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# Research on the Problems and Countermeasures of Labor Education in Universities in the New Era

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**Abstract:** The reform and innovation of labor education in universities in the new era is an inherent requirement and inevitable trend of the current Chinese educational concept of "simultaneous development of five educations". At present, despite the gratifying achievements of labor education reform in universities, there are still significant problems such as the underestimation of the value of education, the prominent contradiction between knowledge and practice, the lack of overall planning in the implementation of work, and the insufficient motivation of students as the main body. Universities should fully combine the actual situation of school-based labor education work, focus on the significance of the era value of labor education in universities from the perspective of ideological and political education for college students, and carry out targeted rectification of labor education in universities. It is necessary to clarify the direction, attach importance to the value rational principle of labor education, construct a scientific education plan for labor education, form a team of dual-qualified teachers for labor education, create a "golden course" system for labor education, and shape the most glorious campus environment for labor education. By delving into the innovative path of labor education in universities in the new era, we can continuously improve the content and methods of labor education, play the value leading role of labor education, and cultivate outstanding talents with comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor.

**Keywords:** New Era, Labor Education, Problems and Countermeasures, Research

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## 1. Introduction

At present, the educational concept of "simultaneous development of five educations" has gradually become a common consensus among Chinese educators and even the whole society, and the role and value of labor education have been increasingly valued and highlighted. "New labor" and "new labor education" call for clarification of the value and practical innovation of labor education in universities, so that people can fully realize that labor in the new era should no longer be a simple means of making a living, but should be closely related to people's self-development. My awakening, free development, and self-emancipation should be fully integrated with belief cultivation, life ethics, professional practice, and other aspects to enable college students to truly experience the charm of labor practice and the inherent value of labor education. Therefore, only by

shifting the value orientation and innovating the practice of labor education in universities can it be possible to realize the return of labor education to its true value. Currently, benchmarking the value direction of cultivating morality and fostering talents in universities in the new era, analyzing the current situation of labor education in universities, and objectively analyzing the problems and deficiencies of labor education in universities in China based on summarizing the achievements and experiences gained, exploring new paths for labor education in universities in the new era are not only the inherent needs of labor education reform, but also the inevitable requirement for the rational return of labor education.

## 2. The Value Connotation of Labor Education in Universities in the New Era

### 2.1. National Education Reform Needs

In recent years, labor education in China's universities has gradually gained attention and become an important content and concept of the socialist education system with Chinese characteristics. The concepts of "practical work to prosper the country" and "advocating labor" in the new era have gradually become the ideological guidance and practical follow-up of current labor education work in China. At present, China's education reform work is entering the deep water zone. Although the "morality, intelligence, physical fitness, beauty, and labor" five-in-one education pattern has gradually taken shape, it also faces severe challenges. Traditional labor education concepts and value orientations in universities have been unable to adapt to the inherent requirements of national education reform in the new era, and it is urgent to realize the value transformation and practical innovation of labor education in universities.

### 2.2. The Intrinsic Need for Individual Free Development

In traditional Chinese society, labor only existed as a means of making a living, and people generally had inherent narrow views and stereotypical evaluations of labor and labor education. Currently, labor is no longer a simple means of making a living, and more and more people fully recognize the inherent value and transcendence of socialist labor education, especially socialist labor education with Chinese characteristics. The ultimate goal of labor education in the new era is to promote human self-awareness, free development, and self-liberation. Therefore, the practical needs of current college students for free development, comprehensive improvement, and self-liberation call for a value shift and practical innovation in labor education in universities.

### 2.3. Realistic Demands for the Realization of the Desire for a Better Life

At present, the concepts of "labor" and "labor education" are closely related to and integrated with "Chinese path to modernization", "rural revitalization", "common prosperity" and "the Chinese Dream". In the context of the new era, people have more expectations for a better life in the process of labor practice. Therefore, current labor education in universities should no longer be limited to material production and life itself, but should be closely linked to college students' labor practices and their pursuit of a better life. This realistic concern can guide people to combine labor theory and labor practice, and have a positive impact on belief cultivation, life ethics, professional practice, and other aspects, realizing the value transformation and practical innovation of labor education in universities, and enabling college students to truly recognize the true value and inherent transcendence of labor education in the new era.

## 3. Examination of the Current Situation of Labor Education Reform in Universities

At present, the practice of labor education in universities has been accompanied by the introduction of a series of macro policies by the state, which has further clarified the direction of work on "what to teach and how to teach" [1] in labor education, and has also achieved a series of expected results. First, the inheritance and innovation at the school level have been carried out in an orderly manner. Universities have successively constructed labor education curriculum systems, used flexible and diverse activity carriers to strengthen labor practice education, and closely integrated labor education with ideological education, so that the labor education of schools, families, and society are unified [2]. Second, college students have a more scientific understanding of labor education. College students gradually realize the special role and significance of labor education in promoting the all-round development of people in the new era, and have a strong willingness to participate in labor activities as a whole, with a high degree of recognition of the spirit of labor [3]. Third, college students have a high degree of satisfaction with labor education courses, and most universities can "build a new structure of labor education courses" and "promote a curriculum system of discipline integration" [4]. Fourth, college students have a good experience in the process of labor education. The labor education currently carried out in universities can enable college students to fully accept the environmental atmosphere infection and situational education incentives, and college students' labor quality, especially the realm of labor spirit, has been greatly improved [5].

Based on the above achievements and effects, there are still a series of problems in labor education in universities due to the influence of many factors such as schools, families, society, and individuals, which still have a large gap with the requirements and expectations of labor education in the new era. Specifically, it mainly reflects in the following four aspects:

### 3.1. The Value of Education Is Still Underestimated

First, some universities still treat labor education as a general administrative matter or quality-oriented activity, lacking the necessary political and theoretical literacy and philosophical awareness, which leads to the underestimation or neglect of the true value and proper function of labor education. Currently, universities are generally caught in a "value crisis that cannot truly promote the comprehensive and free development of human beings" [6]. Second, labor education in some universities currently remains in a weak position compared to moral education, intellectual education, physical education, and aesthetic education. University educators do not truly understand labor education, and the educational value of labor is not fully understood and valued in educational practice. Third, some university labor

education workers equate "labor" with "labor education" to varying degrees, assuming that labor education is a natural process that occurs during labor, without recognizing the special nature of ideological education in labor education in the new era and the need for scientific guidance. This objectively leads to the simplification and formalization of labor education work.

### ***3.2. The Split Between Knowledge and Action Is Prominent***

Students are ambivalent in their attitudes towards labor and labor education. They verbally express their respect for labor and the importance of labor education, but in their actions and practices, they show negative tendencies such as "belittling labor" and "liking leisure and hating labor". Various phenomena such as "online loans" and "naked loans" among college students are manifestations of the alienation of their labor values [7]. At the same time, current labor education work is still influenced by the inertia of traditional education, lacking the characteristics of interaction or communication, and extreme reflection of instrumental rationality in education, ignoring the subjective initiative of students [8]. It still stays at the level of theoretical indoctrination, lacking the awareness of practical education, resulting in the typical problem of the division between knowledge and practice in labor education.

### ***3.3. Lack of Overall Planning in the Implementation of Work***

At present, the reform of labor education in some universities still lacks planning, and there is a lack of overall planning in the top-level design of labor education at the school-based level, such as "how to do" and "how to do it". The content is relatively scattered and not centralized, and it has not formed a joint force of educational resources and educational forces. At the same time, some universities still lack scientific rationality in the identification of the teaching subjects of labor education, the formulation of implementation plans, the strategies of curriculum reform, and the construction of the three-level working linkage mechanism of "school-institute-class". According to the survey, "among the labor education measures carried out in universities, regular voluntary cleaning of campus sanitation, cultivating students' self-care ability and professional literacy, and offering courses related to labor education occupy the top three" [9]. This problem reveals that the design and planning of labor education in universities seriously lags behind the requirements of the state, which seriously affects the effective realization of the educational function of labor education.

### ***3.4. Lack of Student Motivation***

First, college students have not yet placed labor education in its proper place, and have not fully recognized the ideological and political education function and transcendence of labor education. They neglect the role of labor and weaken the significance of labor education. Second, influenced by the bad social atmosphere and values, the

current college students are obviously lacking in the quality of hard work and the spirit of hard struggle. The "sorrow culture", "lying down" and "Buddhist youth" among young students are the products of the lack of labor spirit cultivation [10]. Third, students lack a sense of academic and career development goals in campus life. They have not effectively linked labor education with professional learning, campus life, social practice, and innovative entrepreneurial activities. They lack the awareness of learning from labor examples, and have not effectively connected personal development with labor practice, the pursuit of personal dreams, and the realization of the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

## **4. Optimization Strategies for the Path of Labor Education in Chinese Universities in the New Era**

In view of the above-mentioned typical problems and related causes in current labor education in universities, we actively benchmark the goals and tasks of labor education in universities in the new era on the basis of theoretical research and empirical investigation, and actively seek solutions to rectify and solve the problems in labor education in universities through innovation of labor education carriers, so as to achieve the rational return of labor education in universities in the new era.

### ***4.1. Clear Guidance: Attaching Importance to the Value Rational Principle of Labor Education***

In the three-dimensional goal system of labor education, the cultivation of labor values is one of the core goals of labor education. Therefore, in the new era, the work of labor education in universities should fully focus on the core issue of cultivating students' labor values, and always attach importance to the value rationality principle of labor education in the practice of labor education. Therefore, in carrying out various labor education activities, universities should actively highlight the core goal of cultivating students' labor values throughout the entire process of labor education work. "Value is the 'life dimension' of labor education, and exploring the value of labor education is one of the ways for labor education to get rid of its own development dilemma." [11] Labor education in the new era should effectively avoid the alienation of the goal of labor education as a tool for "political domestication" and economic construction [12], so that people are no longer materialized as "technical people", "political people", and "economic people", and labor is no longer used as a means of disciplining and controlling students in the educational field. Instead, it should pay more attention to the value of human freedom and comprehensive development. Labor education activities in the new era should effectively abandon utilitarian, entertaining, and disciplinary tendencies, continuously guide college students to recognize the comprehensive value of labor, pay more attention to human emotions, values, morality, and spiritual

freedom, and abandon the "externalization" of labor education. It can better pursue the true, good, and beautiful and the free and comprehensive development of human beings, and truly feel the transcendence of labor education in universities in the new era.

#### **4.2. Improve the Program: Build a Scientific Education Program for Labor Education**

First, universities should truly attach importance to labor education at the school-based level, establish a leadership mechanism for labor education effectively coordinated by the school party committee, and attach importance to the implementation of various requirements for labor education on campus, especially by leveraging the linkage mechanism between student work departments and various departments in labor education practice activities. Second, universities should pay more attention to the moral value of labor practice, while paying attention to the integration of individual and collective labor practice. Changing the "book school" to a "labor school", paying attention to the influence and incentive of practical experience on college students, enabling students to stimulate their own emotions, experience the value and fun of their own existence, and better understand the deep-seated significance and value of current labor education. At the same time, it is important to highlight the special function of collective labor practice, guiding students to feel their own strength and possibilities in the process, and to experience the "peak experience" of joy, satisfaction, and detachment in the whole process of collective labor practice. This experience is an integrated sense of self, which is the organic unity of limitation and infinity, purpose and means, and the need for survival and aesthetic needs. It is the most perfect, harmonious, and happy state of human existence [13]. In carrying out labor education activities, universities should enable college students to effectively feel the profound connotation of "collective labor is the ultimate expression of labor", and consider the value of labor and labor education from a collective dimension. Third, universities should establish an evaluation index system centered on the shaping of labor values and the cultivation of labor character, highlighting the important value-oriented role of the comprehensive evaluation mechanism of labor education, enabling students to truly participate in labor activities and consciously feel the charm of labor, experience the value of labor, and more effectively motivate college students to engage in innovative entrepreneurial labor with added value of science and technology as well as love and public welfare labor with added value of social welfare. At the same time, it is important to focus on collective recording and group evaluation, highlighting the process-based assessment of individuals in collective labor, and using and playing the special educational effect of collective labor practice activities for college students. A more scientific and targeted three-dimensional assessment system should be established.

#### **4.3. Optimizing Teachers: Establishing a Team of Dual-Quality Teachers for Labor Education**

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of labor education in universities, it is necessary to build a professional teaching team that values the combined effects of teaching, scientific research, and management. Therefore, in order to truly implement labor education reform in universities, it is not only necessary to build a team of teachers with a foundation in Marxist labor philosophy to address the practical problem of weak labor philosophy literacy among teachers and students in the practice of labor education reform in universities, but also to launch a cultivation project of "labor discipline construction-labor teacher training-labor education teacher team construction" on the basis of strengthening the construction of related disciplines of labor education [14]. Adhering to the principle of seeking truth from facts and being targeted, we should build a team of dual-quality teachers who are dedicated, willing to sacrifice, and both professional and part-time, so as to effectively solve the typical problem of "lack of teachers and temporary patchwork" in labor education in universities. Therefore, the reform of labor education in universities should do the following two things in terms of teacher optimization: First, it is necessary to promptly select or recruit full-time labor education teachers, establish a team of labor education teachers, and establish a school-level labor education center to strengthen the design, implementation, and evaluation of campus labor education courses through the forms of teaching and research offices, experimental centers, and practice bases. Actively building a "dual-quality" teacher team can not only complete the task of imparting knowledge and answering questions, but also help students achieve the goal of improving their labor practice ability and cultivating their labor values. Second, we should actively leverage the advantages of academic resources in universities, and establish a "labor education research center" within the school according to the principle of "resource sharing and labor education". With the integration of complex disciplines as the carrier, based on the target requirements and actual situation of labor education in the new era, we should strengthen the theoretical research and practical innovation of labor education, and improve the scientific and effectiveness of labor education in the new era.

#### **4.4. Constructing Courses: Creating a "Golden Course" System for Labor Education**

Universities should strive to make labor education courses into vivid "golden courses" that are highly advanced, innovative, and challenging, and are deeply loved by students. On the basis of this, through the transformation of school culture and educational life, they should actively construct a three-dimensional and comprehensive "big curriculum system" of labor education. In terms of design ideas, there should be specialized labor education courses (such as public compulsory courses and elective courses), and efforts should be made to integrate labor education into the existing talent

cultivation path system, that is, to achieve the effective integration of labor education with ideological and political education, professional education, campus culture construction, innovation and entrepreneurship education, social practice and volunteer service, industry-education integration, career education and employment guidance, internship training, etc. In terms of design principles, curriculum design and activity planning should be carried out in accordance with the principles of scientificity, pertinence, professionalism, and overall planning, effectively avoiding randomness, fragmentation, and entertainment tendencies, so that labor education can return to its true nature and achieve its due value goals [15]. At the same time, actively highlighting the special educational characteristics of collective labor in universities, establishing curriculum modules focused on collective labor practice, adhering to the combination of on-campus practice and off-campus practice, cultivating generative labor education collective practice curriculum systems, allowing students to learn to reflect and grow in collective practice, and feel the inherent value and charm of labor education in the new era. In addition, in the new era, universities should also fully grasp the laws and principles of curriculum education in universities, and on the basis of scientific planning and systematic design, orderly promote the integration of labor education courses with other subject knowledge, values, and skills teaching, so as to achieve the effective integration and resonance of ideological and political education courses and curriculum-based ideological and political education in the realization of labor education value goals, and continuously improve the ideological and political work effectiveness of labor education curriculum system in shaping college students' labor values.

#### **4.5. Create an Atmosphere: Create a Campus Environment Where Labor Is the Most Glorious**

Establishing a strong campus cultural atmosphere of "labor is the most glorious" is an important foundation and environmental guarantee for universities to carry out labor education. We should actively cultivate a strong atmosphere of advocating labor and active labor. First, we should actively promote the "labor view" into campus activities, actively promote and publicize the new era labor values in classroom teaching, dormitory life, community organizations, practical activities, etc., and actively stimulate the young students' healthy, sunny, courageous, and innovative labor spirit. Second, we should focus on exploring the typical figures and stories about pioneering and innovating, striving and fighting, and self-improvement in the school history, so that college students can deeply understand the vivid truth that labor creates history and labor creates the future. At the same time, we should effectively utilize the school-based cultural resources such as school mottoes and school songs, as well as the labor spirit elements in environmental cultural carriers, to cultivate the labor spirit and labor sentiment in the new era. The third is to be good at carrying out labor education activities with the theme of "promoting labor spirit and cultivating labor feelings" in academic contests, innovation and entrepreneurship contests, campus theme

publicity and other work, strengthen the ideological guidance of campus culture, tell stories of workers, model worker and craftsmen in a lively and grounded manner, create a strong campus atmosphere that respects and advocates labor, and actively promote the labor spirit of the new era. Fourth, we should give play to the role of peer role models and highlight the exemplary role of labor stars. In the new era, labor education in universities must pay full attention to the role of role models among college students, and fully value the influence and inspiration of role models on the student community. We should actively carry out labor role model selection activities based on students' professional characteristics, development needs, and personal career planning, and identify typical outstanding individuals among ordinary students who are hardworking, honest, trustworthy, innovative, and entrepreneurial. We should focus on the demonstration role of peer role models within the school, so that students can benchmark themselves against visible and tangible role models around them, and work together to become excellent pioneers of labor practice in universities in the new era. Fifth, create and expand the space for labor education centered on natural and practical fields, break the one-dimensional classroom knowledge impartment mode, and let students go to nature and practice fields, feel, experience and practice the spirit of labor education in the new era in the atmosphere of blending human and nature, human and society, and achieve the true purpose of labor education in the process of emotional interaction, quality improvement and value cultivation.

## **5. Conclusion**

The cultivation of college students in the new era cannot be separated from the support of labor education, and cannot be separated from the reflection and questioning of the value, implementation mode, and practical path of labor education. Deeply exploring innovative paths for labor education in universities in the new era, continuously improving the content and methods of labor education, and leveraging the value leading function of labor education are of great significance for universities to cultivate outstanding talents with comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor.

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## **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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## Biography

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