

Practical Paths for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into *Labor Education* for College Students

Dan Luo, Xiaoliang Xu

Yangtze University College of Arts and Sciences, Jingzhou 434020, Hubei, China

Abstract: *Currently, labor education for college students faces challenges such as insufficient ideological guidance, a weak teaching staff, and a single educational approach. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is rich in labor education resources. It not only injects vitality into the high - quality development of labor education in colleges and universities but also helps to inherit excellent traditional culture, enhancing college students' sense of national identity and cultural confidence. Traditional culture and labor education are highly compatible in nature, guiding students to cultivate excellent labor qualities and understand the value of labor. Colleges and universities should fully draw on the labor - education elements in traditional culture. By making efforts in optimizing the content of labor education, strengthening ideological guidance, building a professional teaching staff, and innovating educational approaches, they can promote the in - depth practice of labor education, laying a solid foundation for cultivating socialist builders and successors who are well - developed morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and in terms of labor.*

Keywords: Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture, Labor Education for College Students, Practical Paths.

1. Introduction

In 2020, the “Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary, Secondary and Higher Education Institutions in the New Era” jointly issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council clearly emphasized that labor education plays an extremely crucial role in cultivating socialist builders and successors. It is directly related to the labor spirit, labor values, and proficiency in labor skills of the educated [1]. Despite the clear policy direction, many problems have gradually emerged in the actual implementation of labor education for college students. How to systematically and scientifically understand the content structure and hierarchical system of labor education for college students in the new era, and how to carry out effective labor education among college students through innovative educational methods and practical models, has become a core issue of high concern in the field of education theory. This issue not only concerns the all-round development of college students but is also closely related to the improvement of the national education system and the quality of talent cultivation, urgently requiring in-depth research and the exploration of practical solutions. The “Opinions on Implementing the Project for the Inheritance and Development of Fine Traditional Chinese Culture” has pointed out the direction for the education field: it is necessary to comprehensively promote and disseminate traditional Chinese virtues, integrate them into all aspects of education, and cultivate students' humanistic spirit through immersive and diverse teaching practices [2]. The spirit of model workers and the spirit of craftsmanship embody values such as hard work, striving for excellence, and dedication, and are vivid manifestations and powerful carriers of the inheritance of traditional Chinese virtues in the field of labor. They not only condense the wisdom of the Chinese nation but also inject fresh vitality into labor education in the new era, becoming an inseparable key part of the labor education system.

2. The Current Situation of Labor Education for Contemporary College Students

2.1 The Contents of Labor Education in the New Era for College Students

Labor education, as a key component of the socialist education system with Chinese characteristics, is a crucial path to shaping college students' correct labor qualities and guiding them to establish a scientific value orientation [3]. The “Opinions” systematically constructs a labor education goal system from three dimensions: ideological cognition, emotional attitude, as well as ability habits. On the ideological level, colleges and universities need to guide students to deepen their understanding of labor education, fully understand the important value of labor education in personal growth and social development, and gradually build a Marxist view of labor. Let students deeply recognize the concept that “labor is the most glorious, the most noble, the greatest, and the most beautiful” from the bottom of their hearts, and make it a value criterion to guide their own behaviors. In terms of emotional experience, by means of diverse labor practices, it can help students perceive the value and beauty created by labor, and gain a sense of achievement and happiness in the labor process. It is aimed to cultivate students' spirit of thrift, hard work, and innovation in practice, and encourage them to be brave in pioneering and selfless dedication. From the perspective of ability cultivation, by participating in various labor practices, college students can continuously improve their survival and living skills, explore the value and meaning of life in labor, gradually develop good labor habits, as well as lay a solid foundation for entering and serving society in the future.

2.2 The Current Dilemmas of Labor Education for Contemporary College Students

2.2.1 Insufficient Ideological Guidance in Labor Education

In the era of information explosion, college students are exposed to diverse cultures and ideas through the Internet. The negative impacts of utilitarianism and hedonism cannot be underestimated. Some college students are misled by online concepts such as “lying flat” and “worshiping money”, developing a wrong perception of the value of labor. They consider physical labor dull and uninteresting, and believe that mental labor is worthless if it does not bring quick and substantial returns [4]. However, labor education in colleges and universities has failed to keep up with the times in terms of ideological guidance. Some labor education courses are outdated and still focus on traditional theories, failing to deeply analyze current social phenomena and students’ concerns.

When conducting labor education, many colleges and universities only arrange for students to participate in simple physical labor such as cleaning the campus. They fail to explain the spiritual connotations and values behind labor. In campus culture construction, the promotion of labor education is simple, mainly through posting slogans and holding sporadic lectures, lacking continuity and innovation. Due to the failure to fully explore and publicize the deeds of labor models around them, students are lack of role models to refer to and thus find it difficult to develop a sense of respect for labor and establish a correct view of labor, resulting in labor education failing to achieve the expected results at the ideological level.

2.2.2 Insufficient Number of Full-time Teachers for Labor Education

The construction of the teaching staff directly affects the quality and effectiveness of labor education. Currently, the number of full-time teachers for labor education in colleges and universities is seriously inadequate. Most labor education courses are taught by ideological and political teachers, counselors, or teachers from other disciplines. Although these part-time teachers have certain teaching experience, they have not received systematic professional training in labor education and thus have an inaccurate grasp of the teaching focus and methods. In many colleges and universities, 90% of the teachers teaching labor education courses are part-time, and only less than 10% of them have participated in professional training related to labor education.

Due to the heavy teaching tasks of part-time teachers, they find it hard to devote a lot of time and energy to studying labor education, and their teaching methods often follow traditional models without innovation. At the same time, colleges and universities have not established a completed training mechanism for labor education teachers, making it not easy for teachers to access the latest labor education concepts and teaching methods, and their knowledge structure cannot be updated in a timely manner. In terms of professional title evaluation and career development, labor education teachers lack clear promotion paths and policy support, which seriously dampens their enthusiasm and initiative, leading to an unstable teaching staff and restricting the long-term development of labor education.

2.2.3 Monotonous Forms of Labor Education with Insignificant Effects

At present, both the teaching and practical aspects of labor education in colleges and universities have the problem of monotonous forms. In classroom teaching, most teachers adopt a theoretical indoctrination approach, unilaterally explaining the concepts and significance of labor education without closely connecting with real life. For example, in a labor education course at a certain university, 80% of the class time is spent on theoretical explanations, and only 20% is allocated to simple case analyses, resulting in low student participation.

In the practical aspect of labor education, most colleges and universities only organize students to participate in simple labor such as cleaning the campus and organizing the library, which is monotonous in form and content and fails to meet the diverse needs of students from different majors and with different interests. The integration of labor education with other disciplines is not high, and a collaborative education pattern has not been formed. For instance, in the teaching process of science and engineering majors, labor education is not organically combined with professional practice, and students cannot experience the value of labor in their professional studies. In addition, the evaluation system of labor education is not perfect, overly emphasizing the number of times and duration of students’ participation in labor, while neglecting a comprehensive assessment of students’ labor attitudes, skills, and spirit. As a result, labor education fails to achieve the goal of cultivating students’ labor literacy, and the educational effect is greatly reduced.

3. Values of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Labor Education for College Students

3.1 Providing Abundant Educational Resources

With a long history and profound heritage, excellent traditional Chinese culture contains a vast number of labor - related allusions, poems, and skills, which form a high-quality resource repository for labor education [5]. The story of “Dayu Taming the Flood” tells how Dayu, in order to quell the flood, passed by his home three times without entering. With fearless courage and unwavering belief, he successfully tamed the flood. The labor spirit of fearing no hardship and making selfless dedication demonstrated in this allusion inspires students to move forward bravely and take on responsibilities actively when facing challenges in their studies and lives. The verse “Hoeing the crops under the midday sun, sweat dripping onto the soil beneath the seedlings” vividly depicts the hard work of farmers under the scorching sun with plain words. It enables students to directly sense the arduousness of labor, guiding them to cherish food and develop the habit of being thrifty. In labor education classes, teachers introduce these allusions and poems. Through vivid explanations and interactions, they help students deeply understand the value of labor and establish correct labor concepts.

Traditional handicrafts such as paper-cutting, embroidery, and ceramic making, as the resplendent pearls of Chinese culture, are also precious resources for carrying out labor education. Taking paper -cutting as an example, during the learning process, students need to use scissors and paper. Through steps like folding and cutting, they create various

works. This not only exercises students' hands-on ability and stimulates their creativity but also allows them to deeply understand the historical culture behind paper-cutting art. From ancient totem worship to the decorations of folk festivals, paper-cutting embodies the cultural memories and emotional sustenance of the Chinese nation. While experiencing the charm of traditional skills, students enhance their aesthetic ability and gain a deeper understanding of the concept that labor creates beauty.

3.2 Enhancing National Identity and Cultural Confidence

Integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into labor education for college students opens a door for students to deeply understand the history and culture of the Chinese nation. It enables them to truly appreciate the hard work and wisdom of their predecessors, generates a strong sense of national identity, and further strengthens their cultural confidence [6].

When students participate in the learning of traditional skills and labor practices, the charm of excellent traditional culture becomes fully evident. Taking the learning of traditional architectural construction skills as an example, ancient Chinese architecture is world-renowned for its unique mortise-and-tenon structure. This construction technique, which builds stable buildings by fitting wood pieces together without using a single nail, fully demonstrates the extraordinary wisdom and remarkable creativity of our predecessors. In magnificent buildings such as the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven, the profound-meaning colored paintings not only reflects the ancient people's pursuit of aesthetics but also carries rich cultural connotations. When students learn these construction skills, by making architectural models by hand and conducting on-site inspections of ancient buildings, they can directly feel their sophistication. They deeply recognize the remarkable achievements of the Chinese nation in the field of architecture, and a sense of pride in national culture arises spontaneously. Not only in the field of architecture, but also students can draw rich cultural nourishment from traditional handicrafts, traditional farming, and other labor practices. For example, in ceramic art production, every step from kneading clay, pulling blanks to firing embodies the wisdom and hard work of our predecessors and contains profound cultural deposits. Through personal experience, students understand that these traditional skills are not only labor achievements but also carriers of national culture. This stimulates their love for national culture, generates a sense of responsibility to inherit excellent traditional culture, as well as firmly roots cultural confidence in their hearts [7].

3.3 Helping Students Develop Excellent Labor Qualities

Excellent traditional Chinese culture has a long history. The values it contains, such as honesty, trustworthiness, hard work, and unity and cooperation, highly align with the goal of labor education in cultivating students' labor literacy. Integrating these cultural essences throughout the entire process of labor education can effectively guide students to actively practice in various labor activities. As a result, they gradually develop a professional spirit of dedication, teamwork skills for collaborative progress, and a sense of social responsibility to

take on challenges.

Taking traditional agricultural labor as an example, agricultural activities such as sowing and harvesting cannot be completed by one person alone; they require the close cooperation of multiple people. Besides agricultural labor, integrating elements of excellent traditional Chinese culture into other labor scenarios such as campus labor and social practice can also help students develop excellent labor qualities. For example, in campus volunteer services, we can advocate the values of honesty and trustworthiness, and ask students to truthfully record the service duration and cultivate their sense of integrity. In the organization of large-scale public welfare activities, we can encourage students to be hard-working, not shrink back in the face of difficulties, and comprehensively shape excellent labor qualities in labor.

4. Practical Paths for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Labor Education for College Students

4.1 Optimizing the Content of Labor Education and Establishing a New Curriculum Teaching System

Digging and integrating elements of excellent traditional Chinese culture can significantly enrich the content of labor education. Colleges and universities can specifically offer labor education courses related to traditional culture within the curriculum system, such as "Traditional Handicrafts and Labor Education" and "Ancient Agricultural Culture and Labor Practice" [8]. Teachers should not only teach traditional skills like paper-cutting, embroidery, and woodworking but also deeply expound on the historical and cultural backgrounds behind these skills and the labor wisdom they contain. For instance, when teaching paper-cutting skills, teachers are supposed to introduce the important position of paper-cutting art in folk activities and how it embodies people's yearning for a better life. This enables students to grasp the skills and understand the charm of traditional culture simultaneously.

4.2 Strengthening the Ideological Guidance of Labor Education and Establishing Correct Labor Values

Colleges and universities should fully leverage the guiding role of ideological and political education and integrate the labor values in excellent traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political courses. It is wise to carry out activities with diverse themes to create a strong labor-culture atmosphere. Through activities such as displaying traditional labor tools, performing labor-themed art programs, and holding labor-knowledge competitions, let students experience the value and charm of labor. Invite model workers and inheritors of intangible cultural heritage to campus to share their labor experiences and insights. The achievements of model workers through hard work and the inheritance and perseverance of traditional skills by intangible cultural heritage inheritors can inspire students to respect and love labor and stimulate their sense of responsibility to inherit and carry forward excellent traditional culture [9].

4.3 Building a Professional Labor Education Teaching Team and Improving Teaching Quality

Building a professional teaching team that understands both labor education and excellent traditional Chinese culture is crucial for promoting the integration of labor education and traditional culture [10]. Colleges and universities can enhance the professional competence of existing teachers through various means. It is necessary to regularly organize teachers to participate in training related to labor education and traditional culture, invite experts and scholars to give lectures, and conduct academic seminars. This allows teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of the latest concepts and methods of labor education and master rich traditional-culture knowledge.

It is essential to recruit talents with relevant professional backgrounds and practical experience to enrich the labor-education teaching team. We can try to hire teachers with professional backgrounds in traditional handicrafts, folk-culture research, etc., injecting new vitality into labor education. Meanwhile, it is significant to establish a part-time teacher database and invite folk artists and model workers to serve as part-time teachers. They can regularly come to the school to give lectures and provide practical guidance. It is still a problem how to improve the teacher evaluation and incentive mechanism. In aspects such as professional title evaluation and performance assessment, we may give preferential treatment to teachers who actively participate in the integration of labor education and traditional-culture teaching, which can enhance teachers' enthusiasm and initiative, providing solid talent support for the sustainable development of labor education.

5. Conclusion

Integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into labor education for college students is an effective way to address the current problems in college-student labor education and improve the quality of labor education. Based on measures such as reconstructing the content of labor education, strengthening the ideological guidance of labor education, building a teaching team, and enriching the approaches of labor education, the educational function of excellent traditional Chinese culture can be fully realized. This enables students to inherit and carry forward excellent traditional Chinese culture in labor education, establish correct labor values and a positive labor spirit, and achieve all-round development. In the future, as the main front for talent cultivation, colleges and universities should regard the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture and labor education for college students as a long-term educational practice topic, and continuously explore and innovate. It is our duty to continuously optimize curriculum design, teaching methods, and practical activities to promote the deep integration of the two, contributing to the cultivation of socialist builders and successors who are well-developed morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and in terms of labor. Moreover, with the changes of the times and social development, colleges and universities need to promptly summarize practical experience, continuously improve systems and mechanisms, provide solid guarantees for the continuous and in-depth development of labor education, and ensure the steady progress of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into labor education for college students, opening up a new chapter in college-student labor education.

Acknowledgement

This paper is a phased achievement of the Key First-Class Course Labor Education, offered by the College of Arts and Sciences, Yangtze University.

References

- [1] Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary, Secondary and Higher Education in the New Era (March 20, 2020) [EB/OL] (March 26, 2020) [June 18, 2022]. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2020-03/26/content_5495977.htm.
- [2] Wang Xiujie, Qiu Ji. The Historical Evolution of Labor Education Thought and the Approach to Value Creation [J]. *Journal of Henan Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2022, 49(5): 150-156.
- [3] Tan Shaojiang, Tu Airong. On the Labor Outlook of the Gentleman Culture and Its Contemporary Value [J]. *Journal of Hubei University of Economics (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2021, 18(8): 10-13.
- [4] Wan Jie, Zhu Huirong. An Analysis of the Cultivation of College Students' Creative Labor Ability [J]. *Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools*, 2022 (15): 57-59.
- [5] Li Lu. Innovative Research on Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Labor Education for College Students [J]. *Journal of Shandong University of Technology (Social Sciences Edition)*, 2022, 38(6): 43-47.
- [6] Lu Yuliang. Exploration of the Practical Paths for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Labor Education in Colleges and Universities [J]. *Shandong Trade Unions Tribune*, 2024, 30(6): 39-48.
- [7] Wang Cheng, Li Hong, Liao Qiyun. What is Labor Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era: A Study Based on the Implementation Plans of Colleges and Universities [J]. *Journal of Education of Renmin University of China*, 2024, 11(6): 106-118.
- [8] Yang Xinyi, Lin Hongbin. The Realistic Dilemmas and Optimization Paths of Integrating Labor Education in Colleges and Universities into the Construction of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in the New Era [J]. *Journal of Beijing Union University*, 2024, 38(6): 19-24.
- [9] Xie Jia, Wu Mei. Exploration of the Integration Paths of the Educational Concept of "Labor + Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture" in Colleges and Universities [J]. *Journal of Jilin Province Institute of Education*, 2024, 40(6): 24-28.
- [10] Xu Gongxiuzhi. Practical Paths for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Labor Education for College Students [J]. *Continuing Education Research*, 2023, 10(2): 108-112.