

Challenges and Countermeasures of Youth Moral Education in the Era of Big Data

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Abstract: Youth moral education is an extremely important work, which is related to the inheritance of traditional virtues of the Chinese nation, the fundamental plan of “successor,” and the construction of modern Chinese spiritual civilization. In the era of big data, the moral education of youth is facing new challenges and opportunities. The wide application of big data technology has brought about an information explosion, exposing young people to more diverse and complex social information. It not only brings opportunities for positive moral education but also many challenges. The main problems of youth moral education in the era of big data are neglected youth subjectivity, insufficient youth moral practice, and utilitarian youth value orientation. We should develop personalized moral education programs, strengthen the integration of moral knowledge and action, and pay more attention to moral practice to improve the pertinence and effectiveness of moral education for young people in the era of big data.

Keywords: New era; Youth; Moral education

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1. Introduction

On April 21, 2022, the white paper “Chinese Youth in the New Era” issued by The State Council Information Office emphasized the positive and dynamic role of youth in the entire social force, and regarded youth as the vanguard of the country’s hope and the nation’s future, and an important force for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation ^[1]. In the process of further promoting the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we must take young people as the main and key target of education, strengthen guidance and care for the young generation, and pay special attention to moral education, as only through moral education can we promote the all-round development of individuals and facilitate social civilization and progress ^[2]. In the face of the historical background and realistic situation of the great changes unseen in a century, a deep understanding of the practical logic of China’s youth moral education in the new era and an analysis of the necessity, importance, and feasibility of this work will help clarify the important strategic position of youth moral education.

2. Values of youth moral education in the new era

2.1. Carrying forward the fine tradition of “taking virtue as beauty” of the Chinese nation

The idea of “taking virtue as beauty” inherited by the Chinese nation for thousands of years is deeply rooted in the *Three-Character Classic* and Confucianism. Since ancient times, Confucianism has focused on cultivating people’s virtues, stressing the importance of self-cultivation, family harmony, governance and world peace, and closely combining virtue and morals as the cornerstone of individual cultivation and social progress ^[3]. In the new era, this traditional value is increasingly important. In the trend of the information age, young people face a huge ocean of information, thus choosing the right moral code and establishing a good moral trend is vital. In the *Three-Character Classic*, “human beings are born with a good nature,” in which the innate good nature is emphasized. Through the guidance of Confucianism, youth can keep their minds pure, cultivate their morality, and avoid being lost in the flood of information. Confucianism advocates the concept of “cultivating one’s morality, regulating the family, governing the country, and making the world peaceful,” which emphasizes the internal link between individual virtue and the harmonious development of society ^[4]. Therefore, the concept has further practical significance in the new era. Through solid moral education work, we can guide young people to maintain a lofty ideal of life, not lose their way to the fragmentation of information, and contribute their own strength to the prosperity and progress of society and the country.

2.2. Grasping the fundamental plan of “successor”

Grasping the fundamental plan of “successor” is essential for the prosperity of the country, while in the new era, youth moral education has become a key aspect to achieving this goal. It has been repeatedly stressed that “youth are the future of the country and the hope of the nation.” In the face of huge information flow, young people need more clear ideals, beliefs, and spirits of responsibility ^[5]. In the relevant national documents and speech, it is clearly pointed out that we should strengthen the moral education work of young people and train socialist builders and successors with All-round development of morality, intelligence, physical beauty and labor. The moral cultivation of youth is directly related to social harmony and national stability ^[6]. The goal of moral education is not only to cultivate young people’s sense of responsibility and feelings of home and country but also to guide them to distinguish right from wrong and maintain their sense of responsibility to society and country in the age of information explosion and diversity.

2.3. Contributing to the great cause of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation

With the realization of the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, China is closer to the great dream of national rejuvenation, but opportunities and challenges coexist. The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic has brought about great changes in the international and domestic environment, adding more pressure to the journey of national rejuvenation. Under the conditions of the new era, the realization of national rejuvenation requires not only sufficient material security but also strong moral support, which depends on the continuous efforts of generations of Chinese young people ^[7]. The value of moral education is essential in the great cause of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Moral education can provide support for the realization of Chinese-style modernization of spiritual civilization. In the process of national rejuvenation, it is necessary to carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, cultivate young students’ identification and inheritance of Chinese civilization, and guide young students to establish correct cultural self-confidence through moral education, so that they can become the inheritors and promoters of traditional culture and contribute to the realization of the Chinese Dream. Moral education can also cultivate the young generation to have firm ideals, beliefs, and responsibilities. To achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, generations of young people need to shoulder the responsibilities of the times and bravely shoulder the

historical mission ^[8].

3. Challenges faced by youth moral education in the era of big data

3.1. Neglect of subjectivity of young students

The traditional mode of moral education often pays more attention to the standardization and indoctrination of students and does not fully consider the individual differences and subjectivity of each student. The widespread use of big data technology in school management and education has made it easier to get bogged down in mechanical data analysis and the setting of collective standards, while ignoring the unique needs and development trajectory of each student. Some schools rely too much on big data to analyze students' behavior patterns and academic performance, while neglecting the individual differences behind them. Each student is unique, with their own interests, potential, and direction of development. Neglecting subjectivity will lead to misjudgment of students' needs, and moral education measures cannot really get close to students' inner world and development needs ^[9]. In addition, moral education is not only about the management of students' behavior but also about their emotions, psychology, and interpersonal relationships. Neglect of subjectivity leads to neglect of students' mental state, which is essential for their overall healthy development.

3.2. Disconnect between youth thought and moral practice

“Moral judgment differs from moral action. Some people are capable of making sound moral judgments but are not necessarily willing to put them into practice; some people with high cultural accomplishment may not show high moral character in actual behavior. On the contrary, some ordinary people may have the quality of being honest and authentic.” This view reveals a common phenomenon among young college students, that is, there is an obvious disconnect between moral cognition and actual behavior ^[10]. Although these students have considerable knowledge reserve and cultural accomplishment, can understand and agree with moral standards, and know how to deal with normative affairs, compared with middle-aged people, their ideological and moral cognition levels are not fully mature, and they are more susceptible to external influences, resulting in deviation from norms.

The root cause of this phenomenon is that young college students are in a crucial period of life development, and their thought and moral cognition levels are not yet mature. In college, they face the impact of all kinds of new things, social concepts are gradually broadened, and the cognition of moral issues is constantly evolving. Although they can make theoretical moral judgments, in practice, influenced by various social and group pressures, they often show a tendency to separate knowledge from action. This phenomenon of separation of knowledge and action will lead to certain contradictions and confusion in the moral practice of young students. Even if they have a clear understanding of moral standards, they may be deviated in actual action due to changes in the external environment, and it is difficult to convert theory into actual behavior. Secondly, it will make young students more likely to be guided by others and lack independent moral judgment when facing moral choices. Lastly, this separation of knowledge and action also brings obstacles to the development of the country and society, because young students are the backbone of the country in the future, and their values and behaviors will directly affect the development direction of the society.

3.3. Weakened integrity and utilitarian value orientation

With the explosive growth of information, the ease with which young people can access information on the Internet makes them more susceptible to false information. This kind of information-overload environment causes some young people to be distorted when forming their own concept of integrity, and it is difficult to

distinguish between true and false. The phenomenon of false propaganda and rumor spreading on social media has further exacerbated the problem. Taking social media as an example, some young people may use various means in the process of “getting fans and likes,” including publishing false information, hyping events, etc., to attract more attention. This behavior not only affects the authenticity of information on social media, but also damages the integrity image of these young people in real life. For example, a young Internet celebrity is criticized on social media for violating moral norms, but some fans still idolize them due to their success in the virtual space, which exacerbates the weakening of the concept of integrity. In the workplace, some young people neglect team cooperation and social responsibility because of their excessive pursuit of individual interests^[11]. They are more inclined to compete for personal promotion and rewards and ignore the contribution of the team as a whole. This utilitarian value orientation can lead to tension within the team and negatively impact the sustainable development of the enterprise. For example, a young career entrant may gain short-term success by taking shortcuts, but this short-sighted behavior weakens the cohesion and creativity of the entire team in the long run.

4. Path exploration of youth moral education in the era of big data

4.1. Adhering to personalized moral education programs

In the era of big data, adhering to people-oriented moral education needs to start from many aspects. By conducting interest surveys and personality assessments, schools can fully understand the individual differences of students. Creating a student profile that records information about their interests, potential talents, and academic specialties provides the basic data for the formulation of individualized moral education programs and makes moral education work more targeted. Secondly, according to the students’ development stage and the law of individual growth, moral education plans of different levels and contents are formulated. For junior high school students, we can focus on the cultivation of academic interests and the establishment of basic moral norms. High school students need to pay more attention to career planning and the cultivation of social responsibility consciousness; College students can emphasize the moral education content of personality development and innovation and entrepreneurship^[12]. This differentiated moral education program can better meet the development needs of students in different stages. The use of modern scientific and technological means is an important way to develop personalized moral education programs. Through big data analysis and artificial intelligence technology, schools can collect data on students’ academic learning, social activities, interests, and hobbies. These data help to increase the understanding of the personality and needs of each student, so as to add more specific and targeted elements to the moral education program.

4.2. Guiding young people to integrate thought, morality, knowledge, and practice

Through the sharing and lectures of outstanding people inside and outside the school, students can deeply understand the importance of ethical practice. For example, outstanding people from all walks of life, successful entrepreneurs, or social welfare figures can be invited to share their experience and understanding in ethical practice. This not only provides students with concrete ethical practice cases, but also stimulates their interest in learning. At the same time, experienced and virtuous teachers can serve as mentors to students, helping them understand the practical application of moral concepts through daily communication and guidance. For example, tutors can interact with students individually or in small groups, guide them through ethical dilemmas, and advise them on solving practical problems. Promoting the combination of curriculum and practice is an important way to cultivate the idea of the unity of knowledge and action. By integrating more practical cases and scenarios into teaching, students can be guided to actively think and put into practice by expanding

classroom teaching methods. For example, in ethics or sociology courses, teachers can guide students to analyze problems, propose solutions, and apply the moral concepts learned in practice by discussing real social problems and case analysis. Through social practice and volunteer activities, students can personally experience the value of moral practice, including participating in community service, environmental protection activities, etc., so that they can better understand the relationship between morality and behavior in practice. Strengthening home-school cooperation and forming synergy is a key measure to ensure that students form unified values between home and school. By carrying out parent-teacher meetings and home visits, schools can timely understand the moral status of students in the home environment ^[13]. For example, schools can invite parents to participate in the planning of school moral education and jointly develop home-school cooperation plans to ensure that schools and families are committed to cultivating correct moral concepts and practical skills of young students in the process of development.

4.3. Emphasizing moral practice and enhancing the effectiveness of moral education among young people

Through social media, special moral education public accounts or community platforms can be created to regularly publish content about positive energy, values, social responsibility, and other aspects. Various forms of content including short videos, illustrated articles, interactive voting, etc., can be used to increase attraction and interactivity ^[14]. Through these social media platforms, moral educators can timely convey positive messages to young people and guide them to pay attention to social values. Secondly, through online platforms, creative and interactive moral education courses can be designed. These courses use multimedia teaching means, including online video, virtual reality experience, online discussion, etc., to make moral education more interesting and practical ^[15]. Moral educators can work with professional teams to develop online course content to ensure that the information is accurate and professional. At the same time, moral educators can use Internet resources to establish a moral education learning platform to provide personalized learning experiences. The platform can recommend relevant moral education content according to students' interests and needs and set learning tasks and assessments to help students better digest and apply what they have learned.

5. Conclusion

In the new era, the core goal of youth moral education is to promote youth to actively participate in moral practice and internalize moral ideas into practical actions. By adhering to personalized moral education program, guiding young people to integrate ideological and moral knowledge and practice, paying attention to moral practice, improving the effectiveness of youth moral education, and other measures, we can more effectively encourage young people to participate in moral practice and provide strong support for cultivating virtuous youth and building socialism. The moral education of young people in the new era needs to be closely combined with the characteristics of the times, and through the combination of theoretical guidance and practical training, young people can not only understand moral concepts in the process of moral education but also actively practice them in real life, contributing to social progress and development.

Disclosure statement

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