
On the Responsibility and Commitment of Youth in the New Era from the Perspective of Exemplary Spirit

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Abstract: Youth in the new era are an important force driving national development and national rejuvenation. As a core spiritual guide and value benchmark, exemplary spirit plays a pivotal role in shaping young people's worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. This paper explores the connotation and contemporary value of exemplary spirit, analyzes its intrinsic connection with the responsibility and commitment of youth in the new era, and examines the practical dilemmas in cultivating youth's sense of responsibility in the current social context. Based on theoretical analysis and case studies of typical role models in different fields, the paper proposes targeted paths to inherit and carry forward exemplary spirit, such as optimizing the cultivation mechanism of role model education, integrating exemplary spirit into campus culture and social practice, and enhancing young people's subjective initiative in learning and practicing. The research aims to provide a theoretical reference and practical path for guiding young people to firm up their ideals and beliefs, bravely assume the historical mission of the times, and contribute youthful strength to the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Keywords: Exemplary Spirit; Youth in the New Era; Sense of Responsibility; Ideals and Beliefs; Value Guidance; Social Practice

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The new era is a period of rapid development characterized by globalization, digitalization, and profound changes in the international political and economic landscape. Against the backdrop of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China's call for "cultivating newcomers who will take on the task of national rejuvenation," young people have become the core force driving social progress and national development. However, under the influence of diverse social trends, information overload, and the impact of Western ideological trends, some young people are facing challenges such as blurred values, weakened sense of responsibility, and lack of initiative. In this context, exemplary spirit—with its strong appeal, inspirational power, and practical guiding significance—has once again become an important starting point for ideological and political education and youth guidance.

Exemplary spirit is not only a cultural heritage accumulated through long-term social development but also a concrete embodiment of core socialist values. Typical role models, as the carriers of exemplary spirit, include revolutionary martyrs, model workers, scientific and technological talents, moral models, and outstanding young people. Their stories and spirits

transcend time and space and have always inspired successive generations of young people to pursue truth, strive for self-improvement, and assume social responsibilities. Exploring the intrinsic relationship between exemplary spirit and the responsibility and commitment of young people in the new era is not only an inherent requirement for implementing the Party's education policy but also an urgent need to guide young people to grow into talents who can bear the burden of the times.

1.2. Research Significance

1.2.1. Theoretical Significance

This paper constructs a theoretical analysis framework of “exemplary spirit connotation—youth responsibility connotation—interaction mechanism”, which enriches the theoretical research system of exemplary spirit education in the field of youth ideological and political education. It clarifies the logical relationship between exemplary spirit and youth responsibility formation, makes up for the deficiency of existing research in the theoretical interpretation of youth responsibility cultivation based on exemplary spirit, and provides a new theoretical perspective for the innovation of youth ideological and political education theory.

1.2.2. Practical Significance

In practice, this paper sorts out the current problems in the cultivation of youth responsibility by virtue of exemplary spirit and puts forward operable improvement strategies, which can provide practical reference for universities, social organizations and media platforms to carry out exemplary spirit education. For young people themselves, the analysis of typical role model cases and practical paths can help them clarify the connotation of the times responsibility, locate their own growth directions, and stimulate their subjective initiative to learn from role models and assume social responsibilities.

1.3. Literature Review

At home and abroad, scholars have conducted extensive research on exemplary spirit and youth responsibility. In terms of exemplary spirit research, foreign scholars focus on the concept connotation and social function of role models. For example, Bandura's social learning theory points out that individuals obtain new behaviors and values through observing and imitating role models, which lays a theoretical foundation for the study of exemplary spirit's guiding effect. Domestic scholars have deepened the connotation of exemplary spirit, emphasizing that it is a unity of spiritual value, behavioral demonstration and era characteristics, and highlighting its important role in inheriting national spirit and shaping social values.

In the research on youth responsibility, foreign scholars mostly start from the perspectives of psychology and sociology, focusing on the formation mechanism of youth responsibility, such as the influence of family education, social environment and individual cognitive level on youth responsibility. Domestic scholars combine the background of the times, and define the responsibility of young people in the new era as the unity of personal growth, social contribution and national mission, emphasizing the integration of individual ideals with the cause of the country and nation.

However, the existing research still has two limitations: first, the research on the relationship between exemplary spirit and youth responsibility is relatively fragmented, lacking a systematic analysis of the internal logical connection; second, the practical strategies proposed are too general, and lack of targeted solutions for different groups of young people (such as college students, young professionals) and different social scenarios. Based on this, this paper takes the lead in carrying out systematic research on the interaction between exemplary spirit and youth responsibility, and puts forward more refined and practical paths.

1.4. Research Methods and Innovation Points

1.4.1. Research Methods

(1) Literature Research Method: Sort out domestic and foreign literature on exemplary spirit, youth responsibility and

ideological and political education, sort out the theoretical basis and research context, and lay a foundation for the research design of this paper.

- (2) Case Study Method: Select typical role models in the fields of science and technology, poverty alleviation, epidemic prevention and control, and college student volunteers, analyze their spiritual connotation and deeds, and explore the guiding effect of exemplary spirit on youth responsibility.
- (3) Questionnaire Survey Method: Conduct a questionnaire survey on 500 young people (including college students and young workers) in 3 regions (eastern, central and western China) to understand the current situation of their perception of exemplary spirit and the cultivation of their sense of responsibility, and identify existing problems.
- (4) Normative Analysis Method: Based on the theory of social learning and value guidance, analyze the internal mechanism of exemplary spirit affecting youth responsibility, and put forward theoretical paths and practical strategies.

1.4.2. Innovation Points

- (1) Perspective Innovation: Break the single research perspective of traditional exemplary spirit education or youth responsibility research, and take the interaction between exemplary spirit and youth responsibility as the core research object, revealing the intrinsic logical relationship between the two.
- (2) Content Innovation: Combine the new era background with typical role model cases in different fields, and subdivide the responsibility connotation of young people in the new era from the dimensions of personal growth, social contribution and national mission.
- (3) Strategy Innovation: Propose targeted strategies from the three levels of “school education, social guidance and self-practice”, and emphasize the enhancement of young people’s subjective initiative, making the research results more operable and practical.

2. Connotation of Youth Responsibility in the New Era

Youth responsibility in the new era refers to the responsibility and mission that young people (aged 15-35) should bear in the process of national development, social progress and personal growth under the background of the new era. It is a unity of individual value realization and social contribution, and has rich connotations from multiple dimensions.

2.1. Dimension of Personal Growth and Self-Improvement

Young people are in the golden period of physical and mental development and knowledge accumulation. Their responsibility in the dimension of personal growth is to establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life and values, continuously improve their comprehensive quality, master professional skills, and lay a solid foundation for personal growth and future contribution to society. This includes studying hard, strengthening physical exercise, cultivating noble moral sentiments, and improving innovative ability and practical ability.

2.2. Dimension of Social Contribution and Public Service

Young people are an important force in social governance and public service. Their social responsibility is to care about social issues, participate in public welfare undertakings, and contribute to solving social problems. For example, participating in volunteer services such as community governance, environmental protection, and elderly care; assisting in poverty alleviation and rural revitalization; and providing help to people in need in times of crisis (such as epidemic prevention and disaster relief).

2.3. Dimension of National Mission and National Rejuvenation

Under the background of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the national mission responsibility of young people

is to firm up their ideals and beliefs, inherit and carry forward the national spirit and era spirit, and integrate personal ideals into the cause of national development. This includes supporting the Party's leadership, loving the motherland, participating in national construction and scientific and technological innovation, and safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests^[1].

2.4. Dimension of Cultural Inheritance and Innovation

Young people are the inheritors and innovators of excellent traditional Chinese culture. Their cultural responsibility is to inherit and carry forward excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture, and promote the creative transformation and innovative development of culture. This includes learning traditional culture, spreading Chinese culture to the world, and enhancing the cultural confidence of the whole nation.

3. The Internal Mechanism of Exemplary Spirit Promoting Youth Responsibility

Exemplary spirit promotes the formation and development of youth responsibility through a multi-level and multi-dimensional internal mechanism. From the perspective of psychological process, it involves the stages of perception, cognition, emotional resonance and behavioral practice; from the perspective of logical relationship, it reflects the interaction between spiritual guidance, value internalization and practical transformation^[2].

3.1. Perception and Recognition: The Foundation of Responsibility Formation

The first step for young people to be influenced by exemplary spirit is to perceive and recognize the deeds and spirits of role models. With the diversification of communication channels, young people can obtain information about role models through various ways such as online videos, offline lectures, and literary and artistic works.

In the process of perception, young people first pay attention to the typical deeds of role models, such as Yuan Longping's hard work in the fields for decades, Zhang Guimei's selfless dedication to mountainous school education, and the anti-epidemic deeds of medical workers. These specific and vivid deeds break the abstractness of "responsibility" and make young people have a perceptual understanding of the connotation of responsibility^[3].

Subsequently, young people carry out cognitive processing on the perceived information, and recognize the advanced nature and value of exemplary spirit. Through the analysis of the background, motivations and results of role models' deeds, young people can understand that the spirit of role models is not accidental, but the result of long-term adherence to ideals and beliefs, and thus recognize that responsibility is not only a moral obligation, but also a driving force for personal growth and social progress. This perception and recognition lay a cognitive foundation for the formation of youth responsibility.

3.2. Emotional Resonance and Identity: The Core of Responsibility Internalization

Emotional resonance is the key link for exemplary spirit to be internalized into youth responsibility. When young people understand the deeds and spirits of role models, they will have emotional resonance with the difficulties and struggles, persistence and dedication of role models.

For example, when young people learn that a group of young volunteers went to the countryside to teach in poor areas, and they faced harsh living conditions and worked hard to teach knowledge, they will have empathy for their efforts; when they learn that young scientific and technological workers have overcome numerous difficulties to achieve technological breakthroughs, they will have admiration for their perseverance and innovative spirit. This emotional resonance makes young people produce identity recognition of exemplary spirit, believing that the qualities and behaviors of role models are worthy of learning and pursuit.

On this basis, young people will internalize exemplary spirit into their own values and moral norms, and form a sense of identity with responsibility. They will recognize that assuming responsibility is not only a requirement of the times and

society, but also a way to realize their own life value, thus completing the internalization of responsibility from “external norms” to “internal beliefs”.

3.3. Behavioral Simulation and Practice: The Realization of Responsibility Externalization

The internalization of responsibility is only the first step, and the externalization of behavioral practice is the ultimate goal of exemplary spirit promoting youth responsibility. Under the guidance of exemplary spirit, young people will simulate and practice the behaviors of role models, and transform their sense of responsibility into practical actions.

In the field of education, college students often simulate the volunteer teaching behaviors of role model college students, and participate in college student volunteer teaching programs in poor areas, contributing their own strength to education poverty alleviation. In the field of science and technology, young people are inspired by the innovative spirit of role model scientists, and carry out scientific and technological innovation research, striving to make contributions to the development of China’s science and technology. In the field of public service, young people learn from the public welfare spirit of role model moral models, and participate in various volunteer services such as community elderly care, environmental protection, and disaster relief^[4].

In the process of behavioral practice, young people can further deepen their understanding of responsibility, accumulate experience in assuming responsibility, and continuously improve their ability to assume responsibility. At the same time, the feedback from practice (such as the recognition of others, the achievement of goals) will further strengthen their sense of responsibility, forming a positive cycle of “spiritual guidance—behavioral practice—responsibility enhancement”.

3.4. Value Integration and Guidance: The Safeguard for Long-Term Responsibility Cultivation

Exemplary spirit not only promotes the formation of individual youth responsibility, but also realizes the integration of individual values and social values through value guidance, which provides a long-term safeguard for the sustainable cultivation of youth responsibility. In the new era, the core of exemplary spirit is highly consistent with core socialist values, national spirit and the mission of national rejuvenation.

When young people learn from role models and assume responsibilities, they will gradually integrate their personal ideals and goals into the overall development of society and the country, realizing the integration of individual value and social value. This value integration enables young people to have a clearer understanding of their own mission, no longer limited to personal trivial matters, but to focus on national development and social progress, thus forming a long-term and stable sense of responsibility.

In addition, social recognition and praise for role models and young people who assume responsibilities will form a good social atmosphere, which in turn guides more young people to take the initiative to learn from role models and assume responsibilities, forming a virtuous circle of the whole society attaching importance to responsibility cultivation. This value integration and social atmosphere construction are crucial to the long-term cultivation of youth responsibility in the new era.

4. Practical Dilemmas of Exemplary Spirit Cultivating Youth Responsibility in the New Era

Although exemplary spirit has an important guiding role in cultivating youth responsibility, in the current social context, there are still some practical dilemmas in the process of using exemplary spirit to carry out responsibility education for young people, which restrict the effectiveness of education.

4.1. Single and Stereotyped Communication of Exemplary Spirit

At present, the communication of exemplary spirit in some fields still has the problems of single form and stereotyped

content. In traditional school education, the introduction of role models is mostly limited to text reading and lecture teaching, lacking vivid and interactive communication methods. The content of communication often focuses on the glorious deeds and noble qualities of role models, but ignores the daily efforts, difficulties and setbacks they have experienced, making the image of role models too “sublime” and “untouchable”, which is difficult to arouse the emotional resonance of young people.

In the online communication field, some media only pursue the speed and traffic of information dissemination, and simplify and fragment the deeds of role models, failing to fully display the profound connotation of exemplary spirit. This single and fragmented communication method makes young people only have a superficial understanding of exemplary spirit, and cannot deeply understand its internal value, thus reducing the guiding effect of exemplary spirit on youth responsibility.

4.2. Weak Subjective Initiative of Young People in Learning Role Models

Affected by the diversified values and fast-paced life in the Internet era, some young people have weak subjective initiative in learning exemplary spirit. Some young people regard role model education as a kind of “formalistic task”, and only passively accept relevant content in school or social education, without taking the initiative to understand and learn the deeds and spirits of role models.

Some young people are influenced by utilitarianism and individualism, and pay more attention to personal material gains and immediate interests, believing that the dedication and responsibility of role models are “not worthwhile” and have no practical significance for their own development. This kind of utilitarian thinking makes them lack the motivation to learn from role models, and it is difficult to internalize exemplary spirit into their own sense of responsibility. In addition, the impact of Western individualism and hedonism has also led some young people to neglect social responsibility and collective interests, further weakening their initiative to assume responsibilities.

4.3. Imperfect Integration Mechanism of Exemplary Spirit Education and Practice

Exemplary spirit education is not only a theoretical indoctrination, but also needs to be combined with practical activities to realize the transformation from spirit to behavior. However, in the current education process, there is a phenomenon of disconnection between exemplary spirit education and practical activities. Schools and society often only carry out theoretical publicity and learning activities of exemplary spirit, but lack targeted practical platforms and opportunities for young people.

For example, some schools only organize lectures and essay activities on learning role models, but do not build practical platforms such as volunteer service, social practice and scientific and technological innovation for students to practice the spirit of role models. This makes young people only stay at the level of theoretical understanding of responsibility, and cannot transform their sense of responsibility into practical actions. In addition, the evaluation mechanism of exemplary spirit education is not perfect, and there is a lack of scientific evaluation of young people’s practical behavior and responsibility performance, which also reduces the effectiveness of practical education.

4.4. Unfavorable Social Environment Interfering with Responsibility Cultivation

The current social environment also has some unfavorable factors that interfere with the cultivation of youth responsibility. On the one hand, the prevalence of online negative information, such as cyber violence, utilitarian speech and negative social phenomena, has a certain negative impact on the formation of young people’s values. Some young people are easily influenced by these negative information, resulting in negative emotions such as confusion and pessimism, and thus weakening their sense of social responsibility.

On the other hand, the family education of some families is biased. Some parents overemphasize their children’s academic performance and ignore the cultivation of their moral quality and sense of responsibility; some parents overindulge their children, so that children lack the experience of overcoming difficulties and undertaking responsibilities,

and form a self-centered personality. These family education deviations make it difficult for children to form a correct sense of responsibility from an early age, and also increase the difficulty of using exemplary spirit to carry out responsibility education in the later stage.

5. Practical Paths to Promote Youth Responsibility and Commitment Through Exemplary Spirit in the New Era

Aiming at the practical dilemmas existing in the current cultivation of youth responsibility by exemplary spirit, combined with the characteristics of the new era and the growth law of young people, this paper proposes targeted practical paths from the four dimensions of school education, social communication, family education and youth self-cultivation, so as to give full play to the guiding role of exemplary spirit and enhance the sense of responsibility and commitment of young people in the new era.

5.1. Innovate School Education Mechanism and Integrate Exemplary Spirit into Ideological and Political Education

Schools are the main front of youth ideological and political education and responsibility cultivation, and should innovate the education mechanism to integrate exemplary spirit into the whole process of education and teaching. First, optimize the content of exemplary spirit education, abandon the stereotyped and formalistic education mode, and select role models close to young people's lives and growth, such as outstanding young alumni, young grassroots workers and young volunteers, so that young people can feel the authenticity and approachability of role models.

Second, innovate education methods and carriers, combine the characteristics of young people's acceptance of information in the Internet era, carry out diversified education activities such as scenario simulation, role experience, and themed practice, and use short videos, micro documentaries, and online live broadcasts to display the deeds of role models, enhancing the attractiveness and infectivity of education. At the same time, integrate exemplary spirit into professional courses, so that students can understand the responsibility and dedication of role models in professional fields while learning professional knowledge, and realize the organic integration of professional education and ideological and political education.

Third, build a practical education platform, organize young people to carry out social practice activities such as volunteer service, rural investigation, and community governance, guide them to practice the spirit of role models in practice, and transform their sense of responsibility into practical actions. Establish a scientific evaluation mechanism, take students' practical performance, social service and responsibility performance as important evaluation indicators, and stimulate young people's enthusiasm to learn from role models and assume responsibilities.

5.2. Optimize Social Communication Channels and Create a Good Atmosphere for Learning Role Models

Society should assume the responsibility of disseminating exemplary spirit and create a good social atmosphere for the whole society to learn from role models and respect responsibilities. First, mainstream media should give full play to the role of public opinion guidance, increase the publicity of typical role models and exemplary spirit, and conduct in-depth and detailed reports on the deeds and spirits of role models through TV programs, newspapers, new media platforms and other channels, showing the comprehensive image of role models, including their efforts, struggles and persistence, so that young people can fully understand the connotation of exemplary spirit.

Second, innovate the form of communication, use young people's favorite communication methods such as short video platforms, social software, and cultural and creative products to spread exemplary spirit, and launch a series of cultural products such as movies, documentaries, and songs themed on role models, so that exemplary spirit can be subtly integrated into young people's daily lives. At the same time, crack down on the speech of slandering and demeaning role

models on the Internet, purify the online communication environment, and safeguard the positive image of role models.

Third, carry out various social activities to learn from role models, such as role model lecture tours, advanced deeds exhibition halls, and selection of outstanding young role models, so that young people can have face-to-face communication with role models, feel their spiritual strength personally, and drive more young people to take the initiative to assume social responsibilities.

5.3. Pay Attention to Family Education Guidance and Lay a Solid Foundation for Responsibility Cultivation

Family is the first classroom for children's growth, and family education plays a vital role in the formation of young people's sense of responsibility. Parents should change their educational concepts, abandon the wrong idea of emphasizing academic performance over moral education, and pay attention to the cultivation of their children's sense of responsibility and moral quality from an early age.

Parents should set an example, practice exemplary spirit in daily life, show qualities such as dedication, responsibility and kindness, and let their children establish a correct understanding of responsibility through words and deeds. Create a family atmosphere of respecting labor and undertaking responsibilities, let children participate in housework and family affairs appropriately, experience the importance of responsibility in practice, and cultivate their sense of family responsibility and social responsibility.

At the same time, parents should communicate with their children more, guide them to correctly understand exemplary spirit and social responsibility, help them establish correct values, resist the influence of bad social trends, and lay a solid family foundation for the formation of their sense of responsibility.

5.4. Strengthen Youth Self-Cultivation and Enhance the Initiative of Assuming Responsibilities

The formation of youth responsibility ultimately depends on the subjective initiative of young people themselves. Young people in the new era should take the initiative to learn exemplary spirit, strengthen self-cultivation, and consciously assume the responsibilities of the times. First, take the initiative to understand and learn the deeds of typical role models, deeply understand the connotation and value of exemplary spirit, take role models as examples, establish firm ideals and beliefs, and integrate personal growth into the cause of national development and national rejuvenation.

Second, consciously resist the influence of bad values such as utilitarianism and hedonism, establish a correct view of career, life and values, take dedication and responsibility as the pursuit of life, and take the initiative to assume personal, family and social responsibilities. Actively participate in social practice and public welfare activities, accumulate experience in practice, improve their ability to assume responsibilities, and transform their sense of responsibility into practical actions to serve the country and society.

Third, constantly improve their comprehensive quality, study professional knowledge hard, improve innovative ability and practical ability, lay a solid foundation for assuming the mission of the times, and strive to grow into newcomers of the era who can bear the heavy responsibility of national rejuvenation.

6. Conclusion

In the new era, youth are the successors of the country and the nation, and their sense of responsibility and commitment is directly related to the future of the country and the nation. Exemplary spirit, as an important spiritual force to guide young people's growth and progress, has rich connotation and distinct era characteristics, and plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating young people's sense of responsibility. It promotes the formation and development of youth responsibility through the internal mechanism of perception and recognition, emotional resonance and identity, behavioral simulation and practice, and value integration and guidance.

However, in the current social context, there are still practical dilemmas such as single communication of exemplary

spirit, weak subjective initiative of young people, imperfect integration mechanism of education and practice, and unfavorable social environment interference, which restrict the effectiveness of exemplary spirit in cultivating youth responsibility. Therefore, it is necessary to form a joint force of school, society, family and young people themselves, innovate education mechanisms, optimize communication channels, pay attention to family guidance, and strengthen self-cultivation, so as to give full play to the value leading role of exemplary spirit.

In the journey of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, young people should take advanced role models as examples, inherit and carry forward exemplary spirit, firm their ideals and beliefs, enhance their sense of responsibility, integrate their personal ideals into the tide of national development, and contribute their youthful wisdom and strength to the construction of the country and the progress of society. Only in this way can young people truly grow into newcomers of the era who have ideals, dare to take responsibility, can endure hardships and are willing to struggle, and live up to the expectations of the times and the country.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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