

# The Value Implication and Practical Direction of Labor Education for Contemporary College Students

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to comprehensively elaborate the value implication and practical direction of labor education for contemporary college students on the basis of the purpose, model and social and historical conditions of labor education. This paper mainly adopts the methods of systematic research, comparative research and literature research to excavate the moral implication of labor education from the value dimension. The research finds that labor education is helpful to enhance college students' political identity with the country, and cultivate their political feelings of people supremacy, ideological and moral quality and practical work style. The moral function of labor education originates from the dialectical relationship between labor and morality, and its essence is the dialectical relationship between economic foundation and superstructure. Through top-level design, theoretical interpretation, educational practice, cultural infiltration, and infection of teacher ethics, it can give full play to the social significance and moral function of labor education to contemporary college students.

**Keywords:** contemporary college students; labor education; value implication; practical direction

## 1. Introduction

Labor education is an important part of the all-round development of education system, which has the comprehensive function of establishing morality, increasing intelligence, strengthening body and cultivating beauty. Labor education is not only the main content and form of moral education, but also contains rich and profound moral elements, which is of great value to promote the ideological and moral education of contemporary college students. Therefore, to explore the value implication, function basis and practical direction of labor education for contemporary college students' moral education is conducive to promoting the organic unity of the goal, process and effect of labor education and moral education, and giving full play to the role of comprehensively establishing morality and educating people through labor education.

## 2. Pervious Research on Labor Education

It is the tradition of the Chinese nation to attach importance to labor, and labor education has always been valued and emphasized. The research on labor education started early in China. The related research has been carried out after the founding of People's Republic of China, and it has a history of more than 70 years. The current domestic research on the value of labor education mainly involves the following three aspects.

Firstly, for the exploration of the value connotation of labor education, Tan Chuanbao (2019) points out that based on the analysis of the basic connotation and characteristics of labor education, labor education has the attribute of value education. It is necessary to help contemporary college students establish the value attitude of the working people, so that they can form a trend of loving and respecting the process, achievements and subject of labor. Hu Zhongping (2013) analyzes labor education from the perspective of critical pedagogy, claiming that labor education is the liberation process of pursuing self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect, which highlights the human significance of labor education.

Secondly, for the change of the value orientation of labor education, Qi Zhanyong (2019) states that the labor education policy has experienced a change from instrumental rationality to value rationality by referring historical documents and educational reform events. By reviewing the historical process of the value orientation of labor education, Xu Haijiao and AI Zi (2019) show that the value orientation of labor starts from the pursuit of material and technical utility and consciously moves towards the dimension of transcendental human freedom, dignity and beauty.

Thirdly, it is the development of the value of labor education. Zhang Lei and Ni Shengli (2019) believe that labor education is of great value in promoting people's physical and mental liberation, realizing people's essence and facilitating people's all-round development from the perspective of human body. Xu Haijiao (2019) puts forward that the value of labor education can be reconstructed from three dimensions: expectation space, possibility space and reality space.

To sum up, the domestic research mainly focuses on the connotation and purpose of the value of labor

education, exploring the value of labor education from new perspectives such as human body and value composition, which provides abundant theoretical resources for the further research.

When it comes to the foreign research on labor education, it mainly has two perspectives. The first is the research based on Marxist labor theory, represented by Russia and other countries. These countries are mainly or used to be socialist countries. In theory, they generally believe that “education is combined with productive labor”, and “education is labor”. In practice, these countries attach great importance to labor education, putting labor education throughout school education. They also advocate labor spirit and labor skills in national education. Scholars such as Makarenko and Sukhomlinskii, the former Soviet Union educators, generally agree that the highest value of labor education is to realize people’s all-round development. They not only construct the theory of labor education, but also lay great emphasis on educational practice. For example, Sukhomlinskii carried out a series of practice on labor education in Paflesh’s School.

The second is the research about labor education for career preparation, which is based on the theory of cultivating social man, represented by Germany and the United States. Labor education in these countries originated from craft education, as a preparation for occupation, then evolved into technical literacy education, and finally developed to cultivate qualified citizens. In practice, these countries mainly adopt the model of “Work School” and “Learning by Doing”, concentrating on the cultivation of labor skills and labor attitude. The goal of labor value in these countries is to cultivate citizens’ labor ability and attitude. Some of the countries have formed a very complete labor education system, such as Germany. It can be seen that the foreign research on labor education has a solid theoretical foundation, and there are many related empirical studies.

In conclusion, many scholars have achieved fruitful results in the research on the value of labor education based on their own research purport and unique perspective. However, with the development of the times and changes in the connotation of labor itself, the value of labor education is also developing and changing. In the new era, with the emergence of new labor forms such as digital labor and emotional labor, we need to redefine the value of labor education. The value implication and practical direction of labor education for contemporary college students need to be analyzed from a more detailed and updated perspective, such as the value of labor education in students’ emotions and its moral education function.

### **3. The Value Implication of Labor Education for Contemporary College Students**

From the viewpoint of teleology, the fundamental purpose of labor education is to promote the comprehensive and free development of adults, and it is also the fundamental method to realize the

comprehensive and free development of human beings. Labor education can realize people’s all-round and free development, essentially because it can restore people’s class nature and subjectivity. Labor is the fundamental factor that distinguishes humans from animals, and it is also the essence of humans.

In the real society, labor is often alienated as an external means of survival, which limits the comprehensive and free development of human beings. In the ideal social form of human beings, labor will become the first need of life and be enjoyed as laborers’ own physical and intellectual activities. Labor education can show the essential power of human beings, enhance human subjectivity, liberate human beings physically and mentally, shape “complete human”, [1] realizing people’s comprehensive and free development.

In terms of methods, although labor education is of great significance, it is only one of various forms of education. The multi-education approach that integrates school education and productive labor should become a basic education policy in the modern society. Labor education also needs to be closely integrated with intellectual education and physical education. From the perspective of social and historical conditions, education has a class and social nature, and its nature is determined by the nature of the country and social system, which in turn also serves to consolidate the country’s political rule and social system. Labor education under different social and historical conditions also has different class and sociality.

In the society of capital supremacy, labor education is only a kind of pure vocational training and technical training. The fundamental purpose of it is to cultivate the tool of capital accumulation, not to promote the overall development of human beings. In the people-oriented social form, the purpose of labor education is to cultivate all-round development of people to meet the objective requirements of social production and the development of human society. Based on the purpose, mode and social and historical conditions of labor education, the value implication of labor education for contemporary college students is mainly shown in the following aspects.

#### **3.1. The Political Nature of Labor Education Can Enhance College Students’ Political Identity with the Country**

Political nature is the common attribute of all national educational organizations. [2] The labor education carried out in different countries must conform to the social system attribute of the country and integrate its political characteristics and requirements such as social form and system attribute into the educational objectives and contents, so as to serve the consolidation of its own political rule and system norms. The distinctive political nature of labor education itself fully demonstrates the institutional characteristics of countries with different social properties, which is also an important ideological weapon for maintaining the attributes of the national system.

The implementation of labor education will enable contemporary college students to take labor as the hub, deeply understand the objective law of human social development and the historical inevitability of the institutional attribute of their country, firmly establish their internal confidence in the development path of their country, further deepening their political identity with their nation and country. This can also make students gradually grow into loyal supporters, builders and defenders of the country.

### 3.2. The Subjectivity of Labor Education Can Strengthen College Students' Political Feelings of People Supremacy

Labor education emphasizes the subjective value of human beings and is full of deep care and deep feelings for the working people. The view of combining school education with productive labor manifests the subjective value of human labor, and also highlights the role of cultivating human subjectivity based on educational goals and tasks, making education become the channel to realize the individual's liberation from being enslaved by nature and society, and finally become a real person.

The implementation of labor education in colleges and universities can enable contemporary college students to experience the hardships and joys of labor, the important value of personal growth and the noble role of social development in the process of study and practice [3]. Meanwhile, it can help students comprehend the great power and contribution of the working people to the national development, national revitalization and historical progress, master the historical inevitability of the working people to become the masters of the country, thereby forming a deep class feeling for the working people. Furthermore, labor education can help contemporary college students to better establish a people-centered position and stand, recognize and deal with problems based on the needs of the people, firmly establish the political feelings of people supremacy and make a lifelong contribution to the happiness and liberation of the working people.

### 3.3. The Value of Labor Education Can Improve College Students' Ideological and Moral Cultivation

Labor education itself contains a wealth of ideological value content and requirements. It advocates honest, legal, and diligent labor, and strives for the development of individuals, collectives, and the country. Labor education can help college students cultivate the virtues of human nature, facilitate them to cherish the country for the people, establish the public ethics of observing discipline and law, and be strict in self-discipline. It also plays an important role in improving the ideological and moral quality of college students and fulfilling the mission of establishing morality. [4] Colleges and universities vigorously develop labor education through theoretical study and practical exercises, which can enable students to develop a positive, healthy, optimistic and progressive morality and personality. It is conducive for college students to effectively resist the influence of

negative and decadent thoughts such as money worship, hedonism, consumerism, nihilism, and extreme individualism. More deeply, it can help students establish the foundation of faith stably, accumulate enough spiritual elements and adhere to the correct political principle and viewpoint.

### 3.4. The Practicality of Labor Education Can Cultivate College Students' Practical Work Style

Labor education contains the truth demands of labor practice to achieve dreams and change lives. Any worker, regardless of the technical content of the labor, as long as he is diligent in learning, good at practice, conscientious in his work, and striving for perfection, he will definitely be able to create a shining life. Labor education can enable contemporary college students to master the truth that solid work can make them settle down, establish a career and prosper a nation. It also helps to vigorously advocate practical work style among youth groups, guides students to focus on the participation and experience of labor practice, organically unify the labor process and the education process, and promote their own development and contribute to society during the process of labor. Moreover, it is conducive for contemporary college students to establish the values of realizing their dreams through solid work and form a fine style of work: work diligently, work solidly and work hard.

## 4. The Mechanism of the Value Function of Labor Education for Contemporary College Students

The fundamental mechanism of labor education can effectively play a value function is because of the dialectical relationship between labor education and moral education. This dialectical relationship comes from the dialectical relationship between labor and morality, and the dialectical relationship between labor and morality arises from the dialectical relationship between the economic foundation and the superstructure.

The economic base is the sum of production relations. Production relations are determined by the level of development of labor productivity. Morality belongs to the category of superstructure and depends on the economic foundation. Therefore, from a philosophical level, labor determines morality. First of all, labor is a prerequisite for the formation of morality. Second, the purpose, content and methods of morality are subject to the level of labor productivity and the economic system determined by it. Morality is a reflection and embodiment of economic relations and class relations determined by a certain level of productivity. No matter what kind of morality, the fundamental purpose of it is to safeguard the interests of the ruling class. Specifically, the content of morality is a reflection of social production methods and production relations, and its methods cannot be separated from the conditions of productivity and the level of science and technology.

However, morality also has an adverse effect on labor. This reaction is a manifestation of the reaction of the superstructure to the economic foundation. Morality is

the criterion and norm of social production and life. It can consolidate and strengthen the ideology that is consistent with the social and economic foundation and the interests of the ruling class, eliminate ideologies and consciousness that violate this, so as to promote the development of social labor productivity.

Based on the dialectical relationship between labor and morality, there is also a dialectical relationship between labor education and moral education. Labor education is the important form and carrier of moral education, and moral education is the purpose and content of labor education. The two are closely related, complementary, integrated and collaborative. They complement each other and can play a role in educating people.

For the purpose of education, they all want to cultivate people with all-round development. In terms of the nature of education, their essence is determined by the attribute of social system, and they should also obey and serve the needs of the country's talent training. As for the content of education, they should strengthen the cultivation of the core values of young college students. When it comes to the education methods, they all use diversified methods such as theoretical explanation, problem discussion, case inspiration, situational experience, ideal motivation, practical exercise, rewards and punishments and so on. Therefore, fundamentally speaking, labor education and moral education can be integrated and mutually support each other. This is the mechanism of the value function of labor education to contemporary college students.

## **5. The Practical Direction of the Implementation of Labor Education for Contemporary College Students**

### **5.1. Top-level Design: The Value Shaping Function Running Through the Whole Process of Labor Education**

The core of the value of labor education is to cultivate students' labor emotion and morality, and to enhance the sense of obligation and honor of working for the welfare of society. [5] Therefore, the cultivation of labor thought, emotion and morality runs through the whole process of labor education, which is the fundamental requirement of exerting the moral function of labor education. When planning and improving the top-level design of labor education, it is necessary to formulate an implementation plan that places equal emphasis on value shaping and ability cultivation, clarifying the theme, main channels, carrier methods and division of responsibilities of labor ideology and moral education.

Labor education contains rich moral elements. Colleges and universities should scientifically determine the main direction according to the regional characteristics, school running characteristics and discipline and specialty conditions. At the same time, labor education should be integrated into the "Top Ten" systems of educating people such as curriculum, practice, scientific research, service, and organization as an important content to form a comprehensive and all-element labor education system.

In addition, it is important to establish and improve the coordination mechanism of labor education and moral education. Colleges and universities should not only concentrate the efforts of the Academic Affairs Office, Student Affairs Office and other departments, but also integrate the resources of ideological education, organizational construction and professional teachers according to the special requirements of moral education. Only in this way can it form an effective mechanism for mutual promotion of labor education and moral education with daily theoretical education and practical education and give full play to the overall advantages.

### **5.2. Theoretical Interpretation: A Deep Understanding of the Moral Meaning of Labor**

The moral meaning of labor itself is also a scientific and perfect knowledge system. It is necessary to focus on classroom teaching and clearly explain its basic principles and guidelines, so that college students can quickly and systematically recognize and understand the main theories of labor values and moral values. Colleges and universities should improve the curriculum system of labor moral education.

First of all, colleges and universities should enable college students to fully master the important value of labor to the development of individuals, countries, nations, history, and human society, and cultivate and deepen their political identity with the country, as well as class feelings and deep feelings for the people.

Secondly, colleges and universities should set up a series of labor education courses, such as labor introduction, labor economics, labor culture, labor philosophy, labor ethics, labor law, etc. and employment and entrepreneurship courses. College teachers should impart labor knowledge and skills to students, so that students can learn the basic principles of labor thinking, labor attitude, labor quality, and labor emotions, and deepen their understanding and recognition of labor values and morals.

Thirdly, colleges and universities should excavate the meaning of labor ethics through the teaching of various general courses and professional courses. In particular, these courses should make use of historical greats, academic representatives, industry elites, labor models and other advanced figures' struggles and advanced deeds to set moral example for students, so as to encourage and stimulate students' professional awareness and enterprising spirit.

Moral role model is the goal and direction of people's struggle. It has the function of personality inspiration, enlightenment and education, and can establish the correct moral evaluation standard for people. [6] It is helpful to promote students to form scientific and correct professional consciousness, entrepreneurial spirit and struggle spirit, and to grow into leaders and backbone in various fields and industries by excavating the motivating role of models and examples of labor ethics in different disciplines and professional fields.

The theoretical elaboration of the concept of labor ideology and morality should adopt ways and methods rather than simply using indoctrination. One-way theoretical indoctrination ignores students' subjectivity and initiative, which leads to poor teaching effects. In the course of classroom teaching, college teachers should adopt special lectures, case analysis, discussion and debate, reading reports and other diversified methods according to the intellectual, ideological, vivid, and pertinent characteristics of labor ideological and moral theory to improve students' ability of thinking and understanding, and strengthen students' understanding and recognition of labor ideology and moral principles. Furthermore, in the course assessment and evaluation, college teachers should enhance the evaluation of students' labor thought, moral growth and development process, improving the evaluation standard system, and organically integrating the thought evaluation, knowledge evaluation, and ability evaluation of labor to facilitate the harmonious development of students' moral education in four factors: cognition, emotion, will and behavior.

### 5.3. Educational Practice: Experiencing and Comprehending the Moral Meaning of Labor

The process of labor itself is the process of practice. Practical activities have an effective function of educating people, which is reflected in the aspects of encouragement and guidance, nurturing and infection, education and standardization, promotion and development. [7] Practical activities can be organically combined with theoretical explanations, promote each other, and jointly enhance the training effect of the meaning of labor moral education. Labor practice activities in colleges and universities mainly include daily life labor, public welfare activities, volunteer activities, second classroom activities, social practice, professional practice and training and so on. These activities can mainly shape the labor ideology and morality of college students through experience teaching and situational teaching. They also create a specific labor scene, so that college students as the subject of labor can directly interact with the object of labor, generate moral emotions through psychological feelings, image infection, group infection, etc., and transform labor moral cognition into beliefs, beliefs and behaviors.

The educational practice of labor morality can be divided into five steps and links: orientation, instruction, experience, reflection and sublimation. Firstly, orientation is to determine the theme, content and standard requirements of labor ethics. Secondly, instruction means that teachers should clearly explain relevant moral education elements, principles, combination methods and requirements to students before the labor practice process begins, reminding students to concentrate on their experience and comprehension. Thirdly, experience is to feel and experience the relevant content of moral education in the process of labor practice. Fourthly, for reflection, after the labor process, students should check and summarize

whether they meet specific requirements and whether they need improvement according to the relevant moral education content and requirements. Fifthly, sublimation means that students can produce emotion, firm will, further establish and consolidate the moral beliefs and beliefs internalized in the process of labor, and consciously transform them into specific behaviors.

### 5.4. Cultural Infiltration: Nourishing Students' Hearts with Labor Ethics

Colleges and universities need to create a campus culture of "respecting labor, advocating solid work, and pursuing excellence", which can imperceptibly cultivate students' minds and nourish their growth with labor thoughts and moral beliefs.

In terms of spiritual culture, it is necessary for colleges and universities to fully integrate labor ethics into the school-running concept, and align it with the direction of school motto, school spirit, teaching style and academic style. Colleges and universities should actively hold lectures and learning activities on the advanced deeds of model workers, industry elites and outstanding graduates, and vigorously carry forward the spirit of model workers, craftsmanship. Moreover, they also need to take advantage of traditional festivals such as May 1<sup>st</sup> Labor Day to carry out labor-themed education activities and advocate labor ideology and morality, using various media such as the Internet to vigorously publicize the advanced deeds of outstanding laborers, and spread the outstanding labor culture.

When it comes to institutional culture, colleges and universities should take labor ideology and moral education as an important standard for the selection of student scholarships and advanced individuals. In the aspect of behavioral culture, colleges and universities should use labor ethics to shape students' correct behavior, helping students consciously resist all kinds of extravagant waste, greedy for pleasure, and unintended bad behaviors. They also should guide students to establish the values and beliefs of being proud of hard work, being ashamed of arrogance and luxury and develop a fine study style.

As for material culture, colleges and universities should make use of various campus landscapes, buildings and other facilities to create a beautiful environment advocating the enterprising spirit through naming, design, publicity and exhibition.

### 5.5. Infection of Teachers' Ethics: Setting an Example of Labor Ethics

College teachers have the most frequent and close contact with college students, and they are important objects for students to learn and imitate. A teacher with noble ethics and style will have an invisible and powerful influence and appeal to students. Therefore, colleges and universities should strengthen the cultivation of teacher ethics and style with labor morality as an important connotation, so that teachers can form a good working attitude and style: teach meticulously and

tirelessly, study rigorously and devote themselves to educating people. In this way, students can learn the correct working attitude, morality and professionalism and consciousness from the teachers.

In addition, colleges and universities should also actively invite all kinds of labor models, experts, craftsmen and other advanced labor figures to serve as instructors in labor courses to teach students labor skills and combine their own experience to promote the spirit of arduous struggle: be fearless, work solidly, work hard and work in a clever way.

Furthermore, college teachers should actively learn and master the scientific methods of labor education and moral education. Labor ethics education is cross-border and cross-domain education, and it is the organic unity of ideological education and skill education. At present, some teachers lack the ability of labor moral education. Therefore, colleges and universities should take the teaching skills training of labor ethics as an important content of teachers' induction training, job training and teaching research, and set up special projects of labor thought and moral training in various teaching projects, so as to improve teachers' ability to cultivate morality through labor.

## 6. Conclusions

Labor education has rich value implications for the growth and success of contemporary college students. The practical direction of labor education for contemporary college students can be further promoted from the following aspects. Firstly, colleges and universities should fully understand and attach importance to the moral education value of labor education, constructing a moral education goal system for labor education. Secondly, colleges and universities should expand the practice carrier of labor education, especially the education carrier suitable for the physical and mental characteristics of young college students. Thirdly, it is necessary to create the emotional atmosphere of labor education. Young people are especially vulnerable to the influence of emotional

atmosphere. In order to realize the moral value of contemporary college students' labor education, colleges and universities should strengthen the construction of emotional atmosphere. Fourthly, colleges and universities should also improve the training of teachers' teaching skills of labor education, strengthening the example power of teacher's morality infection.

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