

Review and Prospect: Study on *Morality and Law* Textbooks in the Past 70 Years of the Founding of New China

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Abstract—The study of *Morality and Law* textbook has become a very hot topic in recent years. This paper used the knowledge mapping method to make a quantitative and qualitative review of the study on the *Morality and Law* textbook since the foundation of New China from four dimensions: overall development trend, author's contribution, institutions' cooperation and theme. Based on this, the author put forward the way for the development of the research on *Morality and Law* textbook: firstly, developing scientific research team and strengthen core leadership, secondly, focusing on multiple comparative studies to form a communicating research ecology, and thirdly, paying attention to the study of mainstream values and law education, highlighting the characteristic of *Morality and Law* textbook.

Keywords: *Morality and Law* textbook, compulsory education, mapping, bibliometrics

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China 70 years ago, moral education textbooks of primary and secondary school have been changing. In 2016, the textbooks were renamed *Morality and Law*. For the convenience of research, the moral education textbooks in compulsory education stage were collectively called "*Morality and Law*". The establishment of New China, especially the implementation of curriculum reform, promoted the development of *Morality and Law* textbooks. By using the methods of bibliometrics and knowledge map, this paper reviewed the research in this period, sorted out the context of the research, drew the prospect of the research, analyzed the historical evolution and the current situation of the research, and explores the future direction of the research on *Morality and Law* textbooks on this basis.

II. RESEARCH DATA AND METHOD

A. Research data

As we all know, core journals are the most authoritative journals in China at present. To a certain extent, selecting the literature of core journals for research could ensure the reliability of research data. Therefore, on the CNKI database

platform, advanced retrieval was adopted; the source categories were core journals and CSSCI journals. In order to accurately retrieve the research literature, we referred to the evolution of the name of *Morality and Law* textbooks in primary and secondary schools since the founding of New China [1]. After many attempts, the final retrieval themes were set as "*Morality and Law*" including "textbook/teaching material", "ideological and morality" including "textbook/teaching material", "morality and life" including "textbook/teaching material" and "morality and society" including "textbook/teaching material". In order to obtain comprehensive and scientific research data, we also extracted all research literature related to *Morality and Law* textbooks in the theme of "moral education" "ideological politics" and "politics" including "textbook/teaching material". The literature type was periodical, and the time span was 1949-2019 (the literature retrieval time was February 11, 2019). After manual screening, 288 valid literatures were finally obtained as sample data.

B. Research method

The purpose of this study was to analyze the related research of *Morality and Law* textbooks since the founding of New China through scientific metrology and data visualization technology, so as to present the three-dimensional image of the textbooks research. For this reason, CiteSpace.V.5.3.R9 visual analysis tool was selected in this study to conduct multi-dimensional scanning on the collected data, drew the research knowledge map, and visualized the research picture of *Morality and Law* textbooks at the stage of compulsory education.

III. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF *MORALITY AND LAW* TEXTBOOKS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF NEW CHINA

In this paper, CiteSpace.V.5.3.R9 visualization software was used to explore the research team, the theme and the trend of *Morality and Law* textbooks in the stage of compulsory education, hoping to fully display the various scene of the textbooks research.

A. General development trend

We made statistics of the change in the number of publications since the founding of New China 70 years ago ("Fig. 1"). The number of research literature in the field of *Morality and Law* textbooks is relatively small, only 288. During 40 years from 1949 to 1988, the number of papers was zero. After that, it showed an upward trend and developed rapidly. During the 10 years from 2009 to 2019, the number of papers reached 217, accounting for 75.3% of total literature. Since the statistical time was February 2019, the exact data of 2019 couldn't be obtained, but it is certain that the proportion will rise. The reason is that *Morality and Law* textbooks had experienced the ups and downs of 17 years in the early days of the founding of New China, followed by a serious alienation period of 10 years in the "Cultural Revolution". It is not surprising that the amount of literature in this period was zero. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the thought of national construction occupied the mainstream, the political color of textbooks was diluted and ideological and moral values were valued for the first time. In 2001, the state renamed textbooks, changed the moral education textbooks of Grade 1-3 of primary school to "morality and life", grade 4-6 to "morality and society", and junior high school to "Ideological and morality". Since then, researchers began to really pay attention to the moral development of students, and the amount of literature increased. In 2016, the moral education textbooks of primary and secondary school were collectively called *Morality and Law*. The textbook began to return to the ontology of moral education, and a large number of research literature emerged. From 0 in 1949 to 36 in 2018, although the volume of research papers fluctuated in some specific years, there was no doubt about the overall growth trend.

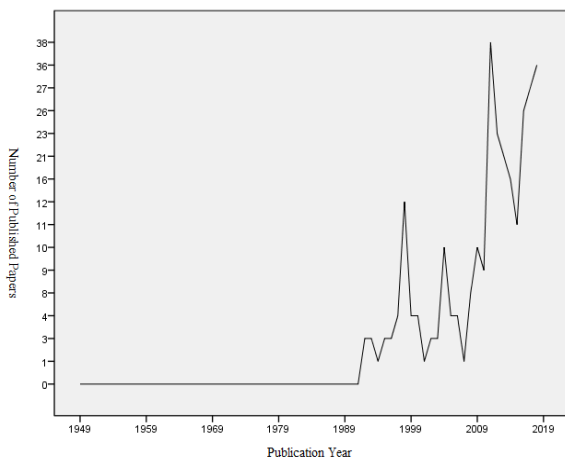


Fig. 1. Publication statistics of *Morality and Law* textbooks research.

B. Author contribution

Through the statistical analysis of the authors' publications, we can not only understand the core authors in this field, but also investigate the development of the

research community. This study analyzed authors' contribution to the study of moral and law textbooks in New China from the perspective of author's publishing volume, drew the authors' cooperation map with CiteSpace software, and set out the authors whose writing frequency ≥ 3 , as shown in "Fig. 2" and "Table I".



Fig. 2. Cooperation map of authors.

TABLE I. AUTHORS WITH PUBLICATION FREQUENCY ≥ 3

Number	Author	Frequency	First Year of Publication	Number	Author	Frequency	First Year of Publication
1	Song Jingtang	8	2012	10	Chen Guangquan	4	1996
2	Wang Yi	6	2010	11	Ren Haibin	3	2017
3	Wu Youcun	5	2011	12	Yang Yiming	3	2018
4	Liu Li	5	1999	13	Song Diankuan	3	1992
5	Zhang Maocong	5	2002	14	Wu Xiaorong	3	1997
6	Shen Xiaomin	4	2007	15	Zheng Hang	3	2004
7	Gao Desheng	4	2006	16	Zhang Guangyu	3	2018
8	Zhang Yaoguo	4	2013	17	Zhang Yue	3	2009
9	Dai Hui	4	2018				

It can be seen from "Fig. 2" and "Table I" that since the founding of New China, the cooperation or contact between the researchers of *Morality and Law* textbooks had not been frequent. The obvious cooperative relations were Song Jingtang and Ren Haibin, Dai Hui and Yang Yiming, and so on. In addition, the authors of the study on moral and law textbooks mainly included Song Jingtang, Wang Yi, Wu Youcun, Liu Li and Zhang Maocong, all of whom had 5 or more articles. From the time of publication, Dai Hui, Ren Haibin, Yang Yiming, Zhang Guangyu and others started in 2017 and later. In a sense, they might become a new source of research power in *Morality and Law* textbooks in the future by using Price Formula¹ to calculate the core authors. We can see that the authors who had more than two articles were the core authors in this field. According to the statistical analysis of CiteSpace background data, it is found that there were 17 authors who had published more than 2 papers (70 papers in total), accounting for 24.3% of the total number of papers, which was far from 50% predicted by George Price. This showed that the research in the field of moral and law textbooks is still in the development stage, the core team has not yet formed, and the number of high-yield authors is less.

C. Institutional cooperation

Through the analysis of institutional cooperation, we can investigate the distribution of research power in this field. Using CiteSpace software to draw a picture of institutional cooperation in the study of *Morality and Law* textbooks, as shown in "Fig. 3", the result shows that, in general, the research power in the field is relatively scattered. The Institute of Curriculum and Teaching of East China Normal University, Ideological and Political Office of People's Education Press, the Institute of Moral Education of Nanjing Normal University, and the Department of Education of Beijing Normal University, are important institutions for the study of *Morality and Law* textbooks. Only a few institutions such as the Department of education of Beijing Normal University and the Political Editing Office of People's Education Press have certain cooperation Relationship. There is no line of cooperation between primary and secondary schools and universities. Therefore, the cooperation between front-line teachers and research

institutions in primary and secondary schools will need to be strengthened.

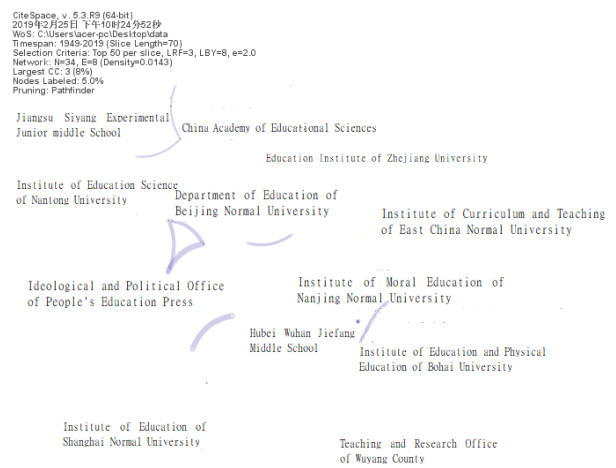


Fig. 3. Institutional cooperation map.

D. Theme presentation

Key words are the main points and contents of the article, through which we can judge the hot spots in a certain research field. [2] We used CiteSpace software to draw a map of keywords co-occurrence, as shown in "Fig. 4", then, listed the top 19 keywords of the co-occurrence frequency and calculated their centrality, as shown in "Table II". The result shows that the top 19 key words with intermediary centrality greater than 0.1 are "Ideology and Morality", "Textbook Compilation" and "Eighth Grade", which shows that these key words are the focus of the study of moral and law textbooks in New China. However, after the founding of New China, the names of moral and law textbooks changed constantly, and the editions were various, resulting in some high-frequency keywords were not highly mediating. Therefore, in addition to the analysis of key words, we also studied a large number of relevant literature, summed up and sorted out three core hot topics in the study: firstly, the basic problems, the grade division, and the comparative study of the moral and law textbooks.

¹ $N=0.749 \times \sqrt{n_{max}}$, the number of core authors is expressed in "N", and the highest number is expressed in "nmax".

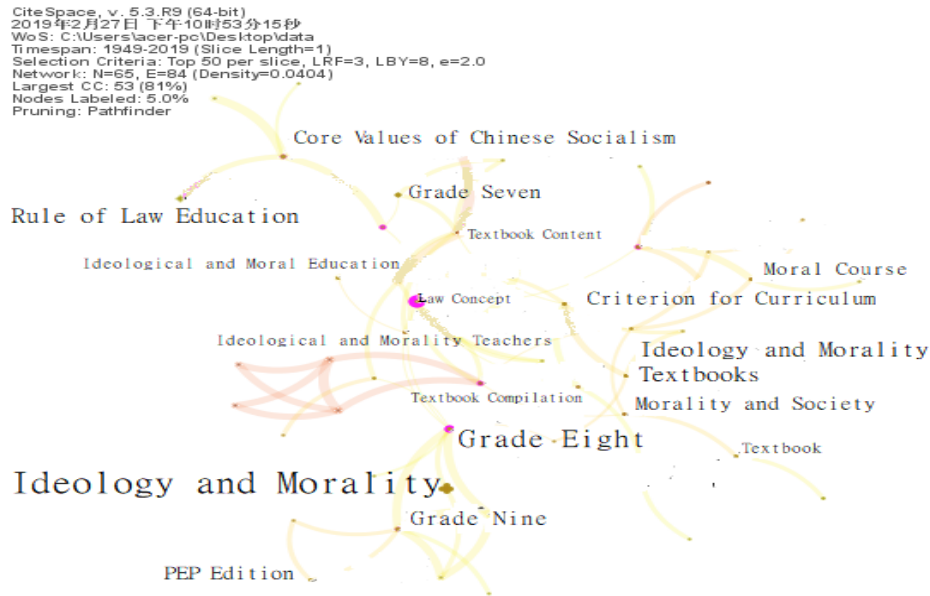


Fig. 4. Keywords co-occurrence map.

TABLE II. KEYWORDS CO-OCCURRENCE FREQUENCY AND THEIR INTERMEDIARY CENTRALITY

Number	Keyword	Frequency	Centrality	Number	Keyword	Frequency	Centrality
1	Ideology and Morality	56	0.25	11	Moral Course	11	0.11
2	Ideology and Morality Textbooks	20	0.02	12	Textbook	9	0.05
3	Grade Eight	16	0.57	13	Ideological and Moral Education	9	0.01
4	Rule of Law Education	15	0	14	Ideological and Morality Teachers	9	0.14
5	Grade Nine	14	0.16	15	Textbook Content	7	0.14
6	PEP Edition	12	0	16	Textbook Compilation	6	0.38
7	Core Values of Chinese Socialism	12	0.15	17	Teaching Material	6	0
8	Grade Seven	12	0.07	18	New textbook	6	0
9	Morality and Society	12	0.1	19	Teaching Suggestions	5	0
10	Criterion for Curriculum	12	0.14				

1) The basic problems of Morality and Law textbooks

Since the founding of New China, the research on the basic problems of Morality and Law textbooks has always been one of the important topics of moral education research. The research of this subject included the concept and principle, content interpretation and thinking, development history, operation path and evaluation of Morality and Law textbooks, etc.

In the aspect of textbooks' concept and principle, the research focused on the concept innovation, compilation principle and new curriculum standard of textbooks. For example, some researchers discussed the importance of the concept innovation of Ideological and moral textbooks, and they believed that we should carry out in-depth innovation in the aspects of purpose view, structure view, culture view and

function view, so as to realize the "soft landing" of the content of the textbooks. [3] There were also researchers who explored the new concept of the Morality and Society, from the perspective of in-depth understanding of the curriculum standards. [4]

In the content interpretation and thinking of Morality and Law textbooks, authors focused on the content structure and value orientation. For example, some researchers discussed the content structure of the new textbooks [5] and the logical relationship between the textbook items [6]. Some researchers also focused on a certain section of the textbook, such as the analysis of the dimensions of "small column" [7], content illustrations [8] and blank design [9]. There were also scholars trying to find the fit between value orientation,

including legal system [10], core values [11] and traditional culture [12], and the textbook content.

In the aspect of historical research on the development of *Morality and Law* textbooks, some researchers have combed four ups and downs in the development of the textbooks in New China, and reflected on the development process of *Morality and Law* textbooks in China. [13][14]

The operation path of textbooks runs through the research of moral and law textbooks, mainly focusing on the first development and the second development of textbooks. For example, some researchers explored the use of *Morality and Law* textbooks from a macro and micro perspective, giving full play to the leading role of textbooks in teaching. In addition, some researchers were trying to explore the secondary development and utilization of Ideological and moral textbooks in order to use them creatively. [15]

In the evaluation of *Morality and Law* textbooks, empirical research and text analysis were used. For example, some researchers used empirical research method to conduct multi-dimensional investigation and research on the use of *Morality and Law* textbooks, and on this basis, put forward countermeasures and suggestions. [16] Some researchers also adopted the method of text analysis, starting from the analysis of the defects of textbooks, and gave improvement and improvement measures. [17]

In a word, since the founding of New China, the study of *Morality and Law* textbooks generally included the development stage of general textbooks, which was conducive to the development of theoretical research and teaching practice of moral and law textbooks. Generally speaking, when the new textbook is put into use, there will be a large number of research literatures to interpret the textbook or explore its use methods. After using the textbook for a period of time, especially in the later period of use, there will be evaluation and defects in the textbook, which lays the foundation for the revision and development of the textbook.

2) *The grade division of Morality and Law textbooks*

The study of grade is another important topic in the study of *Morality and Law* textbooks. The statistical results show that there are 89 research papers on the grade of *Morality and Law* textbooks, accounting for 30.9% of the total research papers. It shows that research on the grade plays an important role in the research of *Morality and Law* textbooks in New China. By analyzing the existing literature, it is found that the research results of *Morality and Law* textbooks in the grade-nine of secondary school are very rich. Comparatively speaking, the research results of *Morality and Law* textbooks in the primary school, especially in the lower grades, are relatively lacking.

Specifically, the researchers study *Morality and Law* textbooks of junior middle school from the macro and micro perspectives. For example, some researchers analyzed textbooks from the perspective of a certain volume, and then put forward teaching suggestions. [18] Some researchers took a unit [19] or a paragraph [20] to analyze the *Morality*

and *Law* textbooks of this grade. There were also researchers who summed up different grades of *Morality and Law* teaching defects, based on some countermeasures analysis. [21] In the grade research on Moral and Law of primary school, some scholars explained the core concept, content structure [22], characteristics [23], value orientation [24] and construction [25] of the textbooks. The research on the *Morality and Law* textbooks in the lower grades of primary school mainly focused on the education of learning to care [26] and the use of illustrations. [27] To some extent, it shows that there is still a broad space for the study of *Morality and Law* textbooks of primary school.

3) *The comparative study of different versions and countries of Morality and Law textbooks*

The study on the editions and countries of *Morality and Law* textbooks is also one of the important topics in the study of moral education textbooks. In the dimension of version, researchers mainly focused on the inland versions of textbooks such as Human Education Version. They not only paid attention to the vertical comparative study of a certain version of textbooks, but also focused on the horizontal comparative study of different versions of textbooks. In the aspect of the longitudinal comparative study of textbook versions, some researchers tried to compare the *Morality and Law* textbooks of primary school published in 1999 and 2005, and examined their evolution from the age, gender, occupation and other dimensions of role models. [28] There were also researchers who evaluated different versions of *Morality and Law* textbooks, compared the characteristics of different versions of textbooks, analyzed the problems and deficiencies in the textbooks, and then put forward suggestions for revision. [29] From the micro point of view, based on the situation of children's moral education, some researchers made a comparative analysis of six sets of textbooks of primary school since 1981. [30] In addition, some researchers analyzed and compared different versions of textbooks from the perspectives of role models [31], adult gender [32], and content of mental health education [33], civic education [34] and rural culture [35].

In addition, there are also a small number of literatures on the mainland and Hong Kong, Taiwan's moral education textbooks for comparative study. In the aspect of the comparative study in mainland China and Hong Kong, some researchers made a comprehensive comparison between the two sets moral textbooks of primary School in mainland China and Hong Kong, and analyzed their respective reference points. [36] There were also researchers who explored the audio-visual textbooks of moral education of primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong, trying to provide reference for the development of teaching materials in China. [37] In the comparative study in mainland China and Taiwan, some researchers made a comparative study of *Morality and Law* textbooks of primary schools in Zhejiang and Taiwan from seven aspects, such as traditional virtue education, public morality education, legal education and the presentation of textbooks. The purpose of this study was to analyze the shortcomings of the textbooks in two places and seek for references. [38] Some researchers also compared the

topic of "Home and I" in the textbook of primary schools Moral and Law published by Jiangsu Education Press and the textbook of Life in Taiwan. [39] Unfortunately, at present, there is no literature on the comparative study of moral education textbooks between Mainland China and Macao.

In the dimension of countries, scholars focused on a few developed countries, such as the United States, Australia and Singapore. For example, some researchers made a comparative study of the American social science textbook and Chinese *Morality and Law* textbook, so as to provide reference for the design and compilation of Chinese textbooks. [40] Some researchers compared and analyzed the *Morality and Law* textbook published by Jiangsu Education Press and the Australian textbook Society and Environment, hoping to get inspiration from them to improve and develop the moral education textbooks in China. [41] Some researchers also focused on two sets of primary school Character and Citizen textbooks in Singapore, and studied the embodiment and implementation of "core literacy" in their country's moral education textbooks. [42] In addition, there were also cross comparative studies on many countries. For example, some researchers analyzed the characteristics of moral education textbooks among the United States, Singapore and Hong Kong in content organization, presentation and layout design, so as to provide enlightenment and reference for the new round of *Morality and Law* textbooks' reform in China. [43]

Generally speaking, the comparative study of *Morality and Law* textbooks in the compulsory education stage since the founding of new China reflects the distinct unbalanced development at the version level. The comparative study of domestic *Morality and Law* textbooks focuses on the comparison between different versions of inland, especially between the Edition of people's Education Press and other versions; the comparative study of national moral education textbooks focuses on a few developed countries, such as the United States, Singapore, Australia, and the amount of contributions is less. As an important research orientation, the comparative study of textbooks needs to be improved in multiple dialogues to promote the leapfrog development of the study of *Morality and Law* textbooks in China.

IV. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Looking back on the results of research on the moral and law textbooks at the compulsory education stage in New China, we should make a comprehensive survey from the perspective of bibliometrics, objectively show the research map in this field, and also reflect on the shortcomings of the research, so as to lay a solid foundation for the deepening of the research and the development of teaching practice. Based on such thinking, the future direction of the study of moral and law textbooks can be focused on the following aspects:

A. *Expanding the research team and strengthening the leading core force*

From the perspective of maps and relevant data analysis, the total amount is still significantly low since the founding of new China 70 years ago, especially in the *Morality and Law* textbooks of grades 1-3, although the number of relevant literature in the field has accumulated to a certain extent, and shows a trend of growth. In addition, the experience sharing and knowledge sharing among the authors are not enough. Therefore, we should encourage multiple forces to participate in research, especially the huge front-line teachers in primary and secondary schools. At the same time, we should strengthen the cooperation of all forces, so as to strengthen the research team and research force.

The core research team plays a fundamental role in the development of a certain research field, and also has an important impact on the future trend of the field. However, the maps and data analysis found that the leading and supporting role of the core team in the field of *Morality and Law* textbook is relatively lacking. There are only 11 authors who have published more than 3 articles in the field, and Song Jingtang is the only one who has published more than 8 articles. Song Jingtang belongs to the Political Editing Room of People Education Press, and his main areas of concern are *Morality and Law* textbooks of junior high school, ideological and political textbooks of senior high school. Among the six authors with more than or equal to 5 papers, Ren Haibin also belongs to the Political Editing Room of the People's Education Press, only Liu Li and Zhang Maocong belong to university researchers, Wang Yi and Wu Youcun are middle school *Morality and Law* teachers. It can be seen that the research power of *Morality and Law* textbooks is scattered, and the core team is insufficient. We can try to form the research community of *Morality and Law* textbooks through various kinds of project funding and training of core research teams, and constantly explore ways and methods to activate its research mission, which is conducive to forming a stable core research team.

B. *Focusing on multiple comparisons and building a research ecology of exchange and mutual learning*

This paper analyzed the comparative study in the field of *Morality and Law* textbooks, and found that there were mainly two dimensions: version dimension and country dimension. The version dimension focuses on the characteristics and advantages of different versions of textbooks, so as to find a new way for the improvement and development of *Morality and Law* textbooks. The country dimension mainly discusses the characteristics and contents of moral education textbooks in other countries, which provides reference for the study of *Morality and Law* textbooks in China. It should be noted that in 2016, all the compulsory education schools began to use the unified textbook *Morality and Law*. So far, the inland version of the comparative study of textbooks in this field began to fade. The compilation and use of the unified textbook of *Morality and Law* reflects the will of the state. If the research would not be focused abroad, the space left for academic discussion

will be extremely limited. Therefore, we can promote the improvement and development of the moral education textbooks of both sides by strengthening the comparative study between the inland integrated textbook and the teaching materials of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. At present, most of the comparative studies of different countries are between China and the United States, China and Australia. However, the lack of attention to other countries in the world may due to our worship of the United States, Australia and other developed countries. We should focus on more other countries, from the compilation, the content structure and the evaluation of moral education textbooks and so on. We need to seek the beneficial experience of all countries in the world in an all-round way as far as possible, so as to find the experience and enlightenment for the development of *Morality and Law* textbooks in China.

C. Paying attention to the mainstream values and the rule of law education, and showing the essence of the textbook Morality and Law

In terms of the title of the Moral and Law textbooks which were used in the national compulsory education stage in 2016, "moral" is always in an important position. The textbook *Morality and Law* compiled by the Ministry of Education, aims to respond to the strong call for core values and traditional culture education. Therefore, the study of the new textbook should strengthen the discussion of the core value system and traditional culture, making full use of the *Morality and Law* textbooks to cultivate the character of the 21st century youth. The Moral and Law textbooks compiled by the Ministry of Education increase the proportion of the content of rule of law. The name of the textbook also appears the word "law" for the first time, which is the requirement of the implementation of the basic strategy of rule of law, as well as the need of the implementation of the Outline of Legal Education for Youth. The *Morality and Law* textbooks have a special volume of legal content, and some of the textbooks in other volumes are also embedded in the legal knowledge. It can be seen that the importance of legal education in the compulsory education stage is becoming more and more prominent, but the current research does not pay enough attention to the legal education. Therefore, the future research can focus more on the content presentation, material selection and contact with students' life of the legal education.

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