

Exploring and Practicing the Pathways of Character Education for University Students Based on Moral Education

Jing Lv*

Xi'an Peihua University, Xi'an 710125, China

*Corresponding author: Jing Lv, lvjing@peihua.edu.cn

Copyright: © 2024 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: With the ongoing development of society and advancements in the economy, the importance of quality education for university students is increasingly emphasized. Moral education, as a crucial component of quality education, has a profound impact on the comprehensive development of university students. However, current moral education faces challenges such as insufficient curriculum offerings, monolithic training methods, and a lack of effective evaluation systems, all of which urgently need improvement. This paper analyzes the current state and challenges of moral education, exploring diversified moral education curriculum systems, the organic integration of moral and professional education, and the design of student-centered moral education activities. Moreover, the paper proposes innovative strategies for moral education by integrating modern information technology, industry-academic cooperation, and an international perspective, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for moral education in universities.

Keywords: Moral education; Quality education; Curriculum system; Modern information technology; Industry-academic collaboration; International perspective

Online publication: August 9, 2024

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly globalizing and information-driven world, the demands for the quality of university students are ever-increasing. Universities, as the cradles of talent development, directly impact the future development of the nation and societal progress. Moral education, an essential part of quality education, plays a vital role in cultivating students' moral qualities and overall competencies. However, moral education in Chinese universities currently faces numerous challenges, including inadequate curriculum settings, the monolithic nature of training methods, and the lack of effective evaluation systems for moral education outcomes. These issues severely constrain the effectiveness of moral education. This paper aims to systematically analyze the existing problems in the moral education of university students and explore the pathways of quality education based on moral cultivation, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for moral education efforts in universities.

2. Current issues and challenges in moral education for university students

2.1. Insufficiencies in moral education curriculum

Currently, many universities exhibit significant deficiencies in their moral education curricula. These issues are primarily manifested in the following areas.

First, the content of moral education courses is overly theoretical, lacking practical cases and engaging teaching materials, making it difficult for students to connect theoretical knowledge with real life. Most moral education courses are lecture-based, featuring monotonous content that fails to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning.

Second, the system of moral education courses is not cohesive or comprehensive. Many universities have fragmented moral education curricula that do not form a complete educational continuum, resulting in students not receiving consistent and systematic educational support at different stages of their moral education.

Lastly, the structure of moral education courses lacks flexibility and adaptability, failing to consider the diverse interests and needs of different students. The existing course structures are often one-size-fits-all, neglecting individual differences among students and failing to meet diverse educational needs

2.2. Monotony in methods of moral education

The monotony of moral education methods is another significant issue in the moral education of university students today. Traditional moral education primarily relies on classroom lectures, a unidirectional method of information transmission that hardly inspires active participation and deep thinking among students.

Firstly, the lecture-based approach limits students' initiative and creativity. The teaching methods in moral education courses are predominantly teacher-centered, in which students passively receive information in the classroom without opportunities for interaction and discussion. This is detrimental to fostering students' critical thinking and self-learning abilities.

Secondly, the absence of practical components is a significant manifestation of the monotony in moral education methods. Although some universities organize moral education activities, these tend to be uniform in format and repetitive in content, failing to engage students' interests. The lack of diversified and innovative practical activities significantly diminishes the effectiveness of moral education.

Additionally, there is a lack of organic integration of moral education with other disciplines during the training process. Moral education content and professional courses are relatively independent, not fully leveraging the interdisciplinary and complementary relationships between various subjects, making it difficult to form a comprehensive, multi-level system of moral education training.

2.3. Lack of an effective evaluation system for moral education

The absence of an effective evaluation system for moral education outcomes is an urgent issue that needs addressing in universities. A scientific and objective evaluation system is crucial for measuring the effectiveness of moral education efforts. However, many universities currently fall short in this area.

Firstly, the evaluation indicators are not scientific or comprehensive enough. Existing evaluations of moral education often focus on quantitative indicators, such as exam scores and attendance rates, neglecting qualitative assessments of students' moral qualities and value orientations. The lack of multidimensional evaluation standards makes it difficult to fully reflect the effects of moral education.

Secondly, the evaluation methods are too uniform, lacking diversity and innovation. Current evaluations of moral education outcomes mainly rely on written exams and end-of-term summaries. This single-mode evaluation does not comprehensively reflect students' moral education levels and actual performances. The absence of process evaluations and dynamic monitoring prevents the timely identification and resolution of

issues in the moral education process.

Lastly, there is insufficient feedback and application of evaluation results. Even within existing evaluation systems, many universities do not adequately prioritize evaluation outcomes, lacking effective feedback mechanisms. They fail to provide timely feedback to students and teachers to guide subsequent moral education efforts and learning improvements.

3. Exploring quality education pathways for university students from the perspective of moral education training

3.1. Constructing a diversified moral education curriculum system

Building a diversified moral education curriculum system is crucial for enhancing the quality of university students' education. Existing moral education courses are often too monolithic and theoretical, failing to spark students' interest and initiative. Thus, it is essential to introduce a variety of course content and teaching methods to enhance the appeal and effectiveness of moral education courses ^[1].

Firstly, the scope of moral education course content should be expanded. In addition to traditional ideological and political education, it can incorporate elements of humanistic literacy, social responsibility, professional ethics, and mental health. Through a rich curriculum setup, students are helped to form a comprehensive set of values and moral standards. For instance, courses on ethics, legal education, and environmental protection can be added to cultivate students' sense of social responsibility and global perspective. Furthermore, incorporating mental health education can help students develop a positive psychological quality and enhance their resilience.

Secondly, a variety of teaching methods should be employed to improve educational outcomes. Combining case studies, situational simulations, and social practices can enhance the interactivity and practicality of courses. For example, through case studies, students can deeply understand moral norms and social responsibilities by analyzing specific cases. Situational simulations allow students to experience and resolve moral dilemmas in simulated real-life scenarios, enhancing their moral judgment and decision-making skills. Modern information technology, such as online courses and virtual reality, provides diverse learning resources and platforms, meeting the varying needs of students. For example, virtual reality technology can simulate moral scenarios in social life, allowing students to receive moral education in immersive experiences. Online courses break the constraints of time and space, offering students flexible learning options.

Lastly, attention should be paid to the systematic and coherent nature of the curriculum system. Moral education courses should be set at different grade levels and stages of professional study, enabling students to receive systematic moral education throughout their university life. For example, foundational courses on moral literacy could be offered at the new student induction stage to help freshmen establish correct values and behavioral norms. During the professional study stage, moral education content could be integrated into professional courses, enhancing students' moral standards while they learn professional knowledge. Courses on professional ethics and social responsibility could be offered on the eve of graduation, preparing students morally for entering society. By developing a scientific curriculum system and teaching plan, the systematic and continuous nature of moral education is ensured. Additionally, a course evaluation and feedback mechanism should be established. Based on students' feedback and learning outcomes, the moral education curriculum system should be continuously improved and optimized to enhance educational quality.

3.2. Organic integration of moral and professional education

The organic integration of moral and professional education is key to achieving the comprehensive development

of university students. Traditionally, moral education has been isolated from professional education, making it difficult for students to apply moral education principles to their professional studies and career development. Integrating moral education into professional education can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of moral education, enabling students to establish correct values and ethical standards while mastering professional knowledge^[2].

Firstly, integrate moral education content into professional courses. Each professional course should organically incorporate moral education content according to its characteristics and requirements. For example, medical programs could enhance moral education in medical ethics courses by discussing doctor-patient relationships and medical ethics, cultivating students' humanitarian care and professional integrity; engineering programs could incorporate moral education in engineering ethics courses, discussing the social responsibilities and professional ethics of engineers, thereby enhancing students' sense of social responsibility and awareness of professional ethics. The integration of professional courses with moral education content allows students to enhance their moral awareness and sense of social responsibility while learning professional knowledge, achieving a unity of knowledge and action.

Secondly, schools should promote interdisciplinary moral education. Interdisciplinary moral education helps cultivate students' comprehensive qualities and innovative abilities. For instance, offering interdisciplinary elective courses in moral education such as "Technology and Society" and "Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development" allows students to receive moral education at the intersection of different disciplines, broadening their horizons and enhancing their overall quality. Additionally, organizing interdisciplinary moral education projects, such as social surveys and public welfare activities, enables students to apply professional knowledge and moral education principles to real-world social issues, fostering their problem-solving abilities and innovative thinking.

Lastly, establish a collaboration mechanism between professional and moral education teachers. Professional teachers and moral education teachers should work closely together, jointly developing teaching plans and course content through collaborative teaching and joint projects, to achieve the organic integration of moral and professional education. For example, inviting moral education teachers to participate in the design and teaching of professional courses can organically integrate moral education content into professional teaching; organizing professional teachers and moral education teachers to jointly supervise students' practical projects can allow students to experience the practical value of moral education concepts. Through collaborative efforts, leveraging each other's strengths, they can jointly enhance the effectiveness of moral education and create a beneficial environment where moral and professional education mutually promote and develop together.

To achieve the organic integration of moral and professional education, universities should also strengthen institutional building and resource investment and establish clear policies and measures to promote the deep integration of moral and professional education. For example, they could develop standards and evaluation systems for integrating moral and professional education, ensure the organic inclusion of moral education content in professional courses, and establish special funds to support teaching reforms and innovation projects that integrate moral and professional education. Furthermore, enhancing teacher training and development is crucial to improving teachers' moral education competencies and professional abilities, enabling them to better undertake the task of integrating moral and professional education.

3.3. Student-centered design of moral education activities

Designing moral education activities centered around students is key to enhancing the effectiveness of moral

education. Traditional moral education activities are often teacher-led, resulting in low student participation and enthusiasm. Therefore, it is necessary to shift the design approach of moral education activities to focus on students, stimulating their initiative and creativity.

Firstly, design a variety of moral education practice activities. Organize students to participate in social practices, volunteer services, and public welfare activities, allowing them to experience and practice moral education principles through actual actions. Specifically, students could engage in community service projects, such as assisting vulnerable groups and cleaning community environments, to cultivate their sense of social responsibility and spirit of service. Schools can also collaborate with NGOs and businesses to involve students in environmental projects and poverty alleviation activities, enhancing their awareness and problem-solving skills regarding social issues. Additionally, encourage students to independently plan and organize moral education activities, such as hosting ethical lectures or organizing moral debate competitions, to strengthen their sense of ownership and responsibility^[3].

Secondly, focus on the personalization and specificity of moral education activities. Considering the different interests and needs of students, moral education activities should offer a variety of choices. For instance, through interest groups and student clubs, different types of moral education activities can be organized, allowing each student to find activities that suit them. Schools can support and guide students to create clubs related to moral education, such as environmental clubs, public welfare clubs, and mental health associations, through which diverse moral education needs can be met. Activities can also be designed specifically for students based on their professional backgrounds and interests, such as organizing health clinics for medical students or engineering ethics discussions for engineering students.

Lastly, establish an effective evaluation and feedback mechanism for moral education activities. Through a scientific evaluation system, provide timely evaluation and feedback on students' moral education activities, helping them summarize experiences and identify areas for improvement. For example, develop evaluation standards and indicators for moral education activities, assessing aspects such as students' participation, activity effectiveness, and personal growth. Through surveys and discussion forums, collect students' opinions and suggestions on moral education activities, and continuously improve and optimize the design of these activities based on feedback, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of moral education activities. Additionally, establish archives for moral education activities by recording students' participation and performance in these activities, providing references for comprehensive quality evaluation and future development of students.

Moreover, schools should focus on the long-term and continuous nature of moral education activities, avoiding short-term behaviors and formalism. By establishing long-term moral education programs and plans, students can continuously participate in moral education activities throughout their university life, forming good moral habits and behavioral norms. Also, through establishing a mentorship system, where teachers or external experts serve as moral education mentors, guide and assist students in their growth and development in moral education activities.

4. Innovative pathways for quality education of university students based on moral education cultivation

4.1. Application of modern information technology in moral education

The rapid development of modern information technology has introduced new opportunities and challenges for moral education. Utilizing information technology to enhance the effectiveness of moral education is a crucial innovative pathway for universities currently.

Firstly, build an intelligent moral education platform. By employing internet technologies, big data, and

artificial intelligence, establish an intelligent platform for moral education that facilitates the sharing and integration of moral education resources. This platform can offer a wealth of moral education course resources, online communication platforms, and real-time data analysis capabilities, aiding teachers in better understanding students' moral education status and providing personalized educational guidance.

Secondly, utilize multimedia teaching methods. Traditional moral education, often reliant on oral lectures, struggles to engage students actively. By integrating multimedia technologies that combine text, images, videos, and other formats, the vividness and appeal of moral education courses are enhanced. Using emerging technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to simulate real-life situations, students can undergo immersive moral education experiences, thus enhancing teaching outcomes ^[4].

Lastly, leverage social media and online platforms. Since modern university students widely use social media and online platforms, these can be utilized to expand the reach and impact of moral education. By publishing moral education content on platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok, and organizing online discussions and interactions, the timeliness and participation in moral education are enhanced.

4.2. School-enterprise cooperation and integration of social resources

School-enterprise cooperation and the integration of social resources are vital pathways to enhance the effectiveness of moral education. By effectively integrating school-enterprise cooperation and social resources, a broader and richer support base for moral education can be provided.

Firstly, conduct school-enterprise cooperative moral education projects. Universities can collaborate with businesses to carry out moral-themed practical projects and activities. For example, organizing student visits to companies to understand corporate culture and social responsibilities, thereby participating in corporate public welfare projects and volunteer activities. This not only enhances students' sense of social responsibility but also allows them to experience and practice moral education concepts in real scenarios ^[5].

Secondly, establish moral education practice bases. Universities can collaborate with local governments, communities, and non-profit organizations to set up moral education practice bases, providing students with long-term, stable platforms for practical experiences. Through participating in community service, environmental protection, and social aid activities, students' social consciousness and spirit of service are strengthened.

Lastly, invite business leaders and social figures to participate in moral education. Universities can invite corporate executives, celebrities, and public figures to serve as guest lecturers in moral education courses, sharing their experiences and perspectives, thus providing students with diverse educational viewpoints. Additionally, organizing moral-themed lectures, forums, and salons can broaden students' horizons and enhance the practical effectiveness of moral education.

4.3. Innovations in moral education with an international perspective

In the context of globalization, moral education needs to embrace an international perspective to address the opportunities and challenges brought by globalization. By adopting advanced international moral education concepts and experiences, promoting the internationalization of moral education is an important pathway to enhance the level of moral education.

Firstly, introduce advanced international moral education concepts. Learning from successful experiences and practices in moral education abroad, such as civic education in the USA and intercultural education in Europe, and integrating these advanced concepts with China's specific conditions, innovate the content and methods of moral education.

Secondly, engage in international exchanges and cooperation. Universities can establish cooperative relationships with foreign universities and educational institutions to carry out exchanges and cooperation in moral education. For example, organizing students to participate in international moral education exchange programs, visiting foreign universities and businesses, understanding different countries' moral education practices and experiences, expanding their international perspective, and enhancing global awareness^[6].

Lastly, promote the international development of moral education. Universities can set up international moral education courses, invite foreign experts and scholars to give lectures, and organize international moral education seminars to advance the internationalization of moral education. Through international moral education, cultivate high-quality talents with international perspectives, cross-cultural communication skills, and a global sense of responsibility.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the current issues in the moral education of university students and proposes specific pathways such as constructing a diversified moral education curriculum system, integrating moral and professional education, and designing student-centered moral education activities. Combined with modern information technology, school-enterprise cooperation, and an international perspective, innovative strategies for moral education cultivation are explored. In the future, moral education should further strengthen theoretical research and practical exploration, focus on international exchanges and cooperation, continually innovate moral education models and methods, enhance the quality and effectiveness of moral education, and contribute to the cultivation of university students with high-quality and comprehensive capabilities.

Funding

The first batch of online ideological and political work research and practice projects at Xi'an Peihua University: "Study on the Innovative Mechanism and Sports Pathways for Cultivating New Generations in Universities from the Perspective of Focusing on Sports Persons", Project Code: PHWSZK2022002.; Shaanxi Province's "14th Five-Year Plan" Educational Science Project for 2023: "Exploration of a 'Five-Dimensional Integrated' Educational Path in University Sports Education from the Perspective of Embodied Moral Education", Project Code: SGH23Y2855.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Jiang B, Yang AH, 2024, Exploring Moral Education Pathways Based on the Ideological and Behavioral Characteristics of University Students in the New Era. *The Guide of Science & Education*, 2024(13): 76–78.
- [2] Nui RY, Wan XY, 2024, Constructing a Moral Education Model for University Students Based on Converged Media Technology. *China Journal of Multimedia & Network Teaching*, 2024(01): 185–189.
- [3] Li J, 2023, Challenges and Breakthroughs in University Students' Moral Education in the Internet Age. *Journal of Guangdong Communications Polytechnic*, 22(04): 120–123.
- [4] Wei TX, 2023, Research on the Evaluation of University Students' Moral Education in Higher Education, thesis,

Hebei University.

- [5] Shao GL, 2023, Research on the Pathways of University Students' Moral Education Management in the New Media Era. *China Economist*, 2023(10): 203–204.
- [6] Wang YR, 2023, Analysis of the Informational Model of Moral Education in Higher Education during the New Media Era. *Journal of News Research*, 14(14): 183–185.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.