

Analysis on the Research Status of Sympathy Connotation and Its Measurement Methods*

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Abstract—With the progress of the times and social development, the requirements for talent specifications are getting higher and higher. The quality of talents has also become a hot issue of universal concern in all countries of the world. The core literacy of college students has made the education sector re-recognize the importance of talents and their evaluation. This paper aims at the sympathy in the moral quality system of college students, carries out literature review, analyzes the connotation characteristics of sympathy, determines the conceptual category for the project research, and carries out combing of the compassion measurement method, and designs and develops the measurement scale of the project to lay the foundation of theory and method.

Keywords—moral quality; sympathy; psychological measurement

I. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of globalization and information age, the research on talent core literacy under the guidance of human capital theory has become the focus of education development strategies in all countries of the world. The democratization of education also requires education to provide the core qualities that can support individual lifelong learning rights. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched the "Definition and Selection of Competencies" project in 1997. The Chinese Ministry of Education released the core literacy of Chinese students in 2016. The quality education of college students is an important research field of higher education. It is not only related to the growth of individual students' adaptability, but also the key fulcrum of China's strategy of strengthening the country. In the core literacy system of college students, moral quality as a responsibility of college students has become the core element of government and society. As an important reference variable for simultaneously measuring individual psychological traits and embodying their social moral consciousness, sympathy has a disturbing phenomenon in the college student population. For example, in order to maximize the self-interest, many college students are selfish, indifferent, and lacking compassion [1]. In the face of this changing trend, the Chinese government has put forward the educational mission of "strengthening moral education and cultivating people" from the perspective of

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national macroeconomic policies. In this context, this research project is based on domestic and international research results, focusing on sympathy, clarifying conceptual misunderstandings, analyzing structural characteristics suitable for sympathy in Chinese cultural environment, and developing relevant measurement tools to understand to provide the basis for the individual's sympathetic psychological level.

II. SYMPATHY RESEARCH STATUS IN DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS

Through literature search, it is found that some scholars in domestic and overseas often use "Empathy" to replace each other with "Sympathy" when they study sympathy. This is a very unserious academic attitude. According to the existing research results, "sympathy and empathy belong to different psychological processes, and should not be confused with a single word [2]." There is a significant difference between the two. Wispé Lauren (1986) argues that compassion refers to the high sensitivity to an individual's suffering and believes that this pain can be alleviated by external behavior; empathy refers to a self-conscious individual trying to understand accurately on another positive or negative emotional experience [2]. In short, empathy is a kind of "cognition", and compassion is a kind of "association". The two are two different processes with different meanings and consequences. Amrisha Vaish (2009) [3] and so on hold the same view. Johanna Ruusuvoori of the University of Tampere in his "Attending to Patients' Troubles in Finnish Homeopathic and General Practice Consultations" project, through the follow-up study of 228 groups of patients, also verified the difference in theory between the sympathy and empathy from the practice process [4]. Therefore, the sympathy referred to in this study is different from empathy and is limited to the discussion of psychology.

Foreign scholars' research on compassion mainly focuses on three aspects. The first is to explore the connection and difference between sympathy and empathy from the theoretical and practical levels. It has been elaborated before and will not be repeated. The second is to demonstrate the physiological differences in the occurrence and development of compassion through empirical research. For example, Nancy Eisenberg (1988) [5] compared the physiological responses of individuals of different ages and genders to pain

in specific situations. The levels of facial expression, heart rate, etc. are different, and the physiological response index of compassion is highly correlated with the individual's empathy index. The third is to explore the relationship between children's and adolescents' compassion and prosocial behavior through empirical research. For example, Tina Malti (2007) [6] of Harvard University in the United States measured the pro-social behavior as the sympathy increased, especially when the child lacked moral motivation. Moral motivation and sympathy are also independently related to prosocial behavior; Tina Malti (2009) [7] in her other joint study, through the investigation of children and their mothers, kindergarten teachers, considers that children's compassion is positively related to mother's and teacher's prosocial evaluation, and the moral motivation regulates the evaluation of compassion and prosocial behavior.

Domestic scholars' psychology-based sympathy research started late, basically based on the research of Western scholars to carry out localization, or specific field research. Some scholars mainly introduce the results of Western sympathy research and its enlightenment from different theoretical perspectives, such as: Chen Xiaoxi (2008) [8] systematically analyzes David Hume's sympathy in his emotionalism from the perspective of rationalism ethics. The important role in moral doctrine, and pointed out its reference significance in today's China; Fei Shangjun (2009) [9] interpreted the special meaning of Adam Smith's concept of sympathy from the perspective of maintaining social morality and order. He believed that justice is onlookers. As a universal moral evaluation scale, the sympathy of the person not only becomes the basis of moral approval or censure, but also explains the essence and characteristics of virtue, and its connotation of appropriate moral appeal reflects the society. The lofty impulse of order and harmony has important implications for the current social harmony and the moral needs of the market society; Hou Hongxia (2012) [10] introduced the human foundation, structure, and characteristics of Adam Smith's virtue theory and current moral education and the value of social construction. She believes that the human foundation of Adam Smith's virtue is sympathy and self-love, and it has a positive sense in solving the problem of the moral depravity of the business community; Jiao Xiuping (2018) [11] introduced Adam Smith's meaning of sympathy, the main points of the mechanism and the significance of the current Chinese government to carry out social and moral governance.

Another part of the scholars mainly expounds the social meaning of sympathy from the perspective of sociology, and discusses the behavioral representation of sympathy and its cultivation strategy in combination with specific social posts. For example, Shi Zhongying (2010) [12] systematically expounded the connotation characteristics of teachers' compassion, and pointed out various ways and methods to awaken and cultivate teachers' sympathy; Ma Ning, Shi Baoxin, and Teng Yanhua (2018) [13] adopted qualitative approach, through the semi-structured interviews with nurses in cancer hospitals, analyzed the sympathetic representation and compassion fatigue of medical staff, and proposed countermeasures; Shi Zhongying (2012) [14] believed that

social sympathy is different from individual sympathy or the emotional resonance of human sympathetic social groups. It is of great significance to the formation of good sociality in democratic social citizens.

Some scholars put sympathy under the moral cultivation system from the perspective of educational psychology, and systematically discuss how to cultivate their sympathy and prosocial behavior against individual psychological characteristics of different ages. For example, Wang Meifang (1996) [15] believes that sympathy is a kind of emotion that resonates with other people's unfortunate encounters and cares, approves, and supports them. It is a kind of position, viewpoint, and ideological consciousness, the noble moral emotions intertwined by cognition, feelings, motives, and actions; Fu Huixin (2006) [16] believes that compassion is a stable personality mentality of an individual, which contains cognitive components and helps others. In behavior, it can arouse the emotional response of the helper, and act on the behavior of helping others with an emotional process; Luo Yanping (2009) [17] expounds the connotation and meaning of narrow sympathy, and believes that compassion is prosocial behavior and altruistic behavior, proposing important mediating factors, the urgency of sympathy education and training methods; Li Yousui and Zhou Kun (2010) [18] Based on the psychological structure of compassion, the experimental research on sympathetic training of 258 children confirmed that targeted training activities can effectively promote the development of sympathetic experience and sympathy behavior of young children. Sympathetic training has a significant role in promoting the development of typical prosocial behaviors of young children; Zhang Wei (2014) [19] aimed at the current reality of the moral decline of college students, based on the theory of compassion, and explored the social culture of college students' sympathy. The reason is that higher education workers should pay attention to the important role of sympathy in moral philosophy, and help college students to strengthen their compassion and establish a correct outlook on life and values, and establish clear, clear and correct moral judgment standards. Liu Li (2017) [20] explores the connotation of compassion and its value in the cultivation of young people's moral emotions, and at the same time puts forward the sympathy in three paths to cultivate young people's moral emotions through the problems in the moral and emotional education of young people in China.

As mentioned above, the study of sympathy is more mature. Under the premise that the scholars at home and abroad strictly distinguish the difference between sympathy and empathy, there is not much difference in the understanding of sympathy. Most of them have verified children through empirical methods. There is a high correlation between sympathy and prosocial behavior. As a forerunner, foreign scholars are more systematic in the field of compassion research, pay more attention to the rigor of concepts, and pay more attention to empirical research in methods, but rarely carry out special sympathetic research in the school education system. Domestic scholars are influenced by social culture, and there is confusion with

empathy in the use of the concepts of sympathy. More on the moral education level, the sympathy and prosocial behavior cultivation of students in different semester are theoretically elaborated and seldom conducted in an empirical study.

III. RESEARCH STATUS OF COMPASSIONATE MEASUREMENT METHODS

Domestic and foreign scholars have carried out comparatively significant differences in the level of sympathetic measurement research. The development of Western psychology is relatively mature, and the experience accumulated in the field of psychological measurement has laid a good foundation for the measurement of sympathy. Foreign scholars' research on sympathy measurement is basically focused on the measurement of physiological response mechanism of children's sympathy. Eisenberg Nancy's (1988) [21] research was based on empirical research, presupposes corresponding external situational stimulus conditions that are prone to sympathy. The observation of heart rate and facial expression feedback of 82 children confirmed that children's physiological index response was highly positively correlated with situational stimulation; Fabes Richard A (1993) [22] also engaged in a similar study with Eisenberg Nancy and got nearly identical conclusions; Jutta Kienbaum (2014) [23] conducted a three-year follow-up of 85 children's sympathetic trends. By prescribing stimuli—observing measurements—confirming the degree of change—creating interventions, it was verified that the difference in children's compassion averages increased significantly with age, and the increase in compassion mainly occurred in between the last year of childcare and the first year of elementary school; Uchida Yukiko (2001) [24] of Kyoto University in Japan developed a sympathy scale covering 22 indicators in his research, from the three dimensions of understanding-resonance-prosocial behavior. The measurement shows that the sympathy scale has a systematic correlation with the relevant variables, showing satisfactory structural validity, and the results also show that sympathy is positively correlated with prosocial behavior. Of course, Western scholars have done more research on empathy measurement, which is beyond the scope of this study.

Domestic scholars basically refer to the research results of Western scholars or make localization improvements on the basis of the choice of sympathy measurement tools. Li Yousui and Zhou Kun (2010) [25] used the "3-9 year old children's sympathetic teacher assessment questionnaire" compiled by Hu Jinsheng in the process of studying the influence of sympathy training on the typical prosocial behavior of children, and adopted 27 items in the questionnaire. The frequency of behaviors described is used to obtain external evaluation data of children's sympathy. At the same time, behavioral event sampling method is used to obtain observational data of children's prosocial behavior, and comprehensive analysis and evaluation are carried out. Zhang Yuanyuan (2013) [26] introduced occupational quality of life scale — Professional Quality of Life Scale-Pro-QOL, to test 790 clinical nurses in Shanghai, which is supplemented by semi-structured interviews, and conducted

a preliminary exploration of the causes of sympathetic fatigue in clinical nurses, pointing out the psychological load and related problems of the clinical nurses, and proposed solutions; Shao Kang-hwa (2014) [27] used Sherman's sympathy scale to measure the group of students on both sides of the Taiwan Straits in the sub-item of "Research on the Differences in Sympathy in Cultural Values across the Taiwan Straits". The results of the study show that there was no significant difference in college students on both sides of the strait on sympathy, indicating the presence of cognitive and behavioral gap on cross-strait college students sympathy, and pointed out the possibility of environmental causes of social, institutional and so on.

In summary, domestic and foreign scholars have done a lot of research in the field of sympathy measurement tools or methods. Western scholars are more focused on children's sympathy physiological response index measurement, more empirical research on methods, and less study on adult sympathy measurement. Domestic scholars generally use the research results of Western scholars in the study of sympathy measurement problems, or carry out appropriate localization on this basis, and have not seen the sympathy measurement tools for the higher vocational college students. Therefore, the development of sympathy measurement tools for higher vocational student groups has certain value for understanding and assessing the moral awareness and ability of contemporary higher vocational students.

IV. CONCLUSION

The research results obtained by scholars at home and abroad in the field of compassion and measurement have provided many ideas and methods for reference in this study. Based on Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiment theory, this study intends to use Wispé Lauren's empathy connotation interpretation to define the meaning of compassion, developing compassion measurement tools suitable for Chinese higher vocational student groups, and conducting application analysis in order to provide support for the moral system education of the higher vocational students.

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