

Empirical Analysis of Shaanxi Female College Students' Religious Identity

Shaanxi N Professional College as an Example

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Abstract—It is one of the most important subjects of higher education to guide the female college students to set up a correct religious conception. We explore the religious identity level of 290 female college students from Shaanxi N Professional College using an anonymous self-made questionnaire. And explore the structural reasons of Shaanxi female college students' religious beliefs based on careful analysis and research, then propose three-dimensional countermeasures to provide theoretical basis for Shaanxi female college students' ideological and political education work.

Keywords—Shaanxi; female college students; religious identity; countermeasures

I. STUDY ORIGIN

The remarkable "religion fever" has appeared world wide since the middle of 20th century. In recent years, along with the spreading of religious culture in university campus, the proportion of religious college students is increasing, and the proportion of female college students is rising gradually. The religious issue of female college students is attracting more and more attention from educational circles. Through questionnaire survey on the female college students from Shaanxi N Vocational College, this paper is to pay attention to the religion diversification of the contemporary female college students, and to study the current situation of Shaanxi female college students' religious identity, rendering them a correct understanding of religion, to establish a scientific outlook on life, thus to benefit the ideological and political education for contemporary female college students.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS

From the perspective of social psychology, the understanding on religious identity by the domestic and foreign scholars varies widely. However, from the perspective of religious psychology, "religious identity is the concept revealing the relationship between individual and group, which may be obtained through individual's family socialization or through the individual's conscious pursue". [1] In today's world, religious belief has been one of the

choices for people's diversified belief. In the colleges in Shaanxi, "college students' belief shows the diversification tendency, with the material belief, spiritual belief and religious belief of their own characteristics, and quite a lot have double belief and multi-belief." [2] Under the historical background of the increasing diversification of contemporary college students' belief, to analyze current situation of Shaanxi college female students' religious identity is of certain theoretical value and practical significance.

III. STUDY OBJECT AND METHOD

The principle of cluster sampling is adopted for this study, and the anonymous questionnaire survey is the main method for data collection. The Religious Identity Questionnaire of Shaanxi Female College Students is compiled from different dimension of cognition degree, recognition degree and tolerance degree about religious identity, to conduct survey research on 290 female college students from Shaanxi N Vocational College. 290 Questionnaires in total are granted, and 281 are retrieved, with the retrieving rate as 96.90%. Among which, there are 279 effective Questionnaires, and the effective retrieving rate is 96.21%. The Likert scale seven points are adopted for the Questionnaire. It will be recorded as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 points from "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Comparatively Disagree", "Generally Agree", "Comparatively Agree", "Agree" to "Strongly Agree". Frequency statistics of the survey data is mainly made by the statistical software of SPSS.

IV. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Demographic Characteristics of the Samples

In the 279 effective Questionnaires, 30 female college students are religious, accounting for 10.75%; 249 female college students are not religious, accounting for 89.25%. With respect to family register, 39 are from cities, accounting for 13.98%; 240 are from rural area, accounting for 86.02%. As for the Grade, 36 are freshmen, accounting for 12.91%; 150 are sophomores, accounting for 53.76%; 93 are junior students, accounting for 33.33%. With regard to the age, 2 are under 17 (including), accounting for 0.71%;

Research topic of Shaanxi Normal University's united front theory "spread penetration and Countermeasures of Christian in contemporary college students: Based on a survey of Xi'an University of analysis" (project number: SNGTZ14-025)

116 are 18-20 years old, accounting for 41.58%; 161 are older than 21 (including), accounting for 57.71%.

B. Structural Reasons of Shaanxi Female College Students' Religious Belief

Female college students are the constructors and successors of the socialism with Chinese characteristics, so their religious belief condition is closely related with national security, national unity and social development to some extent. The questionnaire survey results show that, under the historical background of globalization, there are diversified structural reasons of "five in one" for the religion spreading in Shaanxi colleges and universities. Namely, characteristics of the religion itself, family atmosphere, college environment, social public opinion and students' faith, they interact and influence each other.

1) Characteristics of the religion itself: As we all know, the overall characteristics of Chinese religion mainly reflect "five characters", namely, the mass feature, complexity, long lasting, nationality and internationality. Shaanxi colleges and universities are located in the northwest minority area, and from the perspective of formation factors of the religion itself, its sensibility, mystery, exclusiveness and blindness as well as other characteristics are quite outstanding. Meanwhile, the differences of the regulations on national freedom of religion and the interpretation of series measures also render individual understanding expansion when the female college students are closing to religious activities. For instance, regarding on the issue whether or not the religious faith is of positive effects on social harmony "Fig. 1", the students being surveyed have quite high religious tolerance. Nearly 20% of the female college students have positive response on that issue.

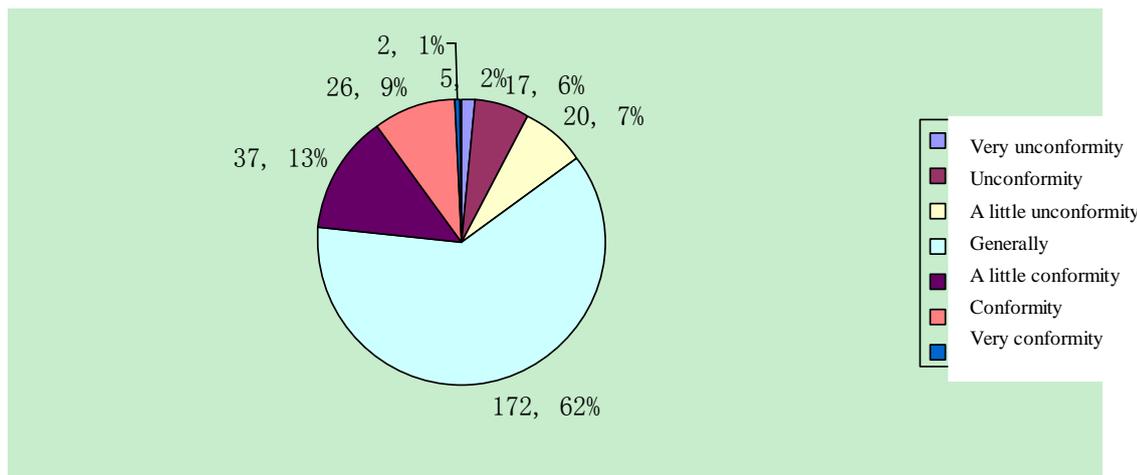


Fig. 1. Do you think religious belief is of positive effects on social harmony ?

2) Family Atmosphere: Most of the Shaanxi female college students are from northwest minority area from the perspective of origin of students, and multi-nation and multi-religion are linked together in this area. For this reason, the family atmosphere with families and friends as main body is naturally one of the important contributors for part of the female college students' conversion to religion. They are religious for their nations are religious on a macro level, and on a micro level, they are religious because their families are religious. Part of

the female college students are grown up in the religious family, so they will subtly acknowledge their family's faith and convert to the corresponding religion. It can be seen from "Fig. 2" that among the religious female college students in this survey, 43% of them convert to religion because their family are religious, and 17% of them convert to religion because their friends are religious. Obviously, family atmosphere is a factor not be ignored for Shaanxi female college students' conversion to religion.

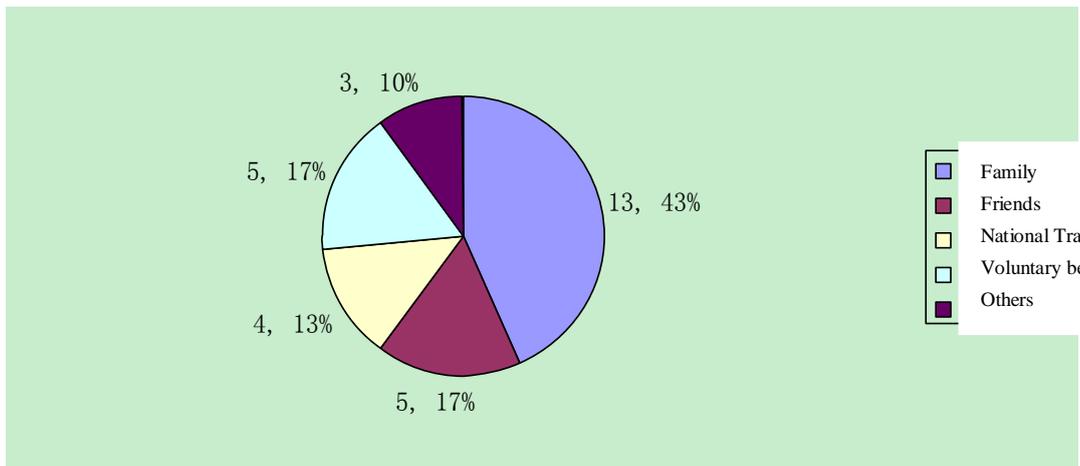


Fig. 2. Different Reasons for Female College Students' Conversion to Religion

3) *College Environment*: College environment can be divided into college hard environment system and college soft environment system. The college hard environment system provides material platform for the learning, living and contacting between teachers and students; while the college soft environment system provides spiritual platform for exchange of thoughts between teachers and students, students and students, teachers and teacher. Both the college hard and soft environment systems are of significant influence on female college students' religious belief. On the one hand, the political quality and ideological consciousness of some college teachers are not up to standard; on the other hand, some

college administrators have quite weak political reading power, being short of keen political insight and discrimination, and lack of attention to religion spreading in campus. Moreover, the religious students will influence other students' religious orientation subtly. It can be seen from "Fig. 3", nearly 50% of the students being surveyed hold the opinion that the propaganda of religious freedom for female college students shall be strengthened, and relevant courses shall be established. In other words, facing the current condition of female college students' religious faith, Shaanxi college environment construction needs to be strengthened.

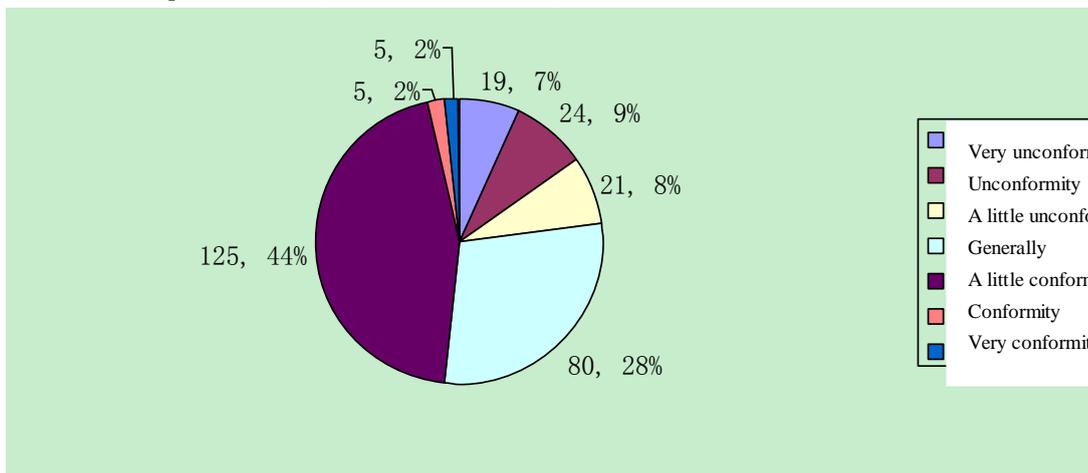


Fig. 3. Do you think the opinion of "the propaganda of religious freedom for female college students shall be strengthened and relevant courses shall be established" is right?

4) *Social Public Opinion*: Since the 21st century, under the historical background of continue development of complex and changeable international situation, China is undergoing a rapid yet profound social reform. The western culture with religious culture as the core has been one extremely important part of Chinese social and cultural diversity. College students are easily to be confused by the frustration encountered in the learning and living process, which provides opportunity to religion spreading. With the coming of Internet + times,

various superstition, heresy, and pseudoscience are influencing people's life subtly with new packing and new forms. It can be seen form "Fig. 4" that nearly 80% of the female college students agree with the enhanced trend of religion spreading ability under the network times. Without doubt, the social public opinion of current religion spreading has provided certain incubation space for Shaanxi female college students' religion faith.

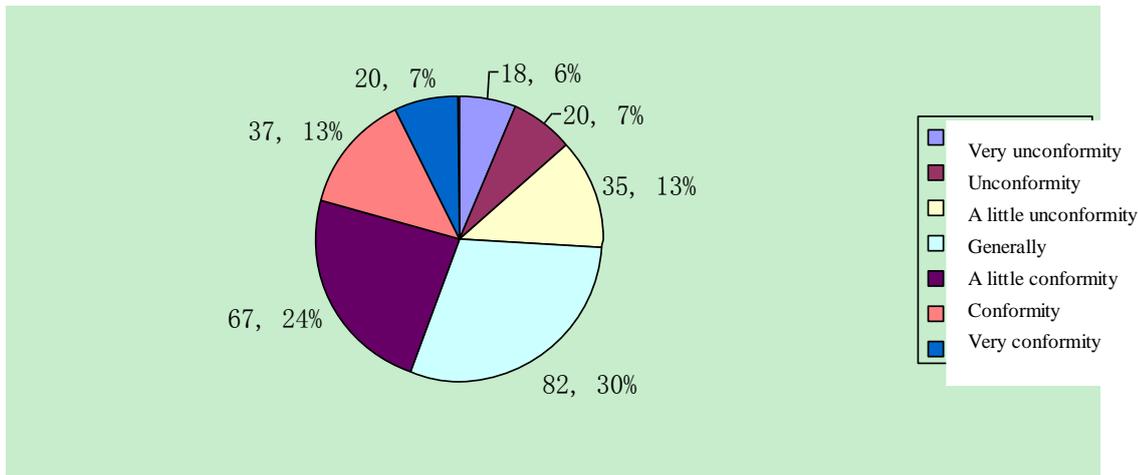


Fig. 4. The spreading speed is rapid under current network times; do you think the religion spreading ability is strengthened?

5) *Students' Faith*: The key reason for Shaanxi female college students' conversion to religion is the student's lack of their own faith. Facing the social condition of diversified faith, part of the female college students have the dislocation phenomenon in terms of subjective cognizance, and are short of strong judgment on right or wrong. So they cannot make correct judgment about the essence of religion, let alone to aware the serious damage of religion spreading, especially religion infiltration. Facing the learning and living frustration, female college students whose mind are immature tend to choose emotional transformation by the feeling of dependency

as presented by religious emotion, and seek the release of helpless mental stress through devout worship. Obviously, female college students' self mental recognized emotional tendency is one of the ideological sources for their choice of religious belief. From "Fig. 5" it can be seen that more than 90% of the female college students hold the opinion that it is necessary for the school to establish mental health education course, which reflects the significant influence on contemporary female college students brought by the "belief crisis" world wide.

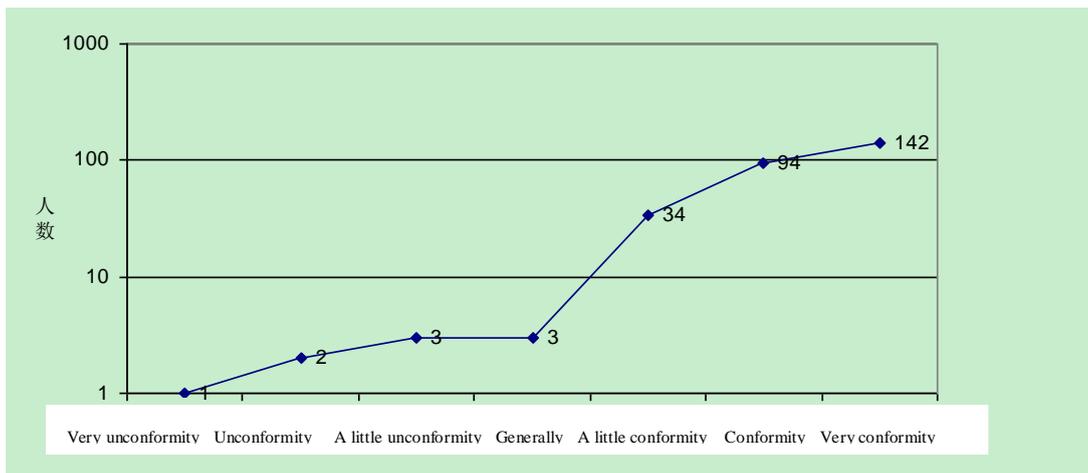


Fig. 5. Do you think it is necessary for the school to establish mental health education course?

V. THREE-DIMENSIONAL COUNTERMEASURES FOR SHAANXI FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS' RELIGION BELIEF

Shaanxi female college students' religion belief is closely related to the social development and reform under historical background, and reflects the generalization trend and diversified characteristics of contemporary college students' spiritual belief to some extent. It is one of the important tasks for higher education to guide Shaanxi female college students

to establish correct religious view. For this purpose, the mastering of Shaanxi female college students' religious identity condition, the guidance and management of female college students religious practice is an ideological and political work with strong complexity, sensitivity and policy, which need to be handled with prudence from the perspective of three dimension.

A. Strengthen the Education of Marxism Religious View, Perform Religious Policy Education as Appropriate

The information era with Internet as distinct features of times enables the unlimited information to be acquired with unprecedented convenience. The acquisition of religion knowledge is no exception. The vigorous female college students not only have the great energy, but the strong thirst for knowledge. Facing the temptation of religion, it is better to lubricate than prevention, and the guidance is better than lubricate, leading is better than guidance. On the one hand, starting from the introduction of classical Marxist writers' discussion on religion, eliminate female college students' perceptual bias about religion. Through strengthening the learning of principles of Marxist philosophy with the historical materialism and dialectical materialism as core concept, to cultivate female college students' materialist and dialectical view ability, and enhance their ability to recognize and resist the idealism. On the other hand, through propaganda of the Party's policy on religion freedom, to help female college students eliminate mystery feeling about religion. Increase the proportion of religious cultural courses in the school's public elective courses and specialized elective courses, unveil the mystery of religion, and promote female college students' in-depth understanding about religion, and more objective and rational cognition about religion.

B. Pay Attention to Female College Students' Ideological and Moral Education, and Improve the Construction of Ideological and Political Education

Shaanxi female college students are the reliable successors and talent reserves for the construction of socialist society, so their religion orientation is closely related to their individual healthy growth, harmonious society's construction and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. For this reason, keeping pace with the times to improve female college students' ideological and moral education is one of the key works that college administrators and relevant departments must make a solid foundation. On the one hand, female college students' scientific outlook on value, life, world as well as honor and dishonor cannot be formed without correct ideological and moral education. On the other hand, improve the construction of ideological and political education, and give play to its main role of ethnic and religious education for female college students. In some sense, religion education and ideological and moral education "have a lot of similarities in terms of educating". [3] Such integrating degree is playing its unique binding function and stabilizing effect in the minority areas, which is beneficial to national solidarity and stability in the border areas.

C. Optimize Campus Culture Structure, and Improve the Construction of Harmonious Campus

Shaanxi colleges and universities are the regional talent pool in northwest minority areas. Therefore, strengthening campus culture construction and optimizing campus culture structure is an important carrier for promoting school's harmonious development. On the one hand, the holy mission of teaching and educating shall be inherited, to strengthen campus material culture construction and system culture

construction, providing the hard harmonious environment for female college students to carry out colorful campus cultural activities, and eliminate female's college students' motivation and demand of church's help. On the other hand, the construction of harmonious campus shall be improved, to promote campus behavioral culture construction and spiritual culture construction, and to carry forward positively the Chinese traditional culture essence, thus to improve female college students' ability to understand ethical and religious policy, enabling them to establish correct outlook on religion, life, world and value.

D. Intensify Religious Safety Education in Colleges, and Build Religion Penetration Defense Mechanism

Religion safety is an important link of national safety. And the religion safety in Shaanxi colleges and universities is especially important, for it is not only linked with the national belief as well as manners and customs that have been developed long among the ethnic minority compatriots, but also linked with the students' enthusiasm and desire to positively explore the outside objective world. We shall strengthen national safety education for the sake of female college students' physical and mental health. On the one hand, we should be practical and realistic when facing religion issues from the strategic level of national safety. Do the mobilization among female college students, to make them profoundly aware of the negative effect of illegal dissemination of religion and the serious consequence of foreign religious penetration. Carry out series religious safety education activity among female college students, and make sorting treatment on various illegal dissemination of religion in campus, to eliminate resolutely the illegal religious of foreign hostile forces in Shaanxi colleges and universities. On the other hand, the linkage mechanism of relevant institution inside and outside the colleges shall be perfected. And we shall take initiative to establish religion penetration defense mechanism, and set up an early warning system for the college religious events. Through the linkage mechanism of such departments in colleges and universities as Personnel Department, Security Department, Propaganda Department, United Front Department, Foreign Affair Department, the Dean's Office, Labor Union, Youth League Committee, Schools and Departments, and around various links that may easily happen religion penetration in Shaanxi college religion spreading to form the long-term dynamic mechanisms with precaution consciousness, control regulation and organization group in place.

E. Enhance Female College Students' Mental Health Consciousness and Strengthen Scientific Spirit Guiding Construction

Most of the female college students from Shaanxi colleges and universities start their independent studying trip by leaving their familiar living environment to a different cultural city that is far from or near their hometown. Along with various discomfort and frustration brought by environmental adaptation, learning stress, emotional exchange and interpersonal communication, mentality unbalance and psychological problems start to occur frequently among part of

the female college students, which provides the possibility for religion spreading to some extent. For this reason, on the one hand, female college students' mental health consciousness shall be strengthened to improve positively of their mental health education. Through such psychological quality optimization measures as emotional adjustment, confusion elimination and frustration analysis, we shall enhance their resistance capability against psychological strike. On the other hand, scientific spirit guiding construction shall be intensified to continuously cultivate female college students' cultural confidence and faith consciousness. "Order and justice are the value target of human social life" [4], while part of the female college students have distinctive spiritual confusion, lack of scientific spirit, facing the sickness and death, happiness and misfortune of human, then tend to be puzzled between science and religion. Cultivation of correct outlook on religion shall be one of the important content of comprehensive education in college, which shall be paid sufficient attention.

In short, as the key transitional period for an individual from naïve to mature, college times will have a comprehensive yet pure and profound yet long lasting influence on a female college student' physical and mental health. Shaanxi colleges and universities located in China's northwest minority areas, guiding female college students to establish correct outlook on religion is of very important value of times and practical significance for improving Shaanxi colleges' ideological and political education effectiveness, thus to maintain social stability, strengthen national unity, and establish harmonious society.

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