

Based on the Developmental Psychology Perspective to Provide a Brief Analysis of Ritual Education within the Concept of Integration of the Primary, secondary and tertiary levels

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Abstract. Ritual education is an educational approach that utilizes rituals as means to allow the education recipients to directly experience and accept the values and beliefs of the educators within a specific environmental ambiance, thereby fostering a sense of safety, identity, belonging, and honor, as well as enhancing group cohesion. Due to the psychological variations among individuals at different developmental stages, this paper, in conjunction with the concept of integration of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, analyzes the adoption of different forms of ritual education based on the psychological characteristics of individuals at various developmental stages, aiming to promote the effectiveness of ritual education.

1 Introduction

Rituals are an important carrier of ritual education, which initially fell within the domain of anthropology. The development of ritual research has progressed with the evolving nature of the concept of rituals. It began in the late 19th century when British anthropologist Max Müller and others categorized rituals under the umbrella of religion. Later, cultural anthropologist Edward Tylor believed that rituals had a binary nature. French sociologist and anthropologist Emile Durkheim further expanded the understanding of rituals, asserting that the sacredness of religion derived from society and that social forces acted upon individuals in a psychological manner, thus extending rituals to secular domains.[1] In the early 20th century, French anthropologist Victor Turner and others argued that "every human society celebrates or expresses its joy, sadness, and victories through rituals and ceremonies," broadening the research scope of rituals. With the attention from the field of education, ritual research has transitioned from anthropology to become an important concept in educational anthropology. It has shown positive practical effects in collaboration with related disciplines such as sociology and psychology. Taking the United States as an example, there is a focus on meaningful sacred rituals such as Independence Day, presidential inaugurations, Memorial Day, and Thanksgiving etc.; By revisiting history and honoring the deceased, students unconsciously establish American beliefs, values, and spirit. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on studying specific practical aspects and ritual events, such as research on children's education through participating in peers' ritual events as imitative demonstrations, and studies on the educational atmosphere of museums and exhibit cases. These studies

highlight the exploration of educational details.

China has a long history of ritual education with its roots tracing back to ancient times. During the Xi Zhou Dynasty, Duke of Zhou proposed the concept of "establishing rituals and promoting music," laying the foundation for China's ceremonial system and ritual education. During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, Confucianism gradually formed a core value pursuit centered around "benevolence." Confucianism integrated political ideals and moral concepts into rituals, music, and ceremonies, thus creating a diverse and effective system of ritual education. [2] Following this, ancient Chinese intellectuals and rulers, with Confucianism as their representative, placed great emphasis on using various rituals for education, shaping individual qualities and behaviors, and maintaining ruling purposes. Examples of this include adult rituals symbolizing the transition to adulthood, coming-of-age ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, birthday banquets, funeral ceremonies, and more. There were also rituals with a repetitive nature, such as ancestor worship rituals, rain prayer rituals, and exorcism rituals. Ancient China's practical and effective application of ritual education was evident. However, the theoretical research on ritual education began with the emergence of Western educational anthropology.

Currently, there is relatively more research on ritual education from the perspectives of sociology and folklore, which can provide a reference for strengthening the cultivation of socialist core values and a sense of responsibility among minority students. However, there is relatively less research on ancient traditional ritual education from a historical perspective, which hinders the inheritance and development of ritual education from ancient to modern times, as well as the transmission of

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cultural genes that result from it. The lack of research on specific ritual education procedures and quality evaluation in educational management does not provide corresponding measures to address the problem of "going through the motions." The psychological perspective has received less attention and has overlooked the psychological research on the educational subjects, thus lacking theoretical guidance for the development of appropriate ritual education programs.

Therefore, in this article, it will be explored from the perspective of educational psychology, the integration of individuals at different age groups, taking into consideration their developmental characteristics to discuss the use of different forms of ritual education under the concept of integrated education for primary, secondary and tertiary levels within different age groups, in order to promote the effectiveness of education for each individual.

2 Rituals and ceremonial education

Rituals originated from totem worship and gradually evolved into a behavioral system that is conducted on specific occasions to achieve predetermined goals. It combines symbolism, performance, cultural transmission, and practicality, and has distinct procedural and normative characteristics. Rituals work through collective actions to sublimate individual emotions and adapt mental states, fostering a sense of security, identity, belonging, and enhancing group cohesion.[3]

Ritual education is a form of education in which the education recipient directly experiences and receives intentional and organized educational influence from the educator, through a series of symbolic and culturally traditional procedures or normative processes. Ritual education uses rituals as a vehicle to allow the education recipient to directly experience and embrace the educator's values and beliefs, through a combination of conscious and unconscious, emotional, and intuitive ways. Successful ritual education provides a sense of security, identity, belonging, and honor to individuals, allowing them to subconsciously develop a sense of alignment with certain values through various ceremonial behaviors, and externalize and elevate their psychological strength.

3 The role of ritual education

Ritual education, as one of the means for individual social identification and organizational social mobilization, has positive effects on both individuals and groups.

3.1 Individual perspective

3.1.1 Promoting role awareness and political and moral socialization.

School education is not only about the transmission and cultivation of knowledge and skills, but also about the process of role positioning. Ritual education is an important approach to student role positioning. By creating a special educational atmosphere through rituals,

students engage in role-playing, which triggers emotional resonance and strengthens their identification with specific stage identities. This can promote self-education and self-improvement among students, as well as clarify their role awareness. [4] At the same time, through ritual activities, students can subtly achieve political and moral socialization, establishing correct ideals, beliefs, and values.

3.1.2 Triggering emotional resonance

General secretary Xi Jinping emphasized the need to establish and standardize certain ceremonial systems, organize diverse commemorative celebrations, disseminate mainstream values, and enhance people's sense of identity and belonging. [5] The various forms of rituals transform correct values into students' personal values, profoundly, enduringly, and subliminally influencing their psychology and behavior. [6] This allows individuals participating in the rituals to immerse themselves in the situation, evoke emotional resonance, and strengthen their sense of identity through episodic memories. Just like the collective consciousness of the Chinese nation embodied in the "Yan Huang Ceremony," it reflects the value of inheriting excellent traditional Chinese culture and can evoke even greater emotional resonance.

3.1.3 Behavior standardization

Ceremonial education is typically a series of activities that schools conduct at specific times and locations. The uniformity of the activities' content and format enables participants to conform to collective standards in their words and actions, thus achieving the desired effect of behavior standardization. In addition, the exemplary role of ceremonies in education, such as through award ceremonies, recognition assemblies, or celebrity lectures, encourages individuals to spontaneously imitate exemplary behavior, thereby also exerting a normative influence on behavior. As renowned German educator Wolfgang states, "During the process of imitation, children participating in ceremonies acquire a 'practical knowledge,' which constitutes the foundation for their future abilities in ritual and social behavior. In the process of imitation, children 'reproduce' ritualized behavior and internalize it." Ceremonial education guides, standardizes, and reinforces the behavior patterns of individuals or groups, which is why some scholars argue that ceremonial education plays a significant social role in shaping and unifying people's lives.

3.2 Collective perspective

3.2.1 Enhancing group identity

Ceremonial activities on campus are an integral part of campus culture itself, in which both teachers and students share a collective identity and collective memory through educational rituals. These fosters shared cultural beliefs

and group identity among the participants. Additionally, these activities serve as a means of transmitting values to both observers and participants, deepening their sense of belonging to the group. Through this sense of belonging, a strong sense of security is generated, further enhancing group identity.

3.2.2 *Enhancing group cohesion*

Group identity can further stimulate group cohesion and morale. Ritual education harnesses the power of group effects through various forms of ceremonies, such as celebrations and social practices, creating strong group cohesion. Individuals who communicate and interact with each other during rituals enhance mutual understanding. Therefore, whether it is from ancient rituals to contemporary social etiquette, ceremonies play a role in strengthening group relationships. [7] Through group activities like ceremonies, the sense of responsibility of each individual can be consolidated, thus enhancing group cohesion.

3.3 **Teaching perspective**

Complementary Hidden Education with Explicit Education. Ritual education can express implicit educational content and educational concepts. Through infectious, procedural, and aesthetic educational forms, hidden educational requirements are made explicit and have a lasting impact. Participants unconsciously feel and experience the implicit education in specific contexts, without external pressure or resistance, through their activities. [8] Through repeated education in rituals, values and behaviors are constantly strengthened and become habits for students. Especially, the slogans, slogans, banners, clothing decorations, and other details in rituals invisibly influence participants, making up for the shortcomings of explicit education in effectively covering life details.

4 **Psychological characteristics of students at different stages**

4.1 **Primary school children stage**

Children transition from primarily concrete thinking to primarily abstract logical thinking [9], but the abstract logical thinking of elementary school students is still closely related to sensory experiences and contains a significant element of concreteness. Additionally, interest is an important factor in how individuals acquire knowledge, and its influence decreases with age. Therefore, children are more easily influenced by intuitive, tangible, and novel external stimuli.

This stage is also the most significant period for individuals to be influenced by social and cultural factors. It is an important time for learning roles, so role-playing can help children develop clear role cognition. Furthermore, children are greatly influenced by school rules and teacher education, thus emphasizing the

effectiveness of ritual education organized by teachers.

4.2 **Secondary school stage**

4.2.1 *Adolescence stage*

During adolescence (about 11-12 to 14-15 years old), individuals' thinking shifts from concrete to abstract logic, but they are in a transitional period from experiential to theoretical thinking, still exhibiting surface-level and one-sided perspectives. Adolescents have broad interests, active thinking, and a desire for creativity, but they lack stable and profound emotional experiences, making them prone to extremism and radical behaviors. They attach great importance to peer evaluations, seeking approval and a desire to establish a unique self-image. Their relationship with teachers shifts from accepting any type of teacher to admiring their idolized teachers. Therefore, allowing students to have a sense of agency and incorporating teacher role models can have a positive impact during this stage.

4.2.2 *Late adolescence stage*

This stage usually begins around the ages of 14 or 15 and lasts until 17 or 18, aligning with the high school stage. Students' formal logical thinking undergoes significant development and takes a dominant position in their cognitive activities. During this stage, there is a growing desire for self-independence and the beginning formation of individual values. They hold strong idealistic views towards society and life. They possess a strong sense of self-esteem and tend to be mature in aspects such as self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-experiences. They maintain positive relationships with others, gradually reducing rebellious tendencies. They have a strong need for independence and wish to be treated as adults. This independent mindset is particularly strong and noticeable compared to previous generations.

4.3 **Early stage of young adulthood during the college phase**

G.S. Hall referred to this period as the "turbulent" stage, while E. Spranger described it as the "second birth" and "marginalized individuals" also refer specifically to this period. During this time, individuals form their worldview, life philosophy, and values in this midst of conflicting psychological states of joy, satisfaction, distress, and anxiety. Cognitive thinking transitions from primarily formal logic thinking to dialectical logic thinking, giving rise to "creative" thinking. In terms of self-awareness, there is a heightened sensitivity to others' evaluations. Erik Erikson believed that the developmental task during this period is to establish a sense of self-identity, with self-evaluation, self-experience, and self-observation becoming more objectively mature. As university students move towards society in the future, the formation of values needs to be achieved through the process of socialization. With the richness of today's social life, university students

can achieve the socialization of their social roles through strengthened learning, imitative learning, and observational learning in various practices.

5 Suggestion

With the rapid development of the times and the subtle changes in student characteristics, the content and form of ceremonial education should also undergo corresponding changes. At the same time, the concept of integrated education from primary to secondary to tertiary levels, as well as the developmental stages of students and the continuity of education, should also be considered in determining the focus of ceremonial education. [figure 1]

5.1 In primary school, the main focus is on cultivating emotional identification through ritual behavior.

Based on the characteristics of children's concrete and image thinking, the focus in primary school is on cultivating students' moral emotions. Through enriching, intuitive, and directly participatory activities, by eliciting emotions, perception and identification with roles can be achieved through role-playing. Moreover, repeated ritual education serves to reinforce learning. For example, weekly flag-raising ceremonies, Tomb-sweeping Day martyrs ceremony, the Young Pioneers ceremony for primary school students, unique ritual education within the classroom etc.

5.2 In the secondary education stage, emotional stimulation is emphasized to foster cognition and identification.

With abstract logical thinking taking the lead, the primary task in the middle school stage is to clarify concepts. As this stage is still greatly influenced by experiential factors, it is important to reinforce identification and enhance ideological identification through ceremonial experiences. Especially by utilizing student-organized ceremonial activities, motivation can be activated to encourage students to complete tasks under strong motivation and achieve clear cognition and identification.

In the high school stage, due to the considerable development of formal logical thinking and the shift away from experiential basis towards theoretical development, the focus is on using concepts to promote students' high level of political identification and to stimulate identification through ceremonial experiences. Students in this age group are already capable of gaining better identification through simple experiences. Therefore, they can participate in ceremonial education from an observer's perspective, rather than directly and intuitively participating as in the primary school stage. For example, the annual commemorative ceremony for revolutionary martyrs on September 30th promotes the remembrance of Chinese revolutionary history through large-scale live broadcasting.

5.3 In the university stage, cognitive development serves as the foundation to promote a sense of responsibility and corresponding behavior.

During their early adulthood, individuals undergo a transition from predominantly engaging in formal logical thinking to engaging in dialectical logical thinking. As students begin to form their worldviews and values, they are already approaching adulthood, although their social experiences and sense of responsibility may still be lacking. Therefore, the purpose of ritual education is to enhance students' sense of mission and cultivate them as builders and successors of socialism. Various types of ritual education are therefore practical and effective, especially when combined with increased participation in university clubs and social activities. By guiding university students through ritual education in various activities, real-life effects can be achieved. Furthermore, for a minority of students with weak sense of responsibility and for those who lack exposure to strong ritual education practices, ritual education can serve as a behavioral reinforcement, increasing identification and the hidden influence of campus culture.

In summary, ritual education is an activity that integrates knowledge, emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Therefore, in ritual education, it is important to pay attention to the students' subjectivity and avoid separating the physical and psychological aspects of their experiences. This will encourage students to fully engage in conscious activities.

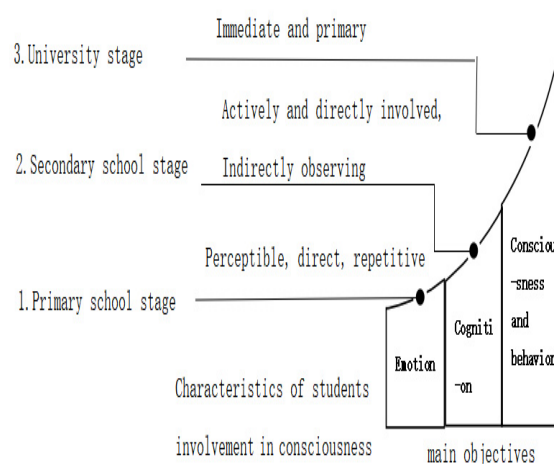


Figure 1: A systemic ritual education diagram

6 Conclusion

The Chinese nation has long been known as the "land of etiquette and rituals", and ritual education is a manifestation of the etiquette culture. It is influenced by social and economic development as well as political systems. Therefore, it is important to explore ritual education forms that are in line with the characteristics of the times. At the same time, it is necessary to consider the developmental characteristics of students at different age groups and establish a continuous system of ritual

education. This will, in a subtle way, pass on Chinese culture, promote core socialist values, and facilitate the healthy growth of students at all stages of their lives.

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