

The Ethical Dimension and Value Guidance Mechanism of Moral Education in Colleges and Universities from the Perspective of Marxist Theory

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Abstract: *From the perspective of Marxist theory, this paper explores the ethical dimension of moral education in colleges and universities and the construction path of its value guidance system. Against the backdrop of the new era, the diversification of values and the rapid development of new media technologies have exposed moral education in colleges and universities to practical challenges such as the weakening of value identity and the disconnection between theory and practice. At present, the moral education work is also plagued by prominent problems including the superficial integration of moral education into curricula and inadequate effectiveness of practical transformation. On the basis of systematically sorting out existing relevant research findings, this paper puts forward targeted optimization strategies that integrate the core essence of Marxist ethics from four dimensions: the reconstruction of curriculum systems, the empowerment of practical education, the development of teaching faculty, and the innovation of educational carriers. These strategies are intended to provide theoretical and practical support for breaking the development predicament of moral education in colleges and universities and constructing a scientific value guidance system, thus helping colleges and universities fully implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and cultivating new people of the era who are capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation.*

Keywords: The ethical dimension, Value guidance mechanism, Moral education, Marxist theory.

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the new era, the wave of globalization has driven the collision of diverse values and the in-depth integration of cultures. As the core carrier for fostering virtue through education, moral education in colleges and universities is confronted with unprecedented complex challenges as well as developmental opportunities. As the fundamental guiding ideology for college moral education, Marxist theory embodies the ethical core of collectivism and the value pursuit of the free and all-round development of human beings, which provides a scientific theoretical support for addressing the current predicaments such as inadequate effectiveness of moral education and weakened value guidance[1].

According to the special survey data released by the Ministry of Education, more than 65% of moral education courses in colleges and universities nationwide still adopt one-way theoretical indoctrination as the main teaching mode, and only 28% of the courses have set up modules for ethical practice and value analysis, resulting in a prominent disconnect between moral education and real ethical life[2]. A sample survey covering more than 20 colleges and universities across the country shows that about 52% of college students believe that the content of moral education has a weak correlation with daily ethical practice, and 39% of students fail to obtain clear guidance on value judgment from the courses[3].

The iteration of new media technologies has given rise to a fragmented and entertainment-oriented information ecosystem, which has further exacerbated the problems of vague value cognition and wavering ethical choices among young students[4]. In this context, from the perspective of Marxist theory, exploring the ethical dimension of college moral education and constructing a scientific value guidance mechanism is not only a practical response to the demand for

the high-quality development of college moral education in the new era, but also an inevitable path to cultivating new people of the era who can shoulder the mission of national rejuvenation, thus bearing important theoretical and practical significance[5].

2. Current Status of Ethical and Value Guidance in College Moral Education

At present, the ethical infiltration and value guidance in college moral education are developing with a momentum of "overall advancement alongside partial imbalance", featuring the coexistence of positive outcomes and prominent shortcomings. At the curriculum implementation level, although more than 68% of colleges and universities have integrated ethical education content into their moral education curriculum systems, only 32% have achieved the in-depth integration of Marxist ethical thoughts with real-world issues. Most courses suffer from the superficial interpretation of ethical connotations and the fragmentation of value guidance[6]. Nearly half of the courses still adopt traditional theoretical lectures as the main teaching method, lacking interactive sessions such as ethical scenario simulation and value analysis, which makes it difficult to arouse students' awareness of active participation.

From the perspective of students' cognition and acceptance, a questionnaire survey covering 30 colleges and universities of different levels nationwide shows that 56% of college students recognize the role of moral education courses in establishing basic ethical norms, but only 31% believe that the values conveyed by the courses can effectively guide their daily ethical choices[7]. In addition, 43% of students have vague value cognition and struggle to make clear judgments when confronted with conflicts between personal and collective

interests, as well as between online ethics and real-world morality, which highlights the lack of targeted precision in value guidance.

The shortcomings in the link of practical transformation are even more prominent. Only 29% of colleges and universities have established a trinity ethical cultivation system integrating “curriculum-based moral education, campus culture and social practice”, and most of them lack regular practical carriers[8]. More than 60% of students report that the campus ethical and cultural atmosphere is weak, and the value guidance of moral education has not been effectively integrated into practical scenarios such as club activities and voluntary services. This leads to a disconnect between ethical cognition and behavioral practice, which restricts the overall effectiveness of moral education work[9].

3. Relevant Research

Against the backdrop of the new era characterized by diversified values and rapid development of new media, the integration of Marxist theory and moral education in colleges and universities has become a key research topic in domestic academic circles, which is of great significance for promoting the high-quality development of college moral education and cultivating new people of the era. After years of in-depth exploration and research, domestic academic circles have accumulated certain rich research achievements on this integration issue, with the research focus consistently centering on two core directions: exploring the ethical dimension of college moral education based on Marxist theory and constructing a scientific and effective value guidance mechanism.

In the research on the ethical dimension of college moral education, scholars have conducted in-depth discussions around the core connotation of Marxist ethics and its application path in moral education. Wang Chen (2021) clearly pointed out that Marxist collectivist ethics constitutes the core essence and spiritual core of college moral education, whose fundamental nature lies in realizing the dialectical unity of the individual and society, and coordinating the relationship between individual interests and collective interests. He argued that to address the current prominent problem of the superficialization of ethical connotations in college moral education, it is necessary to integrate collectivist ethics into the entire process of moral education through curriculum reconstruction, optimize the curriculum content system, and avoid the formalization and emptiness of ethical education in teaching practice.

On the basis of Wang Chen’s research, Liu Min (2022) further expanded the research perspective and proposed that the Marxist theory of the free and all-round development of human beings provides an important value criterion and theoretical basis for the ethical dimension of college moral education. She emphasized that moral education in colleges and universities should not only focus on the cultivation of individual ethical literacy, but also attach importance to the shaping of social values, and strive to balance the relationship between individual development and social progress, so as to achieve the synchronous development and mutual promotion of ethical education and value guidance.

In the field of research on the value guidance mechanism of college moral education, domestic academic circles have carried out diversified and in-depth discussions, forming a variety of research viewpoints and mechanism construction schemes. Based on a large-scale empirical survey covering more than 20 colleges and universities across the country, Li Juan et al. (2024) put forward a three-dimensional value guidance mechanism of “theoretical interpretation - cognitive internalization - practical externalization”. They emphasized that under the guidance of Marxist theory, it is necessary to build a solid bridge connecting theoretical teaching and practical practice, strengthen the interpretation of Marxist theory and its integration with real life, and effectively enhance the targeted nature and effectiveness of value guidance.

Focusing on the characteristics of the new media era and the impact of fragmented information on young students, Zhang Lei (2023) proposed constructing an integrated online-offline value guidance mechanism. He argued that the digital dissemination of Marxist theory through new media carriers such as short videos and online interactive platforms can effectively address the impact of fragmented information on young students’ value cognition, enrich the forms of value guidance, and improve the acceptance and recognition of Marxist values among college students. In addition, some scholars have approached the research from a cultural perspective, arguing that it is essential to explore the convergence points between the Marxist cultural outlook and the fine traditional Chinese ethical culture, integrate excellent traditional ethical culture into moral education, and construct a moral education value guidance mechanism rooted in cultural confidence, which provides a new research idea for the integration of Marxist theory and college moral education[10].

In contrast, relevant foreign research has mostly focused on the integration of Marxist ethical thoughts and higher education, with a focus on exploring the ethical value of Marxist theory in the practice of higher education. Starting from the Marxist theory of alienation, Smith (2021) pointed out that college moral education is facing the predicament of instrumentalization, which overemphasizes the practical function of moral education while ignoring its inherent ethical essence and value pursuit. He advocated that college moral education needs to break through this instrumentalization predicament and return to its ethical essence and original value aspiration, which provides a valuable cross-cultural reference for domestic research in China.

In addition, a cross-cultural study by Jones et al. (2022), which covered college students from five countries, indicated that an ethical infiltration mechanism based on core values can effectively enhance young students’ value identity and ethical awareness. This research conclusion echoes the logic of value guidance under the guidance of Marxist theory in China, confirming the universal value of constructing a value guidance mechanism based on core values.

Overall, existing domestic and foreign research has laid a solid theoretical foundation for the integration of Marxist theory and college moral education, and provided certain practical reference. Yet there remain notable deficiencies that cannot be

ignored: first, the exploration of the inherent logical connection between Marxist theory and the ethical dimension of college moral education is not in-depth enough, and the research on how to deeply integrate Marxist ethical thoughts into moral education practice is still insufficient; second, the construction of the value guidance mechanism mostly focuses on a single link or a single carrier, lacking systematicness and operability, and it is difficult to form a comprehensive and coordinated guidance system; third, there is a shortage of innovative research combined with practical scenarios of the new era such as the rapid development of new media and the diversification of values. These deficiencies have left ample space for the further exploration and in-depth research of this paper.

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4. Challenges Faced by Ethics and Value Guidance in College Moral Education

In the new era, moral education in colleges and universities is confronted with multiple challenges in ethical cultivation and value guidance. The foremost challenge is the weakened identification with core values under the impact of value pluralism. Against the backdrop of globalization, diverse cultures and values intersect and clash, and the infiltration of certain Western utilitarian and individualistic ideological trends has led to such problems among some young students as a diminished sense of collectivism and a utilitarian orientation in ethical values.

Secondly, the glaring disconnect between moral education ethics and real-world practice is a prominent issue. At present, most moral education courses in colleges and universities remain confined to the theoretical level, with inadequate integration between ethical content and students' daily study and life as well as the ethical predicaments in social reality. Failing to address students' genuine ethical doubts, such courses have severely compromised the practical effectiveness of moral education. Meanwhile, the popularization of new media has given rise to new ethical problems in the virtual space; online rumors and vulgar content have disrupted students' ethical cognition, yet colleges and universities have fallen behind in paying attention to and providing guidance on online ethics in moral education.

5. Measures for Ethical Cultivation and Value Guidance in College Moral Education from the Perspective of Marxist Theory

From the perspective of Marxist theory, which serves as the

fundamental guiding ideology for moral education in colleges and universities, targeted at the prominent shortcomings and realistic challenges existing in current ethical cultivation and value guidance of college moral education, a systematic, scientific and operable set of measures can be constructed from four interrelated and mutually supportive dimensions: curriculum, practice, faculty, and carriers. These four dimensions cover the entire process of moral education implementation, from content design to practical practice, from teacher support to carrier dissemination, forming a comprehensive governance system that helps effectively address the current predicaments of moral education and promote the high-quality development of college moral education in the new era.

At the curriculum level, it is imperative to comprehensively restructure the moral education curriculum system and deeply integrate the core connotation of Marxist ethics into every link of curriculum construction. As the core content of ethical cultivation in college moral education, Marxist ethics, with collectivist ethics and the theory of the free and all-round development of human beings as its core, should be fully integrated into the curriculum content system to avoid the superficialization and formalization of ethical education. Specifically, it is necessary to optimize the design of curriculum content, break the traditional single theoretical teaching framework, and increase practical and interactive modules such as the analysis of real-world ethical cases, value discrimination, and ethical argumentation. For example, in the curriculum, typical social ethical cases closely related to college students' daily study and life, such as network ethics, interpersonal ethics, and professional ethics, can be introduced, guiding students to use Marxist ethical principles to analyze and solve practical ethical problems, so as to realize the in-depth integration of Marxist theory, ethical education and real-world issues.

At the same time, it is necessary to change the traditional one-way indoctrination teaching mode, adopt interactive teaching methods such as case teaching, group discussion, and situational simulation, stimulate students' initiative and enthusiasm in participating in ethical learning and value exploration, and guide students to establish correct ethical values and value concepts in active thinking and in-depth communication. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen the connection and integration between moral education courses and professional courses, promote the organic integration of ethical cultivation and professional education, and let students perceive and practice Marxist ethical values in professional learning, so as to comprehensively enhance the attractiveness, pertinence and practical effectiveness of moral education courses.

At the practice level, it is crucial to build a two-way transformation platform that connects theoretical learning with practical practice, and promote the organic unity of ethical cognition and behavioral practice. On the one hand, it is necessary to construct a trinity cultivation system integrating "curriculum-based moral education, campus culture and social practice", clarify the functional positioning of each link, and form a joint force of ethical cultivation. Curriculum-based moral education provides theoretical guidance and knowledge support for ethical cultivation;

campus culture creates a good cultural atmosphere for ethical infiltration; social practice provides a broad platform for students to practice ethical concepts.

Specifically, relying on various practical carriers such as voluntary services, social surveys, ethical situational plays, and public welfare activities, we can organize students to go deep into communities, enterprises, rural areas and other fields to carry out practical activities, so that students can deeply understand the connotation and practical significance of Marxist ethical values in practice, and realize the transformation from ethical cognition to conscious behavior. On the other hand, it is necessary to vigorously foster a positive and healthy campus ethical and cultural atmosphere, take theme lectures, cultural festivals, ethical forums, and other forms to integrate Marxist value concepts into daily campus life, and let students be edified and influenced by ethical culture in an imperceptible way. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the guidance of campus ethical norms, formulate clear campus ethical codes, and guide students to abide by ethical norms in daily study and life, so as to form a good campus ethos of respecting ethics, advocating morality and practicing virtue.

At the faculty level, strengthening the construction of the moral education teaching team and improving the ethical literacy and value guidance ability of teachers are the key links to ensuring the effectiveness of ethical cultivation and value guidance. Teachers, as the disseminators of Marxist theory and the guides of students' ethical values, their own ethical literacy and professional ability directly affect the effect of moral education. According to relevant survey data, about 40% of moral education teachers currently lack systematic training in Marxist ethical thoughts, and have certain shortcomings in the ability to translate Marxist theoretical knowledge into specific ethical guidance and value interpretation, which is difficult to meet the needs of high-quality development of moral education in the new era.

In view of this, it is necessary to carry out specialized training on Marxist ethical thoughts for moral education teachers, focusing on improving their ability to interpret Marxist theories, analyze ethical issues and guide students' value choices. At the same time, it is necessary to encourage teachers to carry out in-depth research on ethical cultivation and value guidance combined with their own teaching practice, explore effective teaching methods and approaches suitable for the characteristics of college students in the new era, and continuously improve their professional level and teaching ability. In addition, it is necessary to establish a sound evaluation and incentive mechanism, encourage teachers to pay more attention to ethical cultivation and value guidance in teaching, and build a professional moral education teaching team with both solid theoretical literacy and strong practical ability.

At the carrier level, it is necessary to innovate the communication mode of ethical cultivation and value guidance to adapt to the characteristics of the new media era and the cognitive habits of young college students. With the rapid development and popularization of new media technologies such as short videos, live broadcasts, and online interactive platforms, the information acquisition and communication methods of college students have undergone

profound changes, which also brings new opportunities and challenges to the dissemination of Marxist ethical thoughts and value concepts.

It is necessary to fully utilize various digital carriers, transform the abstract Marxist ethical thoughts and value concepts into vivid, intuitive and accessible content forms such as short videos, animations, and graphic posters, so as to enhance the appeal and dissemination of value guidance. At the same time, it is necessary to build an online interactive platform, carry out online ethical discussions, value surveys and other activities, guide students to actively participate in online interactions, express their own views and confusion, and teachers carry out targeted guidance and education according to students' questions. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen the management and guidance of online information, resist the spread of negative and vulgar information, create a clean online space, overcome the impact of fragmented information on students' ethical cognition, realize the coordinated development of online and offline value guidance, and effectively enhance the coverage, pertinence and effectiveness of ethical cultivation and value guidance.

6. Conclusion

From the perspective of Marxist theory, this paper conducts a systematic analysis of the ethical dimension and value guidance mechanism of moral education in colleges and universities. The diversification of values and the development of new media in the new era have brought dual challenges to college moral education, which currently presents an unbalanced development status characterized by superficial integration of ethics into curricula, inadequate practical transformation, and vague value cognition among students. The core predicaments are concentrated in the weakened value identity, the disconnection between theory and practice, and the deficiencies in teachers' professional capabilities. By sorting out relevant research, it is found that existing achievements have focused on the exploration of ethical core connotations and the construction of relevant mechanisms, yet there exist such problems as insufficient in-depth excavation of inherent logical connections and a lack of systematicness. Based on the above analysis, this paper proposes targeted measures from four dimensions: curriculum reconstruction, practical empowerment, faculty capacity enhancement and carrier innovation. These measures include integrating the core of Marxist ethics, constructing a three-dimensional cultivation system, improving teachers' ability to interpret Marxist theories, and adapting to the communication characteristics of the new media era. The research findings are intended to provide theoretical and practical support for addressing the predicaments of college moral education and constructing a scientific value guidance mechanism, thus helping colleges and universities fully implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and cultivating qualified new people of the era.

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