

The integration path of excellent traditional Chinese culture and moral education of college students

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Abstract: Integrating traditional Chinese culture into the moral education of college students is a crucial measure to enhance cultural confidence, inspire historical initiative, and guide students to consciously cultivate and practice the core socialist values. As an important platform for moral education in higher education institutions, universities should leverage their strengths to clarify the basic connotations and value systems of traditional culture and moral education, analyze the current challenges faced by college students in understanding traditional culture, and innovate integration pathways from aspects such as curriculum systems, teaching content, and teaching resources. This will help fulfill the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and talent, fostering high-quality individuals with both moral integrity and competence for the country.

Keywords: Chinese traditional culture; colleges and universities; college students; moral education

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, with the collision of globalization and multi-culture, higher education shoulders the historical mission of cultivating new people with both virtue and ability. "Talent is the capital of virtue; virtue is the leader of talent." The excellent traditional Chinese culture contains profound and extensive moral education ideas, which are the spiritual lifeline of the Chinese nation. As cradles for cultivating high-quality talents, universities should deeply implement the important instruction put forward by our national leaders: "A person cannot stand without virtue, and the essence of education lies in establishing virtue," integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into the moral education of college students. Currently, college students moral education faces conflicts between traditional cultures and modern values, making the effective connection between the two a key focus of educational reform.^[1] Guided by the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and talent, college student education must adapt to the demands of the times, enhance students moral standards, and nurture new-era talents with a strong sense of social responsibility and national identity.

2. The value of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into moral education of college students

2.1. Promote the innovative development of traditional culture and enhance students cultural confidence

The fine traditional culture of China is the crystallization of thousands of years of Chinese civilization, embodying the wisdom and spirit of our ancestors.^[2] Higher education institutions are crucial platforms for inheriting and promoting this excellent traditional culture. Integrating traditional culture into the moral education of college students provides them with new platforms for dissemination and development. College students are intellectually active and creative; in the process of learning traditional culture, they can combine modern social characteristics and their own understanding to offer innovative interpretations and expressions of traditional culture. For example, through various forms, such as new media platforms, they can create short videos and other works about traditional culture, bringing it into the public eye in novel ways and thus promoting its innovative development. At the same time, when college students gain a deep understanding of the essence and charm of China's fine traditional culture, they can profoundly recognize the uniqueness and superiority of Chinese culture, thereby enhancing cultural confidence. This confidence will translate into a love for and sense of responsibility to preserve national culture, motivating them to actively spread China's fine traditional culture in international cultural exchanges, thereby enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture.

2.2. Resist the influence of bad social trends and sublimate students ideological and moral ideas

The opening of "The Great Learning" states, "The way of the great learning lies in manifesting bright virtue, in renewing the people, and in striving for the highest good." This ancient classic straightforwardly points out that the purpose of a university is to cultivate individuals with bright virtue, self-renewal, and the highest good, emphasizing the educational function of universities. Today, with the rapid development of economic globalization and the rapid advancement of information technology, various negative Western social ideologies such as individualism, materialism, and hedonism have flooded into our country, strongly impacting the ideological concepts of college students. Some students face these ideologies with issues like a lack of discernment, value biases, and weakened moral values. The excellent traditional Chinese culture contains rich moral norms and value systems, such as Confucian "benevolence," Daoist concepts of "governance through non-action" and "following nature," and Mohist ideas of "universal love" and "non-aggression." These teachings guide college students to care for others, respect nature, uphold justice, and focus on moral cultivation. Integrating these excellent traditional cultural ideas into university moral education can help college students form correct value judgments deep within their hearts, enhancing their immunity against negative social ideologies. When faced with conflicts between personal interests and collective interests, they will be guided by the collectivist ideals of traditional culture to make the right choices, thereby elevating their own thinking and moral realm.

2.3. Implement the fundamental requirement of cultivating virtue and fostering talents, and enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education

Cultivating virtue and nurturing talent is the fundamental task of higher education, with moral education being the key link in achieving this goal. The fine traditional Chinese culture emphasizes self-cultivation, family management, state governance, and world peace, focusing on personal moral cultivation and social responsibility, which aligns closely with the core requirements of higher education's mission to cultivate virtue and nurture talent. Rich in content, traditional Chinese culture plays a significant role in education by enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education and deepening students understanding of "reason." In moral education for college students, it is essential to ensure that students genuinely learn, understand, and believe in the core values of traditional Chinese thought and morality. By introducing classic stories, wise sayings, and historical events from traditional culture, ideological and political education can become more vivid, interesting, and engaging. For example, when explaining the spirit of patriotism, stories such as Yue Fei's loyalty to his country and Wen Tianxiang's refusal to yield can be shared, allowing students to deeply appreciate the essence and power of patriotism. The practical wisdom found in traditional culture can also guide students to transform moral theories into concrete actions, encouraging them to apply traditional cultural ideas in real life, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education and fostering well-rounded socialist builders and successors who excel in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor skills.^[3]

3. The integration of Chinese traditional culture into the moral education of college students

3.1. The integration of traditional culture is shallow

Currently, universities still face the issue of insufficient integration depth in incorporating traditional culture into moral education. On one hand, the content is fragmented. In sourcing elements of traditional culture, there is a lack of systematic and holistic references, focusing instead on superficial symbols such as poetry, songs, and traditional festivals. This fails to organically combine the essence with moral education, making it difficult for students to truly internalize and externalize these values. On the other hand, the methods of integration are monotonous. The approach is primarily knowledge-based, lacking deep interaction and experience, which makes it challenging for students to form emotional resonance and value recognition during the process. For example, when explaining principles of Marxist philosophy, only occasional references are made to ancient philosophical ideas as examples, without delving into the intrinsic connections and interactions between them. Finally, the integration effect is superficial. After nine years of compulsory education and three years of high school, college students have a basic "understanding" of traditional culture and know its content. However, in the process of conducting moral education, universities remain at the surface level of cognition, failing to deeply explore the moral essence of traditional culture. This results in a situation where students exhibit a "separation between knowledge and action," affecting the effectiveness of moral education. For example, in the construction

of campus culture, although some traditional cultural activities have been held, such as calligraphy competitions, poetry recitation, etc., these activities often lack continuity and depth and do not really integrate the spiritual connotation of traditional culture into all aspects of campus culture, which makes it difficult to have a profound impact on students.

3.2. Students have limitations in cognition

Due to the influence of exam-oriented education, some college students have relatively limited exposure and understanding of China's fine traditional culture before entering university, leading to a weak foundation. As a result, although they have the opportunity to study traditional culture after entering university, their understanding is limited due to a lack of systematic learning methods and guidance. On the one hand, students grasp of traditional culture is superficial. Influenced by exam-oriented education, they know some classic poems and anecdotes but lack a deep understanding and appreciation of the ideas, values, and moral principles embedded in traditional culture. For example, students may recite sentences from the Analects of Confucius but have only a superficial understanding of core concepts like "benevolence" and "propriety." On the other hand, some students have little interest in learning about traditional culture, finding it dull and disconnected from modern society and thus lacking enthusiasm for active learning. Especially in the context of globalization, Western and popular cultures have flooded in, strongly impacting the ideological concepts and value orientations of college students. Meanwhile, the rapid spread of internet culture has led to information fragmentation and entertainment, making it easier for students to be attracted by superficial and novel content while neglecting the depth and essence of traditional culture. This impact of diverse cultures is disruptive. It makes it difficult for students to maintain an objective and rational attitude when facing traditional culture, which affects their correct understanding and learning of it.

3.3. Lack of targeted moral education

Currently, moral education in universities fails to effectively guide students based on their cognitive limitations and lacks in-depth analysis of students' interests and needs, leading to a disconnect between educational content and actual student requirements. In universities, students from different majors and grades vary in terms of knowledge reserves, interests, and ideological characteristics. However, some universities fail to adequately consider these differences when conducting moral education, instead opting for a uniform approach. For example, when offering courses related to traditional culture, they fail to tailor the curriculum and teaching content according to the needs of students from different majors. Students in science and engineering programs may need more cultivation of humanistic qualities and innovative thinking through traditional culture, whereas for students in humanities programs, there can be an expansion in both depth and breadth of traditional culture. Additionally, in terms of educational methods, there is no selection based on the characteristics of students at different grade levels, resulting in poor educational outcomes.

4. Integration path of Chinese traditional culture and moral education of college students

4.1. Promote cultural integration and give full play to the role of the classroom as the main battlefield

The classroom is the primary channel for nurturing individuals, and students are the main subjects of learning. Integrating Chinese traditional culture into moral education requires promoting cultural integration, innovating curriculum systems and educational methods, and adhering to the principle of educating through excellent traditional culture. First, optimize the curriculum system. Universities should center on Chinese traditional culture and establish a multi-level, diversified system of excellent traditional culture courses, incorporating it into talent development plans. In addition to specialized required courses on traditional culture, a variety of elective courses should be added, such as "Appreciation of Traditional Chinese Art" and "Traditional Chinese Ritual Culture," to meet the interests and needs of different students. This can also provide students with a more comprehensive and profound understanding of excellent traditional Chinese culture, allowing them to experience its charm in actual classes. At the same time, integrate traditional culture courses organically with professional courses, infusing traditional cultural elements into professional course instruction. For example, in the teaching content of architecture, incorporate elements of traditional Chinese architectural culture to help students understand the styles, layouts, and cultural connotations of traditional Chinese architecture, fostering their love for and awareness of inheriting traditional culture. Second, innovate teaching methods.

Traditional culture is rich and diverse, and a single teaching model fails to generate interest in learning. Therefore, during the integration process, schools and teachers must adopt diversified teaching approaches and learning methods. Adopting case-based teaching and video materials can achieve a subtle and imperceptible educational effect, thereby realizing the deep integration of knowledge and moral education. Under the impetus of information technology, we can utilize modern IT to create a blended online-offline teaching model, develop online courses and resource libraries related to traditional culture, and provide students with more convenient learning channels.

4.2. Deepen the teaching content and enhance students cultural cognition

In response to students cognitive limitations regarding traditional culture, universities should systematically construct a teaching content system for moral education, deepen the teaching content, and enhance students cultural awareness.^[4] Grounded in content and guided by contemporary development, a "one body, two wings" teaching content system should be built, led by socialist core values. Specifically, "one body" involves deeply exploring cultural connotations to cultivate students understanding and appreciation of traditional cultures. For example, when explaining Confucian thought, it is not only necessary to introduce classic works and main ideas but also to guide students to think about the value and significance of Confucian thought in modern society, such as how the concept of "benevolence" can inspire harmonious interpersonal relationships and how the idea of "ritual" can regulate social order. The "two wings" involve selecting representative historical events, stories, and cultural classics to foster students emotional identification with traditional culture. For instance, by telling the story of "sleeping on brushwood and tasting gall," students can understand the indomitable national spirit; analyzing the story of "swearing brotherhood in the peach garden" helps them appreciate the importance of loyalty and friendship. Through such teaching content, students understanding of cultural knowledge is deepened, and their pride and sense of responsibility in inheriting excellent traditional culture are stimulated. Finally, this approach should be integrated with contemporary times. The demand is to integrate China's fine traditional culture with contemporary social hot topics and students real lives, making traditional culture relevant and meaningful in today's context. For example, when explaining environmental concepts in traditional culture, one can link it to current ecological issues, encouraging students to explore how to apply the wisdom from traditional culture to address real-world environmental challenges. At the same time, students are encouraged to draw inspiration from traditional cultures and engage in innovative practices, such as organizing creative design competitions that incorporate cultural elements into modern designs. This not only enhances students understanding of traditional culture but also fosters their innovative abilities.

4.3. Strengthen practical teaching and actively expand new teaching resources

"Unity of Knowledge and Action" is an important educational philosophy in traditional culture. In a multicultural context, universities should firmly uphold their political stance, diversify practical forms, and actively expand new teaching resources. Universities should leverage their strengths to create campus cultural venues with traditional cultural charm and multimedia cultural matrices. During the integration of traditional culture, activities such as field trips, experiential learning, and community service should be organized. Encourage students to delve into communities, rural areas, and cultural heritage sites to understand the inheritance and development of traditional culture among the people. Organize students to participate in volunteer services related to traditional culture, such as serving as museum guides or volunteers for traditional culture preservation events, to enhance their sense of social responsibility and awareness of cultural heritage. Arrange for students to engage in conventional culture experience activities, like learning traditional handicrafts and performing traditional operas, allowing them to personally experience the allure of conventional culture and truly achieve a collision between traditional and modern cultures. At the same time, universities need to strengthen cooperation with all sectors of society and actively expand teaching resources on excellent Chinese traditional culture. Establish partnerships with museums, libraries, and cultural research institutions to provide more opportunities for students to engage with and learn about traditional culture. Invite experts and scholars from the field of conventional culture, as well as folk artists, to give lectures and conduct training at schools and enrich students learning resources. In the process of using network media, colleges and universities should stick to the network defense line, choose high-quality traditional cultural resources, establish a learning platform for excellent Chinese traditional culture, integrate all kinds of high-quality teaching resources, and provide convenient learning channels for students.^[5]

5. Conclusions

The integration of China's fine traditional culture with moral education for college students is a long-term and systematic project of immense value and far-reaching significance. Measures such as breaking through barriers, promoting cultural integration, deepening teaching content, and strengthening practical teaching can effectively enhance the integration effect, cultivating new-era college students with high cultural confidence, good moral character, and a strong sense of social responsibility. In future development, universities should continuously explore innovations and improve integration pathways, allowing China's fine traditional culture to flourish and rejuvenate in moral education, thus nurturing more high-quality talents with both virtue and talent for the country and society.

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