

The relationship between college students' national identity and sense of mission: the role of party membership motivation

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Abstract: College students are not only the backbone of society, but also the future hope of the country. Therefore, cultivating their sense of national identity and mission is crucial to their personal growth. In addition, as the successors of the Party, the motivation of college students to join the Party is also a key point of consideration. This study aims to explore the connection between national identity and sense of mission, and to analyze the role of party membership motivation and its importance in this context. The findings show that national identity has a direct positive effect on sense of mission and a positive indirect effect through several types of party membership motivation - including ideal belief, role model motivation and achievement and progress.

Keywords: college students, national identity, sense of mission, motivation to join the Party

1. Introduction

As Studying the relationship between college students' national identity and historical mission helps to gain a deeper understanding of the degree of college students' identification with the country, their understanding of and attitude towards the country's history, as well as to explore the interplay between this identification and the sense of mission. At the same time, studying the mediating role of the motivation for joining the Party is of great significance in understanding the reasons and significance of college students' joining the Party, as well as how Party organizations can guide college students to establish a correct concept of national identity and mission.

Sense of mission is an individual's perception and identification of the mission given by the time, society and country in which he or she lives, and it is an important driving force for the effectiveness of individual's behavior and social activities^[1,2]. According to Li Jiayang, as a university student, the mission should be to safeguard the interests of the country, revitalizing the Chinese nation and contribute to the cause of human progress^[3]. National identity is an individual's subjective or internal sense of belonging to a certain country, which is manifested in citizens' acceptance, recognition and loyalty to the nation-state^[4,5]. Only when an individual establishes a national identity can he or she form a sense of citizenship and feel the close connection between the individual and the state. The degree of a person's identification with the state determines his feelings and attitudes towards the state. If a person has a high sense of national identity, he will have a sense of mission for the development and prosperity of the country and be willing to contribute to the interests and honor of the country. Contemporary college students are the force to inspire the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and are the pillars of the country's future construction. The strength of college students' sense of national identity is related to the future of China's development^[6]. Thus, hypothesis H1 is proposed: national identity positively affects the sense of mission.

The motive for joining the Party refers to the reason why a person aspires to join a political party or organization. The strength or weakness of the motivation to join the party reflects their loyalty and responsibility to the country and the people^[7,8]. Since college students are in the stage of forming their outlook on life and values, they will be influenced by various social trends, so their motives for joining the party show a diversified trend. Lei Shuangshuang and Zhang Liang divided the motives for joining the Party into five types: ideal belief type, role model motivation type, achievement and progress type, utilitarian type and follower type^[9,10]. Mainstream motives for joining the Party are mainly positive,

and most college students applying for joining the Party regard joining the Party as their lofty ideals and political pursuits, hoping to better serve people around them and inspire the value of their own lives through joining the Party^[11]. Joining the Party is a high degree of recognition of the cause of the Party and the people, and is a manifestation of the individual's pursuit of ideals and contribution to the country and society. Through joining the Party, college students can gain a deeper understanding of the Party's purposes and theories and enhance their sense of mission and responsibility. For the Communist Party, a person's motivation for joining the Party reflects not only the degree of his national identity and sense of mission, but also his pursuit of the communist cause and his identification with the Party's values. A person's strong sense of national identity will inspire his motivation to join the party organization. They aspire to achieve their national ideals and mission through the power of the party organization. This leads to the hypothesis H2: The motivation to join the party mediates between national identity and sense of mission.

This study aims to explore the relationship between college students' national identity and historical mission, focusing on the mediating role of party membership motivation in this relationship. In order to achieve this, the study will use a combination of in-depth interviews and questionnaires to analyze college students' perceptions and attitudes towards national identity and historical mission by collecting their opinions, views and psychological attitudes, and to further explore the mediating role of motivation for joining the Party in between.

2. Methodology

2.1. Objects of study

A total of 1,585 Chinese undergraduates were selected, including 595 in the first year of university, 302 in the second year of university, 442 in the third year of university, and 246 in the fourth year of university; there were 837 male students and 748 female students. Correlation analysis and mediation model test were performed using SPSS26.0.

2.2. Research tools

2.2.1. National Identity Scale for University Students

The National Identity Questionnaire for College Students developed by Ou yang Lei yi^[12] was used. A total of 15 questions were asked, including 5 dimensions of motherland identity, political identity, economic identity, cultural identity and national identity, and 5 levels of scoring were used, with 1="not at all consistent" and 5="completely consistent". Higher scores indicate a higher degree of national identity among college students. The alpha coefficient of the scale in this study is 0.91. Words like "is", "or", "then", etc. should not be capitalized unless they are the first word of the title.

2.2.2. Sense of Mission Scale for College Students

The college students' sense of mission questionnaire developed by Yang Xin^[13] was used. A total of 15 questions were asked and scored on a 5-point scale, with higher scores indicating a stronger sense of mission among college students. The alpha coefficient of this scale in this study was 0.93.

2.2.3. University Students' Motivation to Join the Party Scale

The questionnaire of college students' motivation to join the Party prepared by Zhang Liang^[14] was used. There are 15 questions in total, including 5 dimensions of ideal belief type, achievement and progress type, role model motivation type, follower type and utilitarian type. Using 5-level scoring, the higher the score of each dimension of college students' motivation to join the Party indicates the stronger the corresponding motivation. The alpha coefficient of this scale in this study was 0.94.

3. Results

3.1. Common method bias test

The study used a group field test and on-the-spot recovery method to collect data. There may be common method bias due to the fact that the self-reporting method was used to collect the data. The study used Harman one-factor test^[15], which showed that there were 10 factors with an eigenroot greater than 1. The first factor explained 25.12% of the total variance, which is less than the critical

value of 40%, and there was no significant common method bias.

3.2. Descriptive analysis between variables

The mean values and correlations of seven variables in the dimensions of sense of mission, national identity, and motivation to join the Party were analyzed as follows: sense of mission score (4.85±0.29), national identity (4.91±0.17), ideal belief type(4.82±0.41), achievement and progress type (4.66±0.53), role model motivation type (4.76±0.53), follower type (3.18±1.34), and utilitarian (3.58±1.18). From the above results, it can be seen that sense of mission, national identity, ideal belief type, achievement and progress type, and role model motivation type are much higher than the theoretical mean (3 points).

From Table 1, it can be seen that there is a significant positive correlation between the sense of mission and the five bit dimensions of national identity and motivation to join the party. National identity is significantly positively correlated with ideal belief type, achievement and progress type, role model motivation type, and follower type. The correlation heat map (Figure 1) shows the value of the correlation coefficient between the variables, mainly through color depth to indicate the size of the value, the darker color indicates that the two variables correlation is stronger, the lighter color the weaker the correlation. Thus, it can be seen that the sense of mission and national identity are more strongly correlated with the ideal belief type, the achievement and progress type, and the role model motivation type, and less strongly correlated with the herd type and the utilitarian type.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the variables.

	M+SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Sense of mission	4.85±0.29	1	0.716**	0.690**	0.573**	0.625**	0.144**	0.046*
2 National identity	4.91±0.17	0.716**	1	0.594**	0.468**	0.533**	0.129**	0.028
3 Ideal belief	4.82±0.41	0.690**	0.594**	1	0.633**	0.689**	0.160**	0.051**
4 Achievement and progress	4.66±0.53	0.573**	0.468**	0.633**	1	0.700**	0.387**	0.307**
5 Role model motivational	4.76±0.53	0.625**	0.533**	0.689**	0.700**	1	0.265**	0.142**
6 Follower	3.18±1.34	0.144**	0.129**	0.160**	0.387**	0.265**	1	0.696**
7 Utilitarian	3.58±1.18	0.046*	0.028**	0.051**	0.307**	0.142**	0.696**	1

Note: *, p<0.05; **, p<0.01, same below.

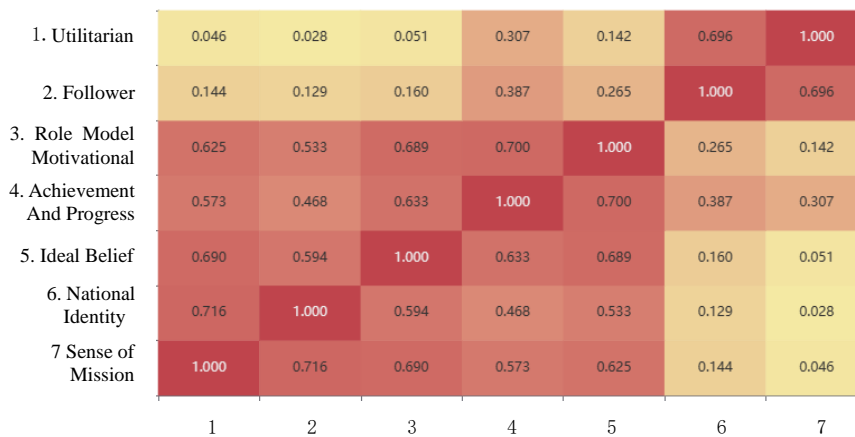


Figure 1: Heat map of correlation.

3.3. Intermediary model testing

According to the results of relevant analyses, the mediation effect test was conducted by selecting ideal belief type, achievement and progress type, and role model motivation type of party membership motivation to construct the mediation model of national identity affecting the sense of mission through party membership motivation. The mediation effect test was carried out using model 4 in the Process program, using the bias-corrected percentile Bootstrap method, and repeated sampling 5000 times to test whether the results were significant. The detailed results are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

The results of regression analyses show that national identity has a significant direct predictive effect on the sense of mission ($\beta= 0.415, P< 0.01$), and when the mediating variables of ideal belief

type, achievement and progress type and role model motivational type are put in, the predictive effect of national identity on the sense of mission is still significant ($\beta= 0.327, P< 0.01$).The results of the analysis of the mediating effect showed that (as shown in Table 2): Ideal belief Type, Achievement and Progress Type, and Role model motivational Type played a significant partial mediating role between National Identity and Sense of Mission, with mediating effect values of 0.063, 0.021, and 0.024, respectively.

Table3 show that the mediating effect is indirectly mediated by three paths: Path 1: National Identity => Ideal belief => Sense of Mission; Path 2: National Identity => Achievement and Progress => Sense of Mission; Path 3: National Identity => Role Model Motivation => Sense of Mission.

Table 2: Mediated effects test.

	Sense of Mission		Ideal belief		Achievement and progress		Role model motivational		Sense of Mission	
	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Constant	2.900**	56.206	0.209	1.612	-0.534**	-2.809	-0.629**	-3.453	2.901**	57.060
National identity	0.415**	41.104	0.969**	38.124	1.055**	28.333	1.144**	32.066	0.327**	22.828
Ideal belief									0.063**	5.796
Achievement and progress									0.021**	2.881
Role model motivational									0.024**	3.052
R ²	0.518		0.486		0.337		0.405		0.540	
F Value	566.511**		499.218**		267.656**		358.286**		370.049**	

Table 3: Intermediation test results.

trails	Total effect	a*b (Boot SE)	a*b (95% Boot CI)	Direct effect	Test Conclusion
National identity => Ideal belief => Sense of Mission	0.415**	0.03	0.045~0.164	0.327**	intermediary
National identity => Achievement and progress => Sense of Mission	0.415**	0.025	0.032~0.045	0.327**	intermediary
National identity => Role model motivational => Sense of Mission	0.415**	0.031	0.013~0.112	0.327**	intermediary

4. Discussion

All Based on the survey data of Chinese college students, this study explored the influence of national identity and sense of mission, as well as the mediating role of the motivation to join the Party in it. It is found that national identity and sense of mission are significantly and positively correlated, and the ideal belief type, achievement and progress type and role model motivation type of party membership motivation play a partial mediating role between national identity and sense of mission.

(1)National identity and sense of mission

Chinese college students have a high level of national identity in general (4.91 ± 0.17), and this data suggests that contemporary Chinese college students have a high level of national belonging and a high level of identification with Chinese identity. According to the social comparison theory, when individuals form a national identity, they will make comparisons between countries. Contemporary college students fully feel the sense of security given by the country by comparing relevant situations at home and abroad, and the enthusiasm of college students for patriotism is unprecedentedly high^[16]. The overall situation of sense of mission is good (4.85 ± 0.29), this data shows that Chinese college students have a high level of historical sense of mission, They recognize themselves as members of society and understand their responsibility to contribute to it. This study found that national identity significantly predicts the level of college students' sense of mission, thus validating Hypothesis 1. A college student with a higher level of national identity has a stronger sense of mission, which is consistent with past research findings. The reason for this may be that national identity is an individual's identification with the country's culture, history, values and other aspects of the country's identity, while sense of mission is a sense of responsibility for the country's development and prosperity, and a sense of mission for the country's future. College students' identification with the country will stimulate the individual's sense of mission towards the country and motivate them to contribute to the development and prosperity of the country. When a person has a strong national identity, he will pay attention to and think about the

problems within the country. He will think about how to improve the development of the country, how to solve social problems, how to improve the happiness of the people and so on. Such thinking and concern will stimulate his sense of mission and make him feel the responsibility to contribute to the country. He may try his best to be a good citizen on a personal level, obey the law and build up a good moral character. At the same time, he may also actively participate in social activities, take an interest in public affairs, engage in voluntary services, etc., so as to contribute to the development of the country.

(2) The mediating role of party membership motivation for national identity and sense of mission

Based on the mediating effect analysis, it was found that national identity partially affects the sense of mission through ideal belief type, achievement and progress type and role model motivation type of party membership, which verifies hypothesis 2. Thus we can infer that: individual's identification with the country will stimulate individual's motivation for joining the party, and individual's motivation for joining the party will deepen individual's sense of mission for the country. Therefore, college students with a high level of national identity may have stronger motives for joining the party, thus enhancing their sense of mission for the future of the country. Motivation to join the party is the reason and driving force behind a person's decision to join a political party^[17]. A person's motivation to join the party may come from various factors, such as identification with personal values, pursuit of personal growth and development, identification with the party's cause and philosophy, etc. Among them, idealistic, progressive and role model-inspired college students tend to have a strong sense of national identity and mission. As a person's internal driving force, national identity can directly affect his or her motivation to join the Party^[18]. A person with a strong national identity is often more likely to be motivated to join the Party because they are willing to fight for the interests of the country and the nation, and contribute to the happiness of the people and the progress of society. National identity can further strengthen the identification with the Party and the sense of mission to the Party's cause by strengthening the individual's sense of social responsibility and civic consciousness. Among the motives for joining the Party, college students will closely link their responsibility to the cause of the country and the Party, believing that joining the Party can better serve the country and society and achieve a high degree of consistency between the individual and the development of the country.

5. Conclusions

Chinese college students' national identity and sense of mission are positively correlated; Chinese college students' national identity and all types of motivation to join the Party (except utilitarian) are positively correlated; Chinese college students' sense of mission and all types of motivation to join the Party are positively correlated; Chinese college students' national identity has a certain predictive effect on the sense of mission and all types of motivation to join the Party (except utilitarian); and all types of motivation to join the Party have certain predictive effects on the sense of mission; ideal belief type and achievement and progress type and role model incentive type of motivation play partial mediating effects between national identity and sense of mission; and ideal belief type and achievement and progress type and role model incentive type of motivation play partial mediating effects on sense of mission. The types of motivation for joining the Party also have a certain predictive effect on the sense of mission; the ideal conviction, achievement and progress, and role model motivation types of motivation for joining the Party have a partially mediating effect on the relationship between national identity and the sense of mission. It is suggested that schools and educators should integrate college students' national identity education, sense of mission education and party building work organically with systematic thinking. The cultivation of college students' national identity and sense of mission is an important way to cultivate socialist builders and successors. The role and significance of the motivation for joining the party is to select outstanding young cadres, strengthen ideological education and political awareness, and promote personal growth and development. Only by cultivating college students' national identity, sense of mission and motivation for joining the Party can we cultivate a new generation of young people with more ideals, beliefs and responsibilities, and contribute to the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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