Affection and Culture Identification: Connotation and Logics

Qiu Liu*

School of Foreign Language, Changchun Normal University, Changchun, Jilin, 130032, China
107454420@qq.com
*Corresponding author

Abstract: *The youth are the main targets for shaping cultural values. Cultural identity is closely related to the development of a nation and plays a positive role in its stability. Therefore, in the process of shaping the value of youth, revealing the interaction mechanism between affection and cultural identity has strong theoretical and practical significance for promoting the education of the socialist core value system and enhancing national cohesion. This study divides cultural identity into two dimensions: cultural identity consciousness and cultural affection consciousness. Affection is inseparable from human mode of thinking and action, and there are circular cumulative causal effects between affection and cultural identity. Based on the students' interview and observation, this study gathers the information and employs Boston four-quadrant matrix to analyse the status quo of students' cultural identity consciousness and cultural affection consciousness, and puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for the improvement of cultural cognitive identity and cultural emotional identity.*

Keywords: *Cultural Identity Consciousness; Emotional Identification; Cumulative Causal Effect*

1. Connotation of Cultural Identification

Identity, logically, means that the two share the same identity. Cultural identity, being interpreted from the psychological level, is a psychological process in which individuals obey and identify with group attitudes and behaviors. It emphasizes that in the process of comparing and comparing with others, it is a psychological sense of belongingness to establish their own cognitive process and emotional process of "who I am" and "who I am not" [1] (Wang Xing, 2000). Therefore, the direct connotation of cultural identity is the sense of belongingness to native culture. It is embodied in the identity pursuit of which region and country a person comes from and the strong degree of his identity with cultural traditions, which is the pursuit of his own identity and the recognition and identification of the value orientation of native culture. Self-identification and Self-affirmation emphasized by cultural identity should be based on the full acceptance of past history and memory, which is a continuous process and cannot be one-sided and localized [2]. (Zhang Xudong, 2005) It can be seen that the connotation of cultural identity involves two levels: the first level, the identity consciousness of cultural identity. The meaning, interpretation and judgment of cultural identity are more related to cultural belief, value identity and system identity than the material level of culture. The development of material culture is a rapid process, such as high-speed rail replacing carriages and We Chat replacing letters. Therefore, it is inaccurate and unscientific to judge cultural identity by material identity. The degree of economic development is related to cultural identity, but it is not a simple positive correlation function. Under the acceptance of national emotion pride and the oppression of foreign culture, the internal driving force and cohesion of cultural identity are stronger, which will be elaborated in detail in the third part later. If cultural identity is a judgment at the level of value and system, then cultural identity should be a defense of the legitimacy of self-cultural value judgment and an explanation of the legitimacy of self-life and behavior. Therefore, the identification of cultural identity of human shared emotions, such as reason, cannot be completely equated with cultural identity, and cultural identity should be a dialectical identity based on cultural particularity, differencing from other people's cultural value judgment. The second level is the emotional closeness consciousness of cultural identity. The process of cultural identity is a psychological process of objective inheritance and subjective acceptance of humanity, so it contains human emotional factors. At the same time, the result of cultural identity also has emotional elements, and the sense of belongingness is ultimately the satisfaction of human emotional needs. Maslow explained different levels of human needs from a psychological point of view. The third level of psychological needs is the need for belongingness and love. Human beings

need to belong to a certain group or community, so as to resist loneliness and strangeness.

Therefore, consciously or unconsciously seeking acceptance is more of an emotional process.

The scope of cultural identity involved in this study does not distinguish between individual cultural identity category and group (social) identity category. This study mainly focuses on young people's cultural orientation and cultural awareness of the core value system of Chinese culture under the confrontation of other cultures, especially the so-called global culture (so-called universal culture).

2. Connotation of Affection

James Langer [3] (1890) and Cannon Budd [4] (1914) defined the connotation of emotion from the physiological point of view, which expressed that emotion is the emotional experience from the change of awareness caused by the physical reaction caused by the stimulation of external perceptions. Freud [5] (1920) psychologically analyzed that emotions were related to people's internal driving force and unconsciousness. Rapaport [6] (1953) concluded that emotion was the unconscious instinctive energy of human beings to stimulation, which is manifested in two forms: action (idea) and experience (emotion). Watson [7] (1930), the representative of behaviorist emotion theory, pays attention to the law between emotion and environment. Arnold's (1960) theory [8] of cognitive evaluation of emotions is the first to associate the generation of emotions with advanced cognitive processes. The theory distinguished affection from emotions. Affection is a positive or negative evaluation of the object; Emotion is an evaluation of whether what happens to us is beneficial or harmful to us. And in employing terms under this context, the study may not distinguish the use of emotion and affection in the following explanations. Ellis (A. Ellis, 1998) [9] emphasized that the source of emotions comes from individual thoughts and concepts of understanding. In the ABC theory, A stands for activating events; B stands for individual views, explanations and evaluations of this event, that is, Belief; C represents the emotional reaction and behavioral Consequences of individuals following this event.

Based on the above scholars' definitions of affection and emotion, it can be roughly summarized as follows: (1) Affection is the necessary physiological and psychological stress response that people react to the change in external environment; (2) Affection reaction will lead to behavioral results; (3) Affection is highly correlated with one's cognition. In this study, the definition of emotion emphasizes its psychological stress reaction, and according to the psychological concept category, emotion is usually used to describe feelings with profound and stable social significance. Emotion can constitute a basic motivation system, which can drive people to engage in activities and improve the efficiency of people's activities. Generally speaking, people's actions depend on their own internal driving force, and emotions can amplify and enhance the signals provided by internal driving force, thus stimulating people's actions more favorably. At the same time, the motivation function of emotion is also manifested in the driving of cognitive activities, which plays a role in driving people's cognitive and inquiry activities.

3. Logics of Cultural Identification and Cultural Affection

In the current cultural context of modernization and globalization, there are two dimensions of conflict in cultural identity: in the time dimension, cultural identity has historical characteristics, and the contradiction is highlighted in the conflict between Chinese traditional culture and modern culture; In the spatial dimension, cultural identity has the characteristics of self-legitimacy compared with other cultures, and the contradiction is highlighted in the conflict between cultural identity and cultural particularity between Chinese culture and global culture. Under the cultural conflict based on the dimensions of time and space, the "identity confusion" [10-11] of emotion in cultural identity forms a circular causal mechanism with cultural identity. Cumulative causation [12] holds that in the dynamic process of social development, there is a cyclic cumulative causal relationship among various factors of social development, and the change of one factor will lead to the change of another factor, which in turn strengthens the development of the first factor and forms a cyclic causal relationship. Base on the above analysis, there is a cyclic causal relationship between affection and cultural identity. Cultural identity is a process of accumulation of cultural cognitive identity and cultural emotional identity driven by affections. Cultural identity is related to time. People reflect on themselves from past events and explain their behaviors and choices from positive emotions, thus forming national self-memory, constantly affirming themselves in real life, and further forming their own behavior judgment standards. Cultural cognitive identity promotes cultural emotional identity driven by emotions; this kind of

positive emotion can deconstruct historical memory positively, and cultural emotional identity promotes the sublimation of cultural cognitive identity. In this way, it can complete a continuous transformation process from cultural self-esteem to cultural self-confidence.

As in psychological category, affection has the characteristics of adaptability and motivation. Ruth (1934) pointed out in Cultural Pattern that the development of culture had the motivation of "affection", and emotion is the internal driving force of cultural pattern integration [13]. Affection is a behavioral characteristic in interactive situations, which permeates our ways of thinking [14] (Myers, 1994) and affects adolescents' identity acquisition [15] (Rosenblum and Lewis, 2003). When a nation is in his rising period, the external expression of national pride is obvious, and with this promotion, cultural identity will also be enhanced [16] (Zheng Xiaoyun, 1992). More researchers believe that higher self-esteem is associated with higher national cultural identity[17] (Bracey, Bamaca, Umana-taylor, 2004). At the same time, national and cultural identity increases with age, and higher levels of cultural identity are associated with more positive attitudes and affections [18] (Phinney and Ferguson Tate, 1997). Therefore, the cumulative causal relationship between cultural identity and cultural positive emotions is self-evident.

Cultural identity takes cultural cognition as its origin and foundation, and the understanding of the nature of things and their development laws is the basis for human beings to form identity. It can also be expressed that if one wants to form identity with things, one must understand what it is, what characteristics it has and what development laws exist, and believe in this understanding before one can form identity. However, with the development of the world and the change of external environment, cognition is a constantly changing process, which may not be completely synchronized, but it will eventually lead to the change of cultural identity. There are two kinds of emotions in cultural identity, cultural discrimination and cultural emotion [16] (Zheng Xiaoyun, 1992). Cultural discrimination, like populism, judges the merits and demerits of other cultures with its own culture as the criterion, thus forming an unfair discriminatory attitude towards other cultures. Cultural emotion corresponds to cultural discrimination, which means that when being discriminated against by culture, dissatisfaction and anger against one's unfair discrimination can cause a higher level of cultural identity.

Cultural identity inevitably involves ideological identification, so it cannot ignore the impact of negative emotions from ideological events (certain historical events) on cultural identity. In the cyclical process of self-criticism, self-rebellion, self-transcendence, self-destruction, and self-regeneration, Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence [19] proposes not the negation but the affirmation of oneself, not becoming another but returning to oneself. When a nation is at a disadvantage position (measured here by its ability to promote economic development), cultural identity forms a self-defense consciousness in contrast and comparison. Cultural identity automatically positions itself and generates a crisis awareness of cultural development, inevitably causing fluctuations in people's emotional attachment to their own culture [16] (Zheng Xiaoyun, 1992). This situation is more likely to produce a cultural self-esteem oriented towards defending the legitimacy of one's own culture, alongside a cultural inferiority complex arising from comparative perspectives. Within these complex emotions, people drive the integration of their own cultural patterns while dialectically approaching cultural differences in seeking cultural convergence.

These all show a tendency, while inheriting culture, young people constantly practice their activities in line with self-cultural norms. When they come into contact with other cultures, they can conduct self-reflection or even deny self-cultural behaviors, in order to form self-cultural orientation in constant reflection. Therefore, permeating and communicating in a constructive emotional way can eliminate the early closure or dispersion of youth identity and further promote youth's commitment to cultural identity.

4. Empirical Study

Based on the previous understanding of cultural identity and cultural affection, this study surveyed a total of 54 undergraduate students from three classes of the 2021 majoring in English at a university. The research focused on cultural cognitive aspects and emotional attitudes, categorizing results using the BCG matrix framework borrowed from the Boston Consulting Group. The scale ranged from 0 to 9, with 5 as the midpoint, resulting in four types (Figure 1):

Self-aware Type: Students who rated their cognitive and emotional self-assessment above 5 (with 9 being the highest level). They demonstrate positive awareness of Chinese culture and ideological aspects such as national policies, regulatory frameworks, socialist core values, and educational

ideologies. They exhibit a positive emotional acceptance of their identity, actively identify with these values, and serve as exemplary practitioners.

Loyal Type: Students whose self-cognitive assessment is below 5, but emotional identification is above 5. They exhibit high confidence and emotional attachment to Chinese culture despite a less clear understanding of cultural and political ideologies.

Anxious Type: Students whose self-cognitive assessment is above 5, but emotional identification is below 5. They have a clear understanding of Chinese culture and political ideologies but show low confidence and emotional attachment to culture.

Passive Type: Students whose self-cognitive assessment and emotional identification are both below 5. They show a lack of clear understanding of Chinese culture and political ideologies, as well as low confidence and emotional attachment to culture.
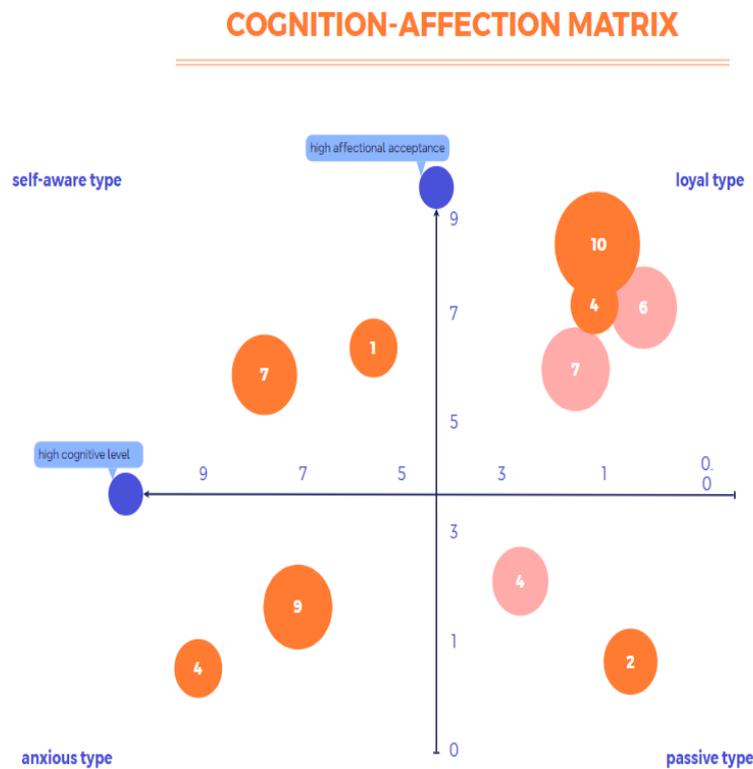

Figure 1: Cognition-affection matrix

Based on the above observations and investigation, for self-aware type students, the key point of ideological and political education lies in fully believing in their guiding role in classroom learning and activities. The survey found that such students at our university typically become probationary party members or young Marxist scholars, serving as exemplary role models who can guide loyal and anxious type students to become future self-aware type students.

Regarding loyal type students, the focus of ideological and political education is on further interpreting culture and ideology, guiding them to identify appropriate ideological points for cultural confidence cultivation. It was found through discussions that most students in this age group belong to the loyal type.

Although the proportion of anxious type students is small, their issue lies in clear self-awareness but low self-esteem. When dealing with such students, it's important to first analyze the reasons causing their anxiety. While they have a thorough understanding of Chinese culture and institutions, they have experienced unfair treatment or failure in social feedback during their growth, leading them to internalize these experiences and develop skepticism and rejection towards culture. They crave acceptance and cultural affirmation, which results in cultural anxiety.

Passive type students constitute a smaller proportion. From their feedback, they passively accept

their own culture and ideological education in the classroom without interest, curiosity, or acceptance. The key for these students is to "ignite their passion." Addressing their motivational issues could potentially lead them to develop into anxious or loyal type students.

5. Conclusion

Cultural identity is the dialectical unity of cultural identity orientation and cultural emotion orientation. To sum up, cultural identity is a positive explanation of self-specific cultural legitimacy. Cultural identity is a constantly changing process concept. The process of cultural identity is the development and integration of culture after the confrontation between time dimension and space dimension. In this kind of cultural conflict, whether it is the conflict of self-cultural innovation or the conflict between self-culture and other culture, emotion or affection could works as catalysts for cultural development to promote cultural integration, and in turn strengthening national emotions and further realizing cultural transcendence. At the same time, affection is highly related to cognition, and cultural emotion can promote higher-level cultural identity.

Acknowledgement

References

[1] Wang Xing. On Cultural Identity in the Process of Contemporary European Integration--Also on EU's Cultural Policy and Intention [J]. International Political Studies, 2000, (4): 120-126

[2] Zhang Xudong. Cultural identity in the era of globalization[M]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005, (1)

[3] James L. Psychology[M]. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1890

[4] Cannon B. Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage[M]. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915

[5] Sigmund F. A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis[J]. Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease, 1920, 52(6):548-549.

[6] Rapaport D. Personality and psychotherapy: An analysis in terms of learning, thinking, and culture [J]. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1953, 23(1), 204–208.

[7] Watson J. Behaviorism [M]. University of Chicago Press, 1930

[8] Arnold M B. Emotion and Personality [M]. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.

[9] Albert Ellis. Personal Reflection[J]. Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy, 1998, 16(4): 213-222.

[10] Erikson E H. Childhood and society [M]. New York: Norton, 1963.

[11] Erikson E H. Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership on the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi [J]. Daedalus, 1968, 97(3):695-730.

[12] Myrdal G. Economic Theory and Under-Developed Regions[M]. London: Duckworth, 1957, 13

[13] Ruth Benedict. Cultural model [M]. Beijing: Huaxia Publishing House, 1987

[14] David Myers. Social psychology [M]. People's Post and Telecommunications Press, 2016.

[15] Rosenblum G D, Lewis M. Emotional Development in Adolescence [M]. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008.

[16] Zheng Xiaoyun. Cultural Identity and Cultural Change [M]. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1992, (10): 18

[17] Bracey J R, Bámaca M Y, Umaña-Taylor A J. Examining Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem Among Biracial and Monoracial Adolescents[J]. Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 2004, 33(2): 123-132.

[18] Phinney J S, Ferguson D L, & Tate J D. Intergroup attitudes among ethnic minority adolescents: A causal model [J]. Child Development, 1997, 68, 955-969.

[19] Nietzsche F W. Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody[M]. Oxford Worlds Classics, 2008, 11.