The Study of College Students’ Family Affection Values Based on Grounded Theory

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Abstract. The Grounded Theory approach is adopted in this research to analyse three-level encoding based on firsthand information acquired by interviewing, investigating, analyzing and generalizing, which establish the theoretical model of college students' family affection values, raise three factors concerning the family cognition, family sentiment and family action to build college students' family affection values and explore the path for enhancing college students' family affection values.

1. Introduction

Family affection is the most strong attachment between loved ones, the most natural and sincere feeling embedded in humanity, and most direct and spiritual resonance-arousing emotion[1]. Treasure this affection is the traditional virtue persistently insisted by Chinese nation for thousands of years. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, once delivered an important speech on the celebration of Spring Festival which specifically expressed his hope that Chinese people would continue to attach great importance to family construction and carry forward the traditional family virtues of the Chinese nation[2]. But the profound changes at home and abroad in new era, the diversification of market economy, and the constant conflict between eastern and western cultures inevitably bring negative influence on college students’ thought and emotion. Weak family affection consciousness and fading family affection values sometimes occur among college students.

This research aims to adopt Grounded Theory in studying college students’ family affection values in order to find dimensions that influence their family affection values, explore how to establish localized family affection values model of college students, discuss path for enhancing college students’ family affection values, and provide reference on how to enhance college students’ family affection values for relevant departments.

2. Research method

Grounded Theory is an important qualitative research method first put forward by two sociologists, Anselm Strauss from Columbia University and Barney Glaser from University of Chicago, in their monograph The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research[3]. In recent years, some Chinese sociologists tried to explore the application of Grounded Theory in Management, Pedagogy, Statistics, Tourism and other research fields. It is proven to be an effective way for theoretical construction localization. Different from quantitative research method, Grounded Theory’s main purpose is not to verify assumed existing thoughts, but to adopt a top-down approach to complete the theory construction based on experience. In Grounded Theory, information collection, sorting and analysis start and proceed simultaneously and run in a continuous cycle[4]. The main process includes open coding, axial coding and selective coding.
3. Research process

3.1 Sample information

In this research, college students were interviewees while semi-structured interview using problem focused interview approach was adopted. Totally 50 students joined the interview and brought 40 effective interview cases. Among interviewees, boys made up 30% while girls made up 70%; 32% were from one-child family while 68% were from non-one-child family; freshmen made up 40%, sophomore made up 30%, junior made up 20%, and senior made up 10%; 66% were from countryside while the other 34% were from the city.

3.2 Interview process

Interviewees were invited one by one to the office to ensure a relaxing atmosphere. They were required to state the problem according to the fact and received promise that we would make the interview anonymous and classified to eliminate their anxiety. With interview outlines were made in advance, each interview took about 40 minutes with note-taking and recording in the whole process. During the interview, researchers focused on listening and tried their best not to interfere interviewees’ statement in order to let interviewees speak freely so they were able collect comprehensive information as best as they could. After the interview, the content was sorted into a text with 63529 Chinese characters.

3.3 Information analysis

Among 40 effective interview cases, 30 cases were selected randomly for Grounded analysis.

3.3.1 Open coding

Open coding is to analyze the sorted text characters by characters, sentence by sentence, continually compare problems occurred in the information for marking problems with concept labels, put similar concepts together to extract scope relevant to the concepts, and finally highlight the focus of problems. Through conceptualization and categorization of information in this process, the code with 15 entries of factors influencing college students' family affection values were formed: A1 Consciousness of paying attention of parents’ birthday (4.12%), A2 Behavior in important holidays (4.23%), A3 Attention to parents’ health (5.18%), A4 Initiative to communicate with parents (5.37%), A5 Frequency to communicate with parents (6.35%), A6 Relation with parents (7.61%), A7 Method to handle conflicts (8.59%), A8 People to speak to (7.39%), A9 Feeling when receiving money for living expenses (6.46%), A10 Company with parents (6.27%), A11 Behavioral expression to chores (7.43%), A12 Behavioral expression to study (8.92%), A13 Behavioral expression to money (8.56%), A14 Behavioral expression to time (8.33%), A15 Behavioral expression to crisis (5.19%).

3.3.2 Axial coding

Axial coding is to adopt a typical analysis mode of “cause→phenomenon→context→influencing factors→behavioral or interactive strategies→result”, using internal relations like cause and effect relation, context relation, and time relation to create organic connections between compiled concepts and categories while axial concept is used to continuously expand categories in order to establish internal relations between categories based on the principle of grasping interviewees’ intention and mental state. In this process, 15 open codes can be summarized into 3 axial codes: B1 Family cognition (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) (25.25%), B2 Family sentiment (A6, A7, A8, A9, A10)(36.32%), B3 Family action (A11, A12, A13, A14, A15)(38.43%).

3.3.3 Selective coding

Selective coding is a process that selects a core category to connect it with other categories systematically, verify their relation, and gradually improve categories that are conceptualized and incomplete for the moment. With repeated observations to 15 open codes and deep analysis to 3 axial codes, the core focus of this research can be categorized as “enhancing college students’ family affection value”, and this core category will be used to lead other categories.
3.3.4 Theoretical saturation test

Theoretical saturation is a moment that no additional data can be acquired to help analyzer further develop the feature of certain category. It is the standard to determine when to stop sampling\(^6\). In the research process, 3 operators conducted a detailed analysis of the statistics. In the open coding process, consistency rate of three operators reached 90.1% while consistency rate of each two operators reached 91.5%, 89.9%, and 90.8% respectively. According to formula for intercoder reliability in qualitative data analysis: \(\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{number of consistent codes}}{\text{number of all codes}}\)^7, it is shown that the reliability of this research is good. In addition, the “Cronbach’s alpha” for reliability test is \(\alpha=0.793\), also indicates a preferably high reliability in this research.

4. Research result

4.1 Structural model for college students’ family affection values

Based on Grounded Theory approach, this research established the structural model for college students’ family affection values as a result. There are three factors, including family cognition, family sentiment and family action, constructed the students’ family affection values. Thus, it can be seen that family affection values is a multilevel, multidimensional and comprehensive system constructed by cognition, sentiment, action and other psychological components. Family cognition, family sentiment and family action are three basic elements of this concept. Only when the three basic elements are organically combined and create the best organizational effect can cultivation of family affection values be promoted.

4.2 Analysis of model elements

4.2.1 Family cognition

College students’ family cognition is their feeling and consciousness towards family affection. That is to say, you need to know what to do and what not to do in face of the family. This is the primary condition to form the family affection values, including consciousness of paying attention of parents’ birthday, behavior in important holidays, attention to parents’ health, initiative to communicate with parents, and frequency to communicate with parents.

4.2.2 Family sentiment

College students’ family sentiment comes from their heart and originate from their feelings toward family. It is an emotional experience when they evaluate their efforts for family affection and a dynamic field for college students to form their family affection values. This mainly includes relation with parents, method to handle conflicts, people to speak to, feeling when receiving money for living expenses, and company with parents. Since ancient times, Chinese nation has always been a nation highly advocates sentiment. Bonds of kinship, brotherhood and other sentiment are reflected in daily lives the whole time.

4.2.3 Family action

College students’ family action is their specific action in social contexts when they should fulfill their family affection duty. This mainly includes behavioral expression to chores, behavioral expression to study, behavioral expression to money, behavioral expression to time, behavioral expression to crisis. The family action is college students’ self-conscious practice and fulfillment of their family affection duty. Family affection not only needs expression, but also needs action.

5. Path for enhancing college students’ family affection values

5.1 Organic combination of family affection education and ideological and political education

The core of ideological and political education lies in the student-oriented approach, and family affection education is just a good evidence of this point. See from their relation, family affection education and ideological and political education cannot exist effectively without the other. On one hand, ideological and political education is one of the theoretical basis of family affection education;
on the other hand, family affection education is one of the main content of ideological and political education and plays an indispensable role in shaping college students’ moral character and improve their sentiment. An advanced family affection education mode will enforce the organic combination of the two, and will be good for better family affection education function in ideological and political education[8]. Therefore, lay emphasis on organic combination of family affection education and ideological and political education and carry out ideological and political education by starting with family affection will narrow the psychological gap between teachers and students, enhance college students' family affection values, and improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

5.2 Organic combination of family affection education and traditional culture

Tradition culture is the crystal of our ancestors’ wisdom which stands in the history for thousands of years and become the soul of the Chinese nation as well as the source of advanced ideas. College students today inherit fine traditional cultures like “culture of filial piety”, “ideology of benevolence” and etc. The value of this inheritance is that they can have a kind heart, self-discipline and tolerance. Combine family affection education and traditional culture together organically through having family affection lectures, organizing family affection keynote speeches, watching family affection themed movies, participating in labor that brings family affection experience, acting family affection scene plays, writing family affection themed articles and so on will help to solve college students family affection problems, enrich content of family affection education, and improve the effect of this education.

5.3 Organic combination of family affection education and new media

With fast development of networking, digitalization and informatization, new media represented by Wechat, micro-blog, and QQ is becoming more and more popular among college students. Therefore, organic combination of family affection education and new media is a necessary trend for higher education development in the new normal. While providing advanced carrier for family affection education, new media brings unprecedented challenges. Specifically, new media should actively integrate with family affection education, keep up with times, creatively carry out family affection education activities that have characteristics of the times and meet national mainstream value orientation; plan family affection education activities with rich connotation and values necessary for college students’ individual growth and development; pay attention to affective commitment, cater to college students’ realistic demand of family affection, use the form of “talk about people and things around you”, give full play to peer modeling, and construct scientific and complete new media family affection education system in order to improve effect of family affection education as a result.

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References


