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Research on the Growth Logic and Cultivation Path of Parental Self-Confidence in Family Education

Yue Zhou[123]*

1 School of Preschool Education, Qiongtai Normal University, Haikou 571100, China

2 Key Laboratory Of Child Cognition & Behavior Development Of Hainan Province

3 Hainan Family Education Research Center

***Corresponding author, E-mail: zhouyueqt@126.com**

Abstract:

Establishing parental self-confidence in family education holds strong practical significance. Understanding and accepting one's own family culture serves as the starting point for parental self-confidence in family education. The natural and irreplaceable parent-child relationship provides the conditional guarantee for generating such self-confidence, while rich experiences in family life education constitute the key elements for accumulating parental self-confidence. Parents can develop individual self-confidence in family education through establishing cultural confidence, practical confidence, and theoretical confidence in family education.

Keywords:

Parents, Family Education Self-Confidence,Growth Logic of Self-Confidence,Cultivation Path

Introduction

In recent years, family education has become an important issue on the agenda of the Chinese government. Following the National Family Education "Ninth Five-Year" Plan issued by the All-China Women's Federation and the National Education Commission in 1996, China's family education policies have entered a stage of intensive professionalization. The Ministry of Education issued the Guiding Opinions on Strengthening Family Education Work in 2015, the National Family Education Guidance Outline (Revised) in 2019, and the Basic Code of Conduct for Parental Family Education in 2020. In 2021, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education was promulgated. From government work plans to national legislation, we can see not only that the status of family education has been elevated to a national strategic height, but also that family education has shifted from being highly private to a stage requiring a certain degree of socialized guidance.

The emphasis on family education in national policies has stimulated various social organizations, family education instructors, and media to guide family education, with slogans such as "raising children according to law" and "parenting with certificates" forcing today's parents to attach great importance to family educa-

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tion. In the practical field, the National Family Education Status Survey Report (2018) pointed out: "Many parents feel confused about family education. They are eager to educate their children well but often feel that their ability falls short of their wishes" (China Collaborative Innovation Center of Assessment for Basic Education Quality, 2018). The results of the Second National Family Education Status Survey Report showed that 73.1% of people believed that "problems with children can always be traced back to the parents," and 47.4% of parents "do not know what methods to use to educate their children" in daily life (Children's Work Department of the All-China Women's Federation, 2016). From this, we can see the current social reality of family education: on the one hand, national guidelines and codes of conduct for family education are becoming increasingly mature and professional; on the other hand, parents—the main subjects of family education—face complex educational situations but feel insufficiently competent.

Therefore, the author believes it is necessary to explore the growth logic and cultivation path of parental self-confidence in family education in such a realistic context. Parents possessing educational self-confidence can, on the one hand, enable them to be more objective and rational in the era of information explosion, reduce parental anxiety, enhance their sense of self-efficacy in education, and promote lifelong learning to facilitate the scientific and rational progress of family education. On the other hand, in the process of developing educational self-confidence, parents consolidate their principal position in family education and promote the excavation, inheritance, construction, and development of family culture and excellent family traditions.

1. The Connotation of Parental Self-Confidence in Family Education

Family education refers to the cultivation, guidance, and influence implemented by parents or other guardians to promote the comprehensive and healthy growth of minors in terms of moral character, physical fitness, life skills, cultural cultivation, and behavioral habits (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2021).

From an etymological perspective, "self-confidence" (自 信) consists of "self" (自), meaning oneself, and "confidence" (信), meaning belief or trust. Therefore, "self-confidence" means believing in oneself. In theEducational Dictionary, "self-confidence" refers to the psychological state of believing in one's own thoughts, morality, and abilities; it is a favorable psychological condition for learning and a spiritual force for striving for success (Gu, 1999).

In this paper, parental self-confidence in family education refers to the psychological state in which parents believe they have the ability to positively and effectively influence, cultivate, and guide the development of minors in terms of moral character, physical fitness, life skills, cultural cultivation, and behavioral habits. It is an important quality that stimulates parents' educational awareness in daily life and an important factor that prompts parents to view social-level family education guidance dialectically and actively adjust their own family education practices.

2. The Growth Logic of Parental Self-Confidence in Family Education

How, then, is parental self-confidence in family education generated? Scholar Che Liping believes that

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"self-confidence is a stable personality trait in which an individual makes objective and positive cognitions and evaluations of their own abilities and values" (Che, 2002). From this perspective, the author believes that parents' self-understanding and acceptance of their own family culture is the starting point for establishing confidence in family education. Furthermore, self-confidence is gradually formed through the cognitive processing of a large amount of information presented in the interaction between people and the environment (Che, 2002). Compared with educational institutions and family education instructors, parents spend the longest time with their children and have the most opportunities to obtain repeated educational practices and observe and evaluate their children, which is the conditional guarantee for parents to generate self-confidence in family education. With the starting point of confidence and sufficient support, parents' love for their children prompts them to consciously implement positive influences in family education practices and consciously evaluate the effects of these influences. In this process, the educational rationality formed by rich practical life experiences ultimately precipitates and accumulates parents' self-confidence in family education.

2.1 Understanding and Accepting One's Own Family Culture as the Starting Point

Scholars have pointed out that "to establish confidence in Chinese education, the first level is to base educational confidence on China's broad cultural foundation" (Chu, 2017). The starting point for parental self-confidence in family education is understanding and accepting one's own family culture. Family culture refers to the stable cultural and psychological state formed by family members of successive generations in terms of lifestyle, existence, behavior patterns, thinking characteristics, emotional patterns, value orientation, aesthetic taste, and psychological quality. The survival and reproduction of each family is realized on a certain foundation of family culture. The premise for parents to carry out family education is to correctly understand the characteristics of their own family culture and accept and absorb its reasonable components. Understanding and accepting one's own family culture is the foundation for parents to deeply think about their own family education situation and the spiritual starting point for them to further devote themselves to learning family education concepts and improving the quality of family education.

2.2 The Natural and Irreplaceable Parent-Child Relationship as Conditional Guarantee

From the perspective of the mechanism of self-confidence generation, when individuals begin to have self-evaluation awareness, their cognition and evaluation of themselves largely depend on the evaluations of people around them (especially collective or group evaluations) (Che, 2002). When parents begin to realize the importance of family education and put it into action, they also begin to pay attention to the evaluation of their own family education quality. If at this stage, the external evaluations received by parents from social policies and regulations, professional family education instructors, and various media propaganda are not positive, parents will generate a sense of educational disorientation. This sense of disorientation will contribute to parents' lack of confidence in family education. Coupled with the false advertising of off-campus training institutions, which creates wider educational anxiety based on parents' lack of confidence.

However, the connotation of family education emphasizes the various influences that parents exert to promote the healthy growth of minors. The effect of these influences should be measured and evaluated by the family individual based on previous experience levels versus current levels, rather than measured according to a unified external evaluation standard. The natural and irreplaceable parent-child relationship, on the one

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hand, allows parents to observe and evaluate educational effects through repeated educational practices, becoming the most direct and effective evaluator. On the other hand, the power of love in the parent-child relationship makes parents the most powerful driving force for family education to develop in a positive direction. This unique condition is the guarantee for parents to generate self-confidence in family education. Parents can be confident and should be confident in family education practice.

2.3 Rich Experience in Family Life Education as the Key Element

Furthermore, from the perspective of the mechanism of self-confidence generation, as individuals grow, their value system gradually forms and stably internalizes into self-evaluation standards. The self then uses these standards as a benchmark to filter compatible values, forming a set of self-evaluation systems. This process gradually accumulates and internalizes individual self-confidence, which is relatively stable at this stage (Che, 2002). Parents' stable self-confidence in family education is also formed through rich practical experience and continuous theoretical learning. Parents are the main body of family education practice. As mentioned above, parents have richer practical experiences in family education than anyone else. Whether these experiences can become true experience depends on whether parents have conscious reflective awareness in family education. The effects of parent-child interaction and the drive of love in the parent-child relationship are important factors that continuously stimulate parents to consciously reflect on their experiences in life practice.

After multiple reflections in life, parents gain a force to break through the constraints of experience, forming the consciousness to seek family education theory. Subsequently, through repeated practical thinking and theoretical learning, parents increase their successful experiences in family education. This process precipitates and accumulates stable parental self-confidence in family education.

3. The Cultivation Path of Parental Self-Confidence in Family Education

Parents continuously accumulate capabilities in rich educational practices and constantly form objective evaluations of themselves and their family's development. The author proposes to discuss the specific paths for parents to develop self-confidence in family education from the following three aspects.

3.1 The Cultivation Path of Family Cultural Confidence

3.1.1 Understanding Family Development History

Every family that has survived the historical process can form a glorious history. The family is a small unit of family continuity, carrying the past memory of the family and expectations for future development. Every parent's understanding of their family's development history is the foundation for guiding the family to continue to develop in a better direction.

3.1.2 Strengthening Intergenerational Communication in the Family

Family education in different generations has different characteristics but also common attributes. Strengthening communication between different generations in the family is not only a process of emotional connec-

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tion for family members but also a process for the family to better understand its own culture and promote cultural integration and common development.

3.1.3 Organizing Excellent Family Education Traditions

Whether noble families with distinguished family histories, scholarly families, or ordinary people, every family that has continued to the present has educational wisdom worth excavating and organizing. Family education in different historical periods has formed many daily educational common sense, strategies, and wisdom based on different social and life situations. These are the excellent educational traditions of the family, worthy of being remembered and passed down.

In summary, parents can better understand and recognize the past, present, and future of their own family education by understanding family development history, strengthening family communication, and organizing excellent family education traditions, thereby establishing the cultural foundation of educational confidence.

3.2 The Cultivation Path of Practical Confidence in Family Education

3.2.1 Strengthening Self-Cultivation

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out at the First National Conference on Model Families: "Family education involves many aspects, but the most important is moral education, education on how to be a person." The key to education on how to be a person is the establishment of ideals, beliefs, and values (All-China Women's Federation, 2021). The premise for parents to guide their children to learn how to be a person in daily life is that parents themselves have good outlooks on life and the world. Scholars have proposed that parents possess high-quality tacit knowledge (behavioral characteristics, lifestyles, and even language expression habits) to bring better influence to their children's growth (Sun, 2018). Family education runs through a person's life. If parents consciously strengthen their self-cultivation in this process, they can positively influence their children in life. The more positive influence of family education, the more it promotes parents' educational self-confidence. The more confidence parents have in educational practice, the more it stimulates parents' investment and thinking, further promoting the development of family education.

3.2.2 Establishing Good Parent-Child Relationships

Good parent-child relationships are the foundation of family education. Only in a state of harmonious relationships will children respect their parents and accept their education. Only based on good parent-child relationships can family education be successful, and parents can gain confidence in family education practice. Therefore, parents can build good parent-child relationships in daily life by strengthening companionship with their children, communicating with them as equals, listening to their needs, valuing their rights, encouraging them to try, and affirming their efforts and achievements.

3.2.3 Developing Habits of Reflecting on Educational Practice

Family education experiences cannot become educational experience without reflection. In educational practice, parents can develop habits of reflecting on educational practice by making growth record books for their children, recording their growth stories, and communicating daily with their spouses about their chil-

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dren's growth events. Reflective practice is a process for parents to understand themselves, understand their children, and understand their own family education.

The cultivation of parents' educational self-confidence is not a short-term process. It is gradually formed through the cognitive processing of a large amount of information presented in the interaction between parents, children, and the current family environment. Parents' self-cultivation, good parent-child relationships, and habits of practical reflection can promote and strengthen cognitive information processing, catalyzing the formation of parents' practical confidence in family education.

3.3 The Cultivation Path of Theoretical Confidence in Family Education

Marx once clearly pointed out: "The degree to which a theory is realized in a country always depends on the degree to which the theory satisfies the needs of that country" (Marx & Engels, 1995). The realization of family education theory is based on the needs of each family education practice. Compared with family education guidance experts and instructors, parents do not possess a theoretical discourse system, but they are practitioners and implementers of theory. Professor Sun Yuantao pointed out: "Without the substantive transformation of social practice supporting theoretical innovation, the construction of academic discourse systems can easily become hollowed out into an empty slogan detached from social reality and rigorous academic practice, unable to achieve true theoretical innovation" (Sun, 2018). Therefore, from this perspective, parents can also generate individual educational theoretical confidence in the collision between practice and theory. Only confident parents can combine external family education theories with their own family education practices to produce true theoretical innovation. The author believes that the cultivation paths in this aspect can proceed from the following two aspects.

3.3.1 Understanding Child Development Laws

Understanding the theory of child development laws is the basic theory necessary for parents to conduct family education. Under the guidance of universal laws, parents can understand their children's developmental needs and provide an environment that supports children's development. At the same time, in this process, they can discover both the universal laws and individual differences in their children's growth. This process not only enriches the theoretical system of parental family education but also promotes the scientific development of family education theory.

3.3.2 Strengthening Learning and Communication with Family Education Theorists

The process in which parents discover, think about, and solve problems in family education practice is the process of self-confidence cultivation. However, in this process, parents' individual prior experiences cannot entirely solve practical problems, requiring strengthened communication and learning with family education theorists. Family education theorists possess professional and rich educational guidance theories. Parents can creatively use theories to solve practical problems after interacting and communicating with them. Scholars have pointed out: "Only by being learning-oriented parents can the quality and effectiveness of family education be improved" (Yang & Qin, 2018). In the process of communicating and learning with family education workers, parents also understand theories, think about theories, and gradually form their own theoretical system of family education, thereby forming personal theoretical confidence in family education.

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In the discussion of psychology, self-confidence is an individual's positive feeling about themselves, a prerequisite for success and an important spiritual pillar. The parental self-confidence in family education discussed in this paper is an important condition for the personalized and benign development of family education. As the main body of family education practice, parents can and should believe in their ability to promote their own family development. Furthermore, family education self-confidence is not a process of blind self-practice, self-praise, or self-satisfaction, but rather a process of objectively understanding oneself, one's children, and one's family, and through theoretical learning and continuous life practice, reflection, and summary, increasing successful experiences in family education to improve confidence. This successful experience does not refer to external manifestations such as children's improved grades or increased family wealth, but rather to more harmonious relationships among family members, stronger happiness in life, every member being able to be themselves in the family, and everyone being able to better realize their ideals.

In today's society where family education issues are prominent and there is extreme emphasis on family education construction, the author believes that every parent should return to the psychological origin, regain the practical rationality of family education, build individual self-confidence in family education, and promote family education to develop in a better direction with a positive attitude and rational wisdom.

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