mention academic achievement, such as "my father always tutored me in math", "Mr. Long criticized me for my declining grades", and "the continuous hard work that I learned from the idol stars" contributed to the success of the role model. However, the importance that elementary school students place on their academic performance is implicitly revealed by statements such as "my dad always tutored me in math," "teacher Long criticized me because my grades dropped," and "the hard work they learned from idol stars contributed to their academic performance". However, there are two sides to the reinforcement of individual value and academic achievement. Neither excessive self-consciousness nor the psychological stress caused by over-valuing grades is worth promoting.

3.5 Weakness of the Perception of the Revolutionary Spirit

It is worth noting that even though ordinary soldiers are more recognized among elementary school students, they do not recognize the revolutionary spirit in the traditional sense. They said, "I didn't realize that Lei Feng was a soldier, I thought he was just an ordinary person. We are too far away from overcoming. In these peaceful times, it is good enough for us ordinary people to be like Lei Feng, to be ready to lend a helping hand when others need it." Today's prosperity and national peace cannot be separated from those revolutionary leaders who worked long and hard to move the revolution forward, and from the soldiers who fought bravely to kill the enemy at the front. Even though the war years are far away through the efforts of those who came before us and the perseverance of many people today, the revolutionary spirit cannot be forgotten, and as the successor of socialism, we should not forget our original intention and remember our mission.

4. Exploring Effective Ways of Chinese Cultural Identity

4.1 Society: Building a Green and Lively Media Environment

In an era when everyone cannot live without the media, the mass media strengthen students' awareness of different role models through the propaganda and promotion of various role models, and influence students' choice of role models and their identification with them. First, build a green media environment. When pushing relevant character events, we should try to uphold diversity instead of specifically selecting some celebrity scandals, etc. for dissemination in order to gain attention; "when the success of a star is closer and more relevant to an individual, it is most capable of inspiring the individual to produce self-enhancement (Locklood, P, & Kunda, Z., 1997)," and when recommending entertainment stars, we should also select the positive energy with. When recommending entertainment celebrities, we should also select celebrity events with positive energy to report, and when promoting negative role models, we should also give positive guidance to students with positive energy, and devote ourselves to creating a green role model learning environment for students. Second, build a lively media environment. Nowadays, most of the reports on scientists, writers, doctors, etc. exist in official newspapers and news, and the official, patterned descriptions, shaped by the stereotypical dull role model characters, do not meet the aesthetics of elementary school students. Therefore, the publicity of role model characters should also keep up with the times and discover more lively ways to promote role model characters. For example, Kanghui uses vlogs for current affairs propaganda, which is a lively way to get more recognition from the general public.

4.2 Teaching Materials: Building a Good Firewall for the Selection of Role Model Characters

The Compulsory Education Character Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition) state that the teaching materials aim to promote the further development of students' moral quality, healthy psychology, legal consciousness and civic awareness, to form an optimistic attitude toward life, and to gradually establish a correct world view, outlook on life and values (Ji Ping, 2013). Objectively speaking, the textbook cannot be recognized by every student because of its wide range of use (Shi O., 2007), but if the selection of role models in the textbook is too rigid, such as the selection of outstanding characters, but the description of their deeds is too single, it will make students think that the qualities of this "role model" are unattainable and difficult to achieve even if they try hard. It is difficult to achieve them even if they try. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the system of compiling, examining, and selecting role model characters for ideology and morality textbooks, and to regulate the selection of role model characters for ideology and morality textbooks through a strict system. First of all, when formulating the textbook preparation plan, the principles of the selection of role models should be stipulated as one of the criteria for the selection of the content of the textbook, and a quantitative list of the types, qualities, and deeds of role models should be listed to ensure that the preparation plan is fully implemented. Secondly, in the process of textbook review, it is necessary to consciously review the tendency of each textbook in terms of the type, quality, and values of the selected role models, but also to review the whole set of textbooks in order to prevent the possible "cumulative effect" of the whole set of textbooks. Finally, in terms of the selection of teaching materials, the final users of teaching materials are students, and although primary and secondary school

students are not yet capable of judging the merits of teaching materials, they can appropriately draw on their opinions in the selection of role models.

4.3 Teachers: Innovative Explanation of Role Models

Teachers play an irreplaceable role in explaining the role models selected by the textbooks, whether students can recognize and accept them or not. Teachers need to pay attention to the following points in their interpretation of role models.

First, accuracy: a realistic attitude. On the one hand, when students fall into stereotypes of role models, teachers should strengthen their guidance such as mentioning Lei Feng, who consistently thinks of the spirit of helping people, but comrade Lei Feng is actually a soldier, shouldering the glorious mission of protecting the country. On the other hand, the teacher is a thinking individual, when interpreting the textbook role model characters, inevitably with subjective color, therefore, teachers should respect the objective authenticity of role model characters, not deliberately beautify their favorite role model characters, nor artificially carved role model characters deeds, should be as much as possible to obtain role model characters information, to restore a real and credible role model characters image to elementary school students.

Second, interesting: use various forms of teaching organization. The interestingness of the process of interpreting role model characters has a key role in the effect of elementary school students' identification with the role model characters in the textbook (Althof, W, & Berkowitz M.W., 2006). Teachers should use various forms to explain role model characters as much as possible within the limited time of the course, such as holding "evaluation sessions of role model characters", allowing students to evaluate role model characters and teachers to guide and comment on them; such as "video teaching method", which makes the video teaching method makes the deeds of role models more vivid and concrete.

Thirdly, life: Appropriately supplement the role models in life. Characters with similar experiences and distinctive characteristics are more likely to get learners' attention and enter into in-depth study (Zheng X., 2015). When the textbook mentions a role model character whose deeds are incomprehensible to students and produce recognition, teachers should introduce role model characters with similar or identical qualities to students appropriately, taking into account the characteristics of the times. For example, the textbook often mentions soldiers who died for their country, peace and development have become the new pattern, the war years are already relatively distant from students, and they may have questions about such qualities, teachers can use the class as an example to guide students who can sacrifice some small personal interests appropriately for the benefit of the class.

4.4 Parents: Provide Positive Guidance by Role Models

First of all, parents should take the initiative to actively improve their own ideological and moral quality through various ways, behave appropriately, teach their children by example, and set a good example for them; secondly, due to the different times and values, parents and children may have different understanding of a role model, such as parents think that idol stars have no appearance and do not contribute much to society, so they do not advocate idol stars as role models for their children, while students think that idol stars always have their own hardships from being small people to the big stage. Students, on the other hand, believe that idol stars always have their own unknown difficulties when they come from small figures to big stages. When parents and children's perceptions of role models conflict, parents should be more proactive in communicating with children and should not forcefully place their own values above those of their children. Finally, some parents have an inappropriate understanding of teaching to the test, placing too much emphasis on the impact of academic achievement on their students and expecting too much from them, resulting in a widespread phenomenon of students also placing too much emphasis on academic achievement. "Significant others are equivalent to role models in a way that helps to understand the significance of social and other people's influence and self-regulation (Shah, J. 2003)." Examinations as a criterion for talent selection, there are high and low scores for grading cannot be avoided, the excellence of students is made up of many factors, and test scores are only one aspect of measurement, parents' reasonable score expectations for their children are positive stimuli for some children, motivating them to achieve better academic performance, while for some sensitive children, it creates great academic stress, which can lead to serious psychological problems. In the case of children who are sensitive, this can create a great deal of academic stress and can lead to serious psychological problems.

4.5 Students: Enhance the Learning Motivation of Role Models

Due to the limitations of life experience and physical and mental development, elementary school students lack the ability to discern and judge the dazzling external information, and choose a variety of role models. The role models set up by human beings are often limited because they contradict the intrinsic mechanism of role modeling in many ways, and the negative influence of many "bad role models" in life cannot be ignored (Yin Xue & Gao Desheng, 2012). Therefore, as more experienced teachers and parents should provide positive

guidance, but children themselves should also have the initiative to do what they can for their own better development. First, set the right goals and choose role models for positive qualities. For example, many students choose idol stars as role model characters. When students see the luminous points of these stars, they should also examine the defects of the stars, choose the good qualities in the role model characters to learn, and take the initiative to actively avoid the defects that exist in the role model characters. Second, when encountering problems, take the initiative to communicate with teachers, parents and peers. For elementary school students with insufficient life experience and discernment ability, they have many doubts about the selection of role models. Is this role model worthy of my choice? What qualities should I learn from this character? I like this character, but what if the people around me don't like it? When encountering these confusions and problems, students cannot solve them independently, so they should take the initiative to communicate with their teachers, parents and peers, and should not be bent on going into a dead end. Third, actively improve their knowledge and actively participate in role model learning activities to enhance their in-depth understanding of role model characters. The lack of discernment of role model characters is mainly due to the lack of understanding of role model characters. Students should actively use various channels to fully understand the characteristics of role model characters in order to better select role model characters that can promote their own growth.

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[1]It is important to note that the "soldiers" in the students' essays are all helpful comrades of Lei Feng.