

An Empirical Study on Students' Evaluation of Moral Education in Foreign Language Education in China*

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Students' evaluation of moral education is of great significance for improving the quality of teaching. Through a survey of 2715 undergraduates majoring in foreign languages, this paper analyzes their evaluation of the moral education. Findings show that students speak highly of teachers' competence in moral education, teaching methods and the integration of moral education in the textbooks, but not in the course assessment and the overall effect of moral education. Suggestions were proposed accordingly to improve moral education of foreign language education in China.

Keywords: curriculum moral education, students' evaluate of teaching, foreign language education

I. Introduction

Moral education highlights the essence of value shaping while imparting knowledge and fostering abilities. Due to the uniqueness of foreign language education, moral education is particularly important (Wen & Chang, 2021, pp. 7-19+89). Therefore, the evaluation of moral education in foreign language education is the key in enhancing the quality of foreign language education (Lu, 2022, pp. 43-58).

Research on students' evaluation of teaching dates back to the 1990s. Although studies show that the interpretation and application of student evaluation results face many challenges (Eiszler, 2002, pp. 483-501), most opinions support that they can serve as a reliable and effective assessment tool, and thus are still widely used in higher education (Spooren et al., 2013, pp. 598-642; Hornstein, 2017). The most important purpose of student evaluations is not to prove but to improve (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Since teaching is a complex systematic process, evaluating based on outcomes is not scientific, and the teaching process should be prioritized to evaluate the quality of teaching (Yang & Lu, 2021, pp. 49-54).

Current research on moral education in foreign language majors mainly focuses on its top-level design (He, 2022, pp. 1+12-14), curriculum design (Wang & Lu, 2023, pp. 9-19+145; Tang, 2021, pp. 40-46), implementation (Miao, 2023, pp. 20-27+145-146), etc., while research and practice on the evaluation of moral education are very limited. Furthermore, in terms of research methods, existing research literature mainly focuses

* **Acknowledgement:** This research is supported by Shandong Provincial Education Science "14th Five-Year Plan" Project (Project Number: 2021ZC060), Shandong Provincial Education Reform Key Project (Project Number: Z2021250), and Shandong Agricultural University Education Reform Project (Project Number: XM202220).

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on macro, theoretical, and speculative explorations, while micro, empirical studies are relatively weak. Based on this, this paper empirically evaluates moral education in foreign language majors, thereby providing important suggestions for further improving the quality of moral education.

II. Research Design

Research Participants

The research participants are 2715 undergraduates majoring in foreign languages. They are from 15 universities in the eastern, central, and western regions of China, covering six provinces: Shandong, Zhejiang, Hebei, Guangdong, Shaanxi, and Guizhou.

Research Tools

This study designs a “Questionnaire on the Evaluation of Moral Education in Courses by Foreign Language Majors”, which consists of two parts. The first part covers personal information with a total of 8 questions, including university, major, grade, political status, research experience, contest experience, etc. The second consists of 29 questions on students' evaluation of moral education in five dimensions: overall evaluation, evaluation of teachers' competence, teaching methods, textbooks, and course assessment.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed through the *Wenjuanxing*, and a total of 2787 questionnaires were collected. After eliminating 72 invalid ones, 2715 valid questionnaires were finally recovered, with a recovery rate of 97.42%. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to study foreign language majors' overall evaluation.

III. Research Results and Discussion

On the whole, foreign language majors have high evaluations of teachers' competence, teaching methods, and textbook design in moral education, but they have the lowest evaluation of the integration of moral education into course assessment.

Evaluation of Teachers' Competence in Moral Education

Students have a high evaluation of foreign language teachers' competence in moral education (mean value of 4.41). Students generally believe that their teachers have the ability to conduct moral education in course teaching. Students' evaluation of teachers' ability to conduct “cultural” education, in particular, is higher (mean value of 4.57) than other dimensions, while the ability to conduct “constitutional education” is lower (mean value of 4.10) than other dimensions.

Evaluation of Teaching Methods in Moral Education

Secondly, students have high evaluations of various teaching methods used in moral education in foreign language courses, with the SD above 0.70, indicating large difference in students' opinion. Students believe the most effective method of moral education is through practice, while classroom discussions and group reports in class are not as effective, but the SD is large, indicating that students have different opinions of this teaching method. This suggests that some students have not realized their status as the main body of moral education, and their enthusiasm for participation in classroom moral construction needs to be improved.

Evaluation of Moral Education in Textbooks

Students have high evaluation of the integration of moral education in the currently used foreign language textbooks (mean value of 4.04), especially introduction of Western culture and cultivation of cross-cultural communication awareness. However, students have lower evaluation of critical thinking in the textbooks. Foreign language majors have more exposure to foreign ideas and values, so it is especially important that they have critical thinking and can make independent judgment. Foreign language textbooks should integrate language, skills, critical thinking, and moral education.

Evaluation of Moral Education in Course Assessment

Students believe that moral evaluation should be included in course assessment (mean value of 4.42) and can be scientifically assessed through reasonable indicators. However, students' evaluation of the actual implementation is significantly lower (mean value of 3.32), indicating that moral education are not well integrated into their course assessment. On the one hand, this is due to foreign language teachers' inability to evaluate the effectiveness of moral education. On the other hand, the lack of an evaluation system for the construction of moral education in university courses makes it difficult to implement the evaluation of moral education in courses assessment. Students have the highest evaluation of evaluating moral qualities through classroom performance, and low evaluation of self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

Evaluation of Overall Moral Education in Foreign Language Teaching

Students have low evaluation of moral education in foreign language courses (with mean values less than 4). This indicates that foreign language education has not well integrated moral education into course teaching, and there is a certain gap between the practice of moral education in courses and students' needs. Specifically, students have the lowest evaluation of moral education in classroom teaching (mean value of 3.31). The integration of moral education by foreign language teachers is mostly random and subjective, which leads to students' lower recognition of moral education in class.

IV. Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusions

Firstly, the overall quality and effectiveness of moral education integrated into foreign language courses need improvement, especially in the integration of moral education into course assessments. Secondly, foreign language teachers are competent in moral education and adopt reasonable teaching methods, and foreign language textbooks also reflect the concept of moral education. However, teachers still lack some essential skills, teaching methods do not adequately stimulate students' active participation, and foreign language textbooks can't sufficiently cultivate students' critical thinking abilities.

Suggestions

Firstly, mechanism should be established for teachers to improve their moral education competence, such as training, team collaboration, action research, etc. Secondly, appropriate teaching methods should be chosen based on a student-centered approach to enhance students' initiative in moral education in courses. Thirdly, textbooks should be improved to integrate not only to foster foreign language students' political identity, national sentiment, cultural literacy, but also critical thinking. Fourthly, moral education should be integrated

into course assessments by incorporating different evaluation bodies including teachers, students, and society, through peer evaluation, teacher evaluation, group peer evaluation, and extracurricular activity bonuses, to conduct multi-dimensional evaluations of students' knowledge, abilities, and qualities.

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