

# *Research on the Cognition and Inheritance of Chinese Traditional Culture by College Students and Teachers*

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**Abstract**—Chinese traditional culture has a long history of thousands of years. Chinese universities are the places for obtaining and spreading knowledge, college students and teachers are of great significance to the spreading of Chinese traditional culture. By using the questionnaire method, both teachers' and students' understanding and inheritance of Chinese traditional culture are investigated in a university. The survey found that Chinese university students and teachers can understand the meanings of Chinese traditional culture well. About half of university students and teachers are able to pinpoint the three cultural patterns: Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. In terms of reading the simple classical Chinese and the four masterpieces of China, books with high reading rate among teachers are also the books with high reading rate among students. In the survey, 85.8% of the students and 92% of the teachers are willing to pass on the traditional Chinese culture. This survey shows that Chinese university students and teachers are full of enthusiasm for Chinese traditional culture and are willing to inherit it.

**Keywords**—Higher education; Chinese traditional culture; cognition; inheritance

## I. INTRODUCTION

As the Chinese nation's spiritual root and cultural soul, the Chinese traditional culture, which has a long history and profound contents, is a rich spiritual treasure.<sup>[1]</sup> Now, with more and more people paying attention to Chinese traditional culture, Chinese traditional culture has become more and more popular in the world. With the developing of society, the Chinese traditional culture is also progressing continuously and has some development in the new times.

Carrying forward the traditional Chinese culture is inseparable from the support of education.<sup>[2]</sup> As the most vigorous, creative and vital group in the society, college students have a great influence on the development of Chinese traditional culture as well as their understanding and acceptability of Chinese traditional culture. The inheritance of higher education to traditional culture is mainly reflected in the cognition of college students and teachers to Chinese traditional culture. At the same time, Chinese traditional culture has an impact on the world outlook, outlook on life and values of college teachers and students.

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Supported by the Tianjin Agricultural University science and technology development fund in 2016, Study of Chinese traditional culture on innovative talents in Agricultural universities -- an example of Tianjin Agricultural University (project number 2016SZZX04)

Universities play an active role in inheriting Chinese traditional culture. The inheritance of colleges and universities is mainly carried out through training objectives, teaching contents, teacher groups and campus culture. Higher education not only inherits Chinese traditional culture, but also has the function of cultural innovation. Because college students have the ability of independently thinking, they are also extremely sensitive to cultural conflicts. When learning Chinese traditional culture, they are generally based on their existing cognition, combined with its own world view, personal view and values. Therefore, college students' learning process of Chinese traditional culture is also a process of communicating, conflict and integration between Chinese traditional culture and other cultures. In this way, colleges and universities have become the controversy between traditional culture and modernization, native culture and foreign culture, which makes colleges and universities easy to produce new cultural concepts and gradually become the mainstream culture. It is necessary to investigate the cognition and inheritance of Chinese traditional culture between teachers and students. Therefore, we conducted a survey on a university to investigate students' and teachers' cognition and inheritance of traditional Chinese culture.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

At the beginning of the investigation, our research group reviewed the relevant literature and designed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two categories: the student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire. A total of 300 questionnaires were placed in the university, including 250 student questionnaires and 50 teacher questionnaires. After investigation 225 student questionnaires and 50 teacher questionnaires were recycled. After questionnaire collection, we analysis the questionnaire, the survey results are as follows

### A. Student Questionnaire

In this investigate, 225 students questionnaires were collected. There were 56 students in arts and 169 in science students. There were 73 boys and 149 girls and 3 students did not specify the sex. 82 people had previously participated in such surveys, 123 people had not participated, and 20 people had not been identified. The origin of origin covers 31 provinces and autonomous regions in China.

China is an ancient country, with thousands of years of history which lay a rich basis for the lives of its inhabitants.<sup>[3]</sup> Chinese traditional culture involves many aspects of life, and contains many contents involving Chinese religions, traditional literature, Chinese music and opera, Chinese calligraphy and painting, martial arts, traditional Chinese medicine, traditional cuisine, traditional festivals etc.

1) Students' learning of Chinese traditional culture

a) *The beginning time and learning way for students to learn Chinese traditional culture*

According to the questionnaire, 80.9% of students were already exposed to ancient poetry and other Chinese classics in primary school and pre-school age, 15.6% were in junior high school and 3.1% were in high school. 0.4% of college students don't know much about traditional Chinese culture before they go to college, but they begin to understand traditional Chinese culture after they go to college.

There are many ways for college students to learn Chinese traditional culture, among which the proportion of books and classroom learning is the highest, reaching 80.9% and 78.2% respectively. At the same time, students tend to study Chinese traditional culture through one or more ways, 30.2% of students studying Chinese traditional culture through one way, 20.9% of students from two ways, 25.3% of students from three, and 23.6% of students from four.

b) *Students' cognition of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in Chinese traditional culture*

The core of Chinese traditional culture is the three cultural patterns of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, the benevolence of Confucianism, the equality of Buddhists, and the nature of Taoism are all the pursuit of Chinese value. These ideological values are still preserved by the modern Chinese and have not disappeared completely with the changes of the times. Many Chinese people do not have a clear religious belief, but on the subconscious level more or less retained some of the Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and some of the content. In the survey, 47.1% of the students can accurately select Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism to refer to Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

c) *Students' cognition of positive thoughts in Chinese traditional culture*

Chinese traditional culture is the Chinese nation for thousands of years of cultural heritage, embodies the vitality and cohesion of the Chinese nation. The core of Chinese traditional culture is people foremost. People view the world, think about life, distinguish between good and evil, and distinguish between right and wrong. Chinese traditional culture is an important Spiritual pillar for the Chinese people and the Code of conduct for Chinese people. For example, "As heaven maintains vigor through movements, a gentle man should constantly strive for self-perfection. As earth's condition is receptive devotion, a gentle man should hold the outer world with broad mind", one of the famous sentences in traditional Chinese culture, not only teaches us to struggle but also teaches us to tolerance. Another famous sentences "Everyone should be concerned about the rise and fall of the world" is full of patriotism, and inspire our feelings of

protecting our country. All these are symbols of the Chinese national spirit and have a strong stimulating effect on the general public.

d) *A survey of students' reading of the four simple classical books*

The ancient written standard in China was Classical Chinese. It was used for thousands of years, but was mostly reserved for scholars and intellectuals in the past. The famous Chinese classical literatures are The Four Books (*The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, The Analects of Confucius, The Mencius*) and The Five Classics (*The Classic of Poetry, The Classic of History, The Three Rites, The I Ching, The Spring and Autumn Annals*). Because these classical Chinese works were writings in classical style, and usually difficult to understand for the people in this period. Mr. Liu Guozheng listed four books as the representatives of *The Mencius, The Grand Historian, Dream Pool Essays, Strange Tales of Liaozhai*.<sup>[4]</sup> Research shows that, 58.7% of students have read *Strange Tales of Liaozhai*. The percentages of students who have read *The Mencius, the Grand Historian, Dream Pool Essays* are respectively 29.8%, 45.8%, 11.6%. Only 3.1% of students have read all of the four books, 10.7% have read three, 23.1% have read two, 60.4% have read one, and 2.7% have not made a choice.

e) *A survey of students' reading of the four masterpieces of China*

The four masterpieces of China are *The Romance of the three Kingdoms, Water Margin, Journey to the West, and Dream of the Red Mansions*. 37.8% of the students had read all four parts, 20.4% had read 3 kinds, 17.3% had read 2 kinds, 23.6% had read 1 species, and 0.9% had not read it. Look at the survey from another way, the most read book is *Journey to the West* achieved 76.4%, the other three books were read by 57.8%, 60.4% and 62.2% of the students.

2) *Students' inheritance of Chinese traditional culture*

The contemporary influence of traditional Chinese culture on the Chinese nation lies in many aspects, such as language, region, economic life and so on. and most importantly, it constitutes the core of our common psychological quality. It constitutes the common cultural psychology and identity of the contemporary Chinese, and the traditional culture still affects our daily life.

Because of the existence of Chinese traditional culture, the Chinese people share the same world view. A questionnaire survey shows that 43.6% of the students think that Chinese traditional culture has a very positive impact on it, and 50.2% of the students think that Chinese traditional culture has a more positive impact on it. That is, Chinese traditional culture has a positive impact on 93.8% of students. 18.2% of students have participated in traditional Chinese cultural activities and societies. 56.4% of students have heard of and have the opportunity to involve in Chinese traditional culture. 15.6 percent of students had never heard of it but are interested in it, while only 7.1 percent of the students don't agree with the idea.

Now, there are many people wearing Chinese Han costume, playing the Guqin and reading Chinese traditional classics.

This is a manifestation of carrying forward the traditional Chinese literature. The beneficial thought of Chinese traditional culture, such as kindness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trust. When asked if students are willing to pass on Chinese traditional culture, 80.4% of students chose definitely and 14.7% of students chose possible. This shows that most people will choose to pass on the traditional Chinese culture.

### *B. Teacher Questionnaire*

As the main body of national education, schools play an important role in cultural education and cultural inheritance and innovation. [5] First of all, teachers should understand the value of traditional culture and play an exemplary role in the spreading of Chinese traditional culture. This kind of mission requires teachers to learn more traditional Chinese cultural knowledge, not only attach importance to the external forms of traditional culture, but also pay attention to carrying forward the intrinsic value of traditional culture.

In this survey, 50 teacher questionnaires were collected. There were 15 men and 35 women, seven of them had participated in this kind of survey before, 41 people had not participated in it, and 2 had not answered. The teachers involved in the survey specialized in animal science, medicine, pharmacy, environmental engineering, aquatic products, biochemistry, English, gardens, Marxist philosophy, fruit science, economic management, thermal engineering, botany, biotechnology, computer applications, Software engineering, automation, mathematics, chemistry, history, administration, processing and storage of agricultural products, water conservancy.

#### *1) Teacher' learning of Chinese traditional culture*

In terms of the understanding of traditional Chinese culture, 64% of the teachers could point out the content of traditional Chinese culture, and some of them added the following options: paper-cutting, martial arts, local traditional cuisine, traditional etiquette, etc.

#### *a) The way for teacher to learn Chinese traditional culture.*

The ratio of teachers learning Chinese traditional culture through books, online media, schools or social activities is 82%, 80%, 32% and 34%, respectively. On the other hand, 20% of teachers learn Chinese traditional culture in one way, 48% in two ways, 12% in two ways and 20% in two ways.

#### *b) Teacher' cognition and learning of Chinese traditional culture.*

The three cultural patterns of Chinese traditional culture are Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Fifty-two percent of the teachers surveyed were able to accurately identify the three cultural patterns. 62% of teachers could understand and point out the beneficial thoughts in Chinese traditional culture.

In terms of the time teachers spend learning Chinese traditional culture, 20% of them often study, 62% occasionally study and 10% have no time to study.

#### *c) A survey of teacher' reading of the four simple classical books*

Four simple classical Chinese classics listed by Liu Guozheng are also well read among teachers. According to the survey, 26% of teachers have read *The Mencius*, 38% have read *the Grand Historian*, and 14% have read *Dream Pool Essays*. 50% of teachers read only one of them, 24% read two of them, 4% read three, 2% read four, and 14% didn't make a choice.

#### *d) A survey of teacher' reading of the four masterpieces of China*

The four masterpieces are the classical works in the history of Chinese literature and the precious cultural heritage of the world. These four books are of extremely high literary level and artistic achievements. Through the survey, 54% of the teachers have read all the four masterpieces. Among the four masterpieces, *Dream of the Red Mansion* has the highest reading rate among teachers. 82% of teachers have read this book. The reading rates of the *The Romance of the three Kingdoms*, *Water Margin*, *Journey to the West* are 66%, 66%, 76%.

### *2) Teacher' inheritance of Chinese traditional culture*

Chinese traditional culture has a long history. As knowledge disseminators, college teachers have high quality and cultural accomplishment. As a result, college teachers have an important influence on the inheritance of Chinese traditional culture. According to the survey, 52% of teachers think that Chinese traditional culture has a very positive impact on them, 36% of teachers believe that Chinese traditional culture has a more positive impact on them. This suggests that, Chinese traditional culture has a positive impact on 88% of teachers.

#### *a) Teachers' participation in traditional Chinese cultural activities*

In the survey, 12 percent of teachers have participated in activities to spread traditional Chinese culture. At the same time, 60% of the teachers have heard of this activity and want to take part in this kind of activity, 18% of teachers have not heard of this activity but they are very interested in this matter, and only 8% of them are not interested.

#### *b) Survey on teachers' references to Chinese traditional culture in class*

In the teacher's class, when explaining knowledge points to students, those who often cite traditional Chinese culture account for 18%, those who occasionally cite Chinese traditional culture account for 46%, those who hardly cite Chinese traditional culture but think it is a good one account for 22%, those who think it is unnecessary to cite Chinese traditional culture account for 6%, and those who do not choose Chinese traditional culture account for 8%.

#### *c) Teachers' recognition and inheritance of Chinese traditional culture*

In Chinese traditional culture, the core of Confucian culture are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness. These thoughts include the moral standards

and standards of conduct, and teach people to develop a correct world view and outlook on life. 36 percent of the teachers totally agreed, 56 percent of teachers basically agreed, and 6 percent of teachers disagreed.

In the survey, 76 percent of the teachers said they would definitely pass on the excellent traditional Chinese culture to their students, while 20 percent chose to pass on the excellent traditional Chinese culture. The survey showed that most teachers would choose to pass on the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

**III. RESEARCH RESULTS**

**A. Comparison of learning ways between teachers and students**

Through investigation, we find that both university teachers and students can understand the connotation of Chinese traditional culture and have a sense of identity with it. They mainly learn Chinese traditional culture through books, which may be because Chinese traditional culture has a long history. The second main way for teachers to learn Chinese traditional culture is the internet, while the second main way for students to learn Chinese traditional culture is classroom teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage university teachers to learn Chinese traditional culture and improve their Chinese traditional cultural transmission capacity.

**B. Analysis of the reading of Chinese classics by teachers and students**

The Chinese classics have a deep influence on the ideology and value orientation of teachers and students. Both four simple classical books and the four masterpieces are representative Chinese classics. Through the survey of teachers' and students' reading of the simple classical Chinese and the four masterpieces, we find that the books which teachers like to read are the same books that students like to read. The results are shown in table below. This survey shows that teachers have a great influence on students when they choose to read books.

TABLE I. A COMPARISON OF THE READING OF CLASSICAL CHINESE BOOKS BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Book Name	The Percentage of People Who Have Read the Book	
	Teacher	Student
<i>The Romance of the three Kingdoms</i>	66	57.8
<i>Water Margin</i>	66	60.4
<i>Journey to the West</i>	76	76.4
<i>Dream of the Red Mansions</i>	82	62.2
<i>The Mencius</i>	26	29.8
<i>The Grand Historian</i>	38	45.8
<i>Dream Pool Essays</i>	14	11.6
<i>Strange Tales of Liaozhai</i>	60	58.7

<sup>a</sup>. The digits in the table are expressed in percentages

**C. Teachers and students' cognition of the three cultural patterns in Chinese traditional culture**

The core of Chinese traditional culture is Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Among them, 47.1% of students could accurately select Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, and 52% of teachers could accurately select Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. This shows that teachers and students need to enhance their understanding of the three cultural patterns in Chinese traditional culture, in order to continue to learn Chinese traditional culture

**D. The recognition and inheritance of Chinese traditional culture by teachers and students**

Chinese traditional culture contains many beneficial thoughts, such as loving the motherland, respecting teachers, being filial to parents, studying hard, innovating knowledge, being generous and so on. In the survey, 85.8% of college students and 92% of university teachers agreed with these beneficial ideas of Chinese traditional culture. In terms of inheriting traditional Chinese culture, 80.4% of college students and 76% of college teachers said they would definitely pass on traditional Chinese culture, while 14.7% of college students and 20% of college teachers said they might pass on traditional Chinese culture.

**IV. CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH PROSPECT**

Chinese traditional culture education is a long-term systematic project.<sup>[6]</sup> The cognition and inheritance of Chinese traditional culture is of great significance to the spread of Chinese traditional culture. According to the survey, teachers and students in universities have a certain degree of learning about the content of Chinese traditional culture and are willing to pass it on. In the future research, we will continue to study the beneficial thoughts in Chinese traditional culture, and explore ways and means to increase the learning interest of teachers and students.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We thanked our research team for working together to develop the plan, conduct the investigation and discuss the results of the survey.

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