

Analysis of Characters of Ideal Friends in Contemporary College Students' Heart: Taking Certain College of Shandong as the Example

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Abstract

In this article, 280 college students are randomly selected in certain college of Shandong Province, and the method of factor analysis is used to study the characters of ideal friends in college students' heart, and the differences of college students' requirements for ideal friends are compared in different grades, sexes and economic status. The result shows that (1) the ideal friends in contemporary college students' heart should possess four main characters, i.e. sincere kindness & friendly tolerance, optimistic personality & being good at communication, diligence, assiduity & active enterprising, graceful image & good temperament, (2) female students require higher quality for the factor of "graceful image & good temperament" than male students, (3) two factors of "optimistic personality & being good at communication" and "diligence, assiduity & active enterprising" have no obvious differences in sophomores, juniors and seniors who all require higher quality than freshmen's requirements for friends, and the factor of "diligence, assiduity & active enterprising" has the interaction of sex and grade, (4) for the factor of "sincere kindness & friendly tolerance", poor students require higher quality than others for friends.

Keywords: College students, Characters of ideal friends, Factor analysis

1. Introduction

Friends occupy very important position in every person's development, and largely influence every person's development. Especially for young college students, they are more urgent to require friends than other ages, and their anticipation for friends is more ideal than any other ages. What characters the ideal friends in college students' heart are? Or which people with what characters can more attract others, and are easy to be others' friends. Though many years' research, social psychologists have summed up some individual characters about attraction, such as warmth, ability and appearance (Jin, 2005, P.235-236). The individual warmth means that if the informant often present positive attitude, others would like him, because the positive attitude will make people warm, and this kind of warmth will increase his attraction. The individual predominant ability is the factor to influence the social attraction, and people always like the persons with ability and special skill, and the clever friends with ability can make others to learn many things and feel safe. The attraction of appearance means that human appearance, dressing, manner and style all will influence human attraction, and especially in the first meeting, the factor of appearance occupies important status. With the process of communication time, its function will be less and less, and the attraction will gradually turn from appearance to individual inner character. Though there were many similar researches in the past, but most of them were centralized in the theoretical discussion and descriptive statistics, and the empirical researches were rare. This research adopts self-made questionnaire, and uses the principle component analysis method to review the characters of ideal friends in contemporary college students' heart, and the target is to arouse college students' attention about their social communication and better perfect and develop themselves.

2. Research object and method

2.1 Research object

In an usual college in Shandong Province, 280 college students including freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors are randomly selected, and except for inefficient data, the effective informants are 258 including 80 freshmen, 60 sophomores, 62 juniors and 56 seniors, including 128 male students and 130 female students, including 110 students majored in liberal arts and 148 students majored in science. Because the topic of the poor students in colleges is still heavy, in the research, 80 poor students are specially selected to review the essential difference to require their friends between that the special group, i.e. the poor students, and the non-poverty

students (by communicating with students, class teachers and assistants, select those students whose livings are difficult and who enjoy the assistance of impoverished students). The average age of all investigated students is 21.60 years old.

2.2 Research tool

Using Zhang Qiaoming's research as the reference (Zhang, 2007, P.220-223), the mode of opening questionnaire is first adopted to make the self-made questionnaire. Randomly select 50 college students, and require them to write out the words describing their ideal friends in their heart, and the time is not limited. After the questionnaires are taken back, two psychologic teachers, 2 psychologic undergraduates and 2 graduate students in the department of Chinese language and literature are required to classify these words, keep the representative words with high frequency of occurrence, combining the words with close meanings (for example, combining "sincere, honesty, pure-heartedness, don't lie, don't cheat, don't sham as "sincere", combining "allowance, tolerance, abiding" as "tolerance""), and abandon the words without representation and specific meanings. Randomly rank the selected representative words with high frequency of occurrence as the formal measuring scale which adopts the count of five points, and 1-5 respectively represents "fall short of most" to "accord with most", and higher points means the characters more according with the ideal friends.

2.3 Research method

Take the college and department as the unit, collectively test college students which have been professionally trained by psychological measurement and assistants. The questionnaires are taken back on the spot, and the SPSS11.5 statistical software is used to process and analyze the data.

3. Results

3.1 Factor analysis of ideal friends in college students' heart

The principle component analysis method is used to implement the factor analysis for the evaluated result. The results show that the coefficient of Bartlett is 3012.163, which indicates that sharing factors exist among variables, and the value of KMO is 0.799, $p=0.000$, which indicate that it is fit to implement factor analysis, and there are 14 factors which eigenvalues are bigger than 1, which can explain the variance of 68.265%. But according to the scree plot (Figure 1) and compressively considering various factors, 4 factors are proper to explain the variance of 52.639%, and the eigenvalues and explained variance variables of various factors are seen in Table 1. By oblique rotation, the detailed result is seen in Table 2.

From Table 2, the characters of ideal friends in college students' heart are mainly centralized in four factors including personal quality, social acceptability, color and appearance. Combining Table 1 with Table 2, the sequence of these four factors can be described as follows, personal quality, social acceptability, learning ability, and color and appearance. The importance of the factor 1 (personal quality) is the most important one, which indicates that in college student's heart, the most important quality that ideal friends should possess is noble personal quality such as "sincere, goodness, and tolerance". The factor 2 is the social acceptability, which ranks second in college students' heart, and the third factor is the learning ability, which shows that college students pay more attention to the social acceptability and the learning ability, but more emphasize the social acceptability. The fourth factor is the color and appearance. Friends should possess good image and special temperament, so college students also emphasize graceful image and gentlest manner.

3.2 Character differences of ideal friends in college students' heart in different sexes, grades, poverty or non-poverty

The principle effects and interactions of four factors in different sexes, grades, poverty or non-poverty are seen in Table 3. From Table 3, the principle effect of college students of different sexes is significant for the factor of "graceful image & good temperament ($F(1)=3.755^*$)", and the principle effect of college students of different grades is significant for the factors of "optimistic personality & being good at communication ($F(3)=3.360^*$)" and "diligence, assiduity & active enterprising ($F(3)=3.233^*$)", and the principle effect of poor college students and non-poor college students is significant for the factor of "sincere kindness & friendly tolerance ($F(1)=4.523^*$)", and the interaction exists in sexes and grades fro the factor of "diligence, assiduity & active enterprising ($F(3)=3.233^*$)". There is not interaction between the sex and the poverty/non-poverty, between the grade and the poverty/non-poverty, and among the sex, the poverty/non-poverty, and the grade for any one factor. The further analysis shows that for the factor of "graceful image & good temperament", female students' requirement ($M=4.3402$) is higher than male students' ($M=4.1821$), and for two factors of "optimistic personality & being good at communication" and "diligence, assiduity & active enterprising", students' including sophomores, juniors and seniors requirements have no obvious different and are all higher than freshmen's

requirements, and for the factor of “sincere kindness & friendly tolerance”, poor students’ requirement ($M=3.974$) is higher than non-poor students’ ($M=3.712$), and for the factor of “diligence, assiduity & active enterprising”, female juniors and seniors’ requirements are higher than fresh female students and sophomores for friends, and the requirement presents the ascending tendency, but male juniors and seniors’ requirements are lower than fresh male students and sophomores for friends, and the requirements present the descending tendency.

4. Discussions

4.1 Characters of ideal friends in college students’ heart

In this research, college students most emphasize whether their friends have the personal quality with “sincere goodness, kindness, and tolerance”, which is consistent with past researches (Jin, 2005, P.235-236 & Luo, 2004), P.116-117). And the personal quality largely influences human attraction, and this kind of influence is stable and sustainable. Except for the requirements about personal quality, college students also emphasize whether their friends have good ability of communication and social acceptability, the active enterprising and learning ability, and good appearance. So to obtain more friends, college students should continually establish good cultures, and good personal quality in the living practice from the essential, and from the exterior image, they should beautify themselves, possess proper and moderate conversation style. In addition, in the friend cycle, they should be active and bright, and be good at, be willing to and dare to engage in social activities. From their own school works, they should have active enterprising spirit and gritty willpower to acquire excellent achievements.

4.2 Requirements of personality and quality for friends

If friends are a book, the appearance is only the cover of the book, and the personal quality is the content of the book. In the result of this survey, the most important character of friends is “sincere kindness & friendly tolerance”. And the research of social psychology indicates that “self-confidence, sincere, goodness, tolerance, passion, credit, continence” are the core qualities of human communication, and they have more weights to form the image in others’ heart. The quality of “sincere” is the most popular quality, and the opposite “insincerity” is the individual character that others most detest (Jin, 2005, P.235-236). In addition, according to the questionnaire statistics about 2227 college students’ friend choosing standards in 22 different types of colleges from northeast of China, North China, East China, Central China, northwest of China, and southwest of China, there are 18 items of friend choosing standard for college students, and the top six items are honest simplicity (64.8%), noble moral character (60.5%), clever and literary (43.9%), paying attention to friendship (41.2%), respecting others (40.2%). In this research, poor students’ requirement is higher than non-poor students’ for the personal quality, that may be because that because of the poverty of family, their sensible hearts, their strong defense feelings in the communication, they want more personal qualities such as “sincere, goodness, kindness, and tolerance” from their friends.

4.3 Requirements of social capability for friends

The king of petroleum in US, Rockefeller said that “if the ability of human communication is a commodity like sugar or coffee, I would pay the most expensive price in the world to buy it”. Almost all contemporary college students have realized the importance of good communication ability for their own developments, so for the requirements of friend, it has fully embodied their own value views. The second important character is friends’ social acceptability, and it has exceeded the requirements in learning and enterprising, and appearance. In this research, for the requirement in friends’ social acceptability, there are not obvious differences among sophomores, juniors and seniors, and their requirements are all higher than fresh students’ requirements for friends, that may be because that freshmen just come to a new environment, and there are not too much conflicts and gulfs each other, so they are not urgent to require whether their friends have good communication ability, but with the increase of communication time, the conflicts and gulfs will be more and more, and they will more and more realize the importance that their friends have good communication ability.

4.4 Requirements of learning enterprising for friends

At present, the employment pressure, and the pressure of entering a higher college have achieve the most height for college students, and facing the drastic situation, more and more students realize that it is hard to win without genuine ability and learning, good learning experience and ability. Naturally, this kind of mind-set is embodied in friend choosing. Those students with grittiness and active enterprising spirit are welcomed, and those students wasting time are stood off. In this research, for the character of “diligence, assiduity, & active enterprising”, there are significant differences among different grades. Sophomores, juniors and seniors are almost same for this character, and their requirements about this character are all higher than freshmen, and the interaction of this character exists in the sex and the grade. In the present environment, female students face more employment

pressure, and they have better outlets when they have active enterprising spirit and advance studies continually, so more and more female students would make friends with those students with the spirit of active enterprising to encourage themselves each other. For the employment, male students have certain advantages, and they more emphasize their own practical ability, so with the increase of grade, their learning enthusiasms are less than female students.

4.5 Requirements of color and appearance for friends

In human communication, the first impress induced by appearance and manner is very important. Human appearance can induce “halo effect” and “radiation effect”. Though people all know it is not right to judge people with their appearance, however, most people can not avoid it. In this research, the factor of “graceful image & good temperament” is emphasized by college students, especially for female students, and they require better appearance and temperament for their friends than male students, which is significantly different and accords with the traditional idea of “a perfect match between a man and a girl” in China. Of course, college students’ requirement for the beauty has not only stayed on the surface layer, and they more emphasize human inner beauty and spiritual beauty. Therefore, college students should pay attention to their appearance and image packaging to make them look more beautiful and tasteful for increasing their human attraction.

References

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Table 1. Eigenvalues and explained variance variables

Factor	Eigenvalue	Contribution rate (%)	Cumulated contribution rate (%)
1	12.751	26.422	26.422
2	5.144	13.288	39.710
3	4.523	8.166	47.876
4	2.882	4.763	52.639

Table 2. Character structure of ideal friends in college students’ heart

Factor	Name of factor	Explanation
1	Sincere kindness, friendly tolerance (Personnel quality)	Goodness, sincere, creditable, tolerance, lenience, magnanimous, honesty, non-sensitive, non-suspicious, unmannered, respecting others, trustful, thinking in the way friends think and doing what friends do, keeping secrets for friends, contribution, providing timely help, conscientious, considerate, understanding, getting along with
2	Optimistic personality, being good at communication (Social acceptability)	Self-confidence, active, optimistic, carefree, passionate, humble, determination, controlling emotions reasonably, sincerely caring about others, unpretentious, strong communication ability, charming personality, unjealous, knowing both ourselves and our adversaries, being neither overbearing nor servile
3	Diligence, assiduity, active, enterprising (Learning ability)	Bright, diligence, assiduity, excellent achievements, original opinions, far ambition, resolute, indomitable, active thinking, strong logicity, self-discipline, genuine ability and learning
4	Graceful image, good temperament (Color and appearance)	Handsome, pizzazz (male), beautiful, civility (female), good temperament, charming, neat dress, proper style of conversation, dressing according with ages, good taste and behaviors, mature and steady, with sense of humor

Table 3. Difference test (value of F) of various factors in different sexes, grades and poverty or non-poverty

	Sincere kindness, friendly tolerance		Optimistic personality, being good at communication		Diligence, assiduity, active, enterprising		Graceful image, good temperament	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Sex (df=1)	0.151	0.698	2.243	0.137	1.694	0.195	3.755	0.047
Grade (df=3)	1.202	0.312	3.360	0.020	3.233	0.027	0.692	0.559
Poverty or non-poverty (df=1)	4.523	0.032	1.147	0.286	0.580	0.448	3.073	0.082
Sex × Grade (df=3)	1.317	0.186	2.213	0.090	3.425	0.042	1.736	0.163
Sex × Poverty or non-poverty (df=1)	0.957	0.330	0.027	0.870	0.374	0.542	1.736	0.858
Grade × Poverty or non-poverty (df=3)	1.573	0.199	1.843	0.142	1.747	0.152	1.957	0.124
Sex × Grade × Poverty or non-poverty (df=3)	1.652	0.181	0.518	0.671	2.145	0.098	1.615	0.189

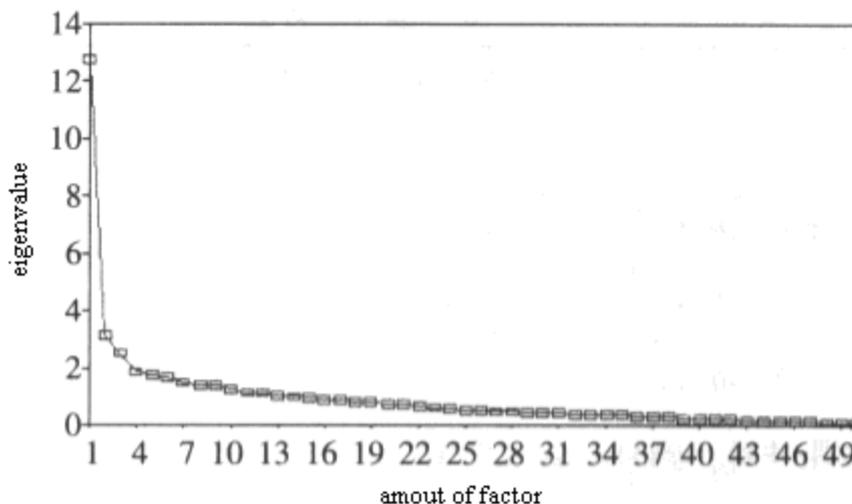


Figure 1. Scree Plot of Factor Analysis