

Construction and Research of the Labor Education System in Higher Vocational Colleges in the New Era

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Abstract. Labor education is a crucial component of socialist education with Chinese characteristics, significantly contributing to the cultivation of labor spirit, values, and skills among socialist builders and successors. In the context of new engineering, higher vocational institutions should align with contemporary development trends to train innovative, practically skilled, and future-ready engineering talents. At the same time, if higher vocational colleges only focus on the teaching of professional courses, it will seriously affect the overall development of students. Therefore, if higher vocational colleges want to get further development, they need to pay extra attention to labor education, moral education and other educational content. Therefore, colleges and universities should enhance the focus on labor education while training applied talents, constructing a rational labor education system to support the development of higher vocational institutions. Theoretical education should emphasize the labor spirit, model worker spirit, craftsmanship spirit, labor laws and regulations, as well as stories of exemplary workers. Labor practice encompasses daily life labor, social service labor, and production and technological innovation labor, aiming to improve college students' labor quality.

Keywords: Labor education; Higher vocational colleges; Labor practice; Labor literacy

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background. As socialism with Chinese characteristics continues to develop in the new era, labor education has become increasingly important. It is not only a key element of students' comprehensive development but also essential for nurturing socialist builders and successors who are morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and labor-wise well-rounded. Despite the craftsman spirit being an integral concept in vocational education, it remains underappreciated and insufficiently promoted. Furthermore, although labor education significantly contributes to developing practical, hands-on, and innovative skills, it has gradually lost prominence amid educational reforms. In reality, vocational education's craftsman spirit is inherently linked to labor education. In 2020, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council released the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Universities, Middle Schools, and Primary Schools in the New Era," emphasizing the integration of labor education into talent training to promote well-rounded development in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor aspects. In the new era, labor education should not only equip students with practical skills but also enhance their labor spirit, quality, and values, ensuring they demonstrate these attributes in social practice. Unlike traditional approaches, modern labor education emphasizes holistic personal development, fostering responsibility, innovation, and teamwork through practical engagement, aligning with modern educational philosophies and the need for high-quality technical and skilled talent.

As key institutions for talent cultivation, colleges and universities should proactively adapt to evolving social demands by integrating labor education into their educational frameworks, embedding it throughout the talent training process. Labor education in higher education not only develops vocational skills but also fosters professional ethics, labor attitudes, and social responsibility among students. Through diverse practical activities, students build resilience, perseverance, and a truth-seeking spirit, ultimately enhancing their overall quality and social adaptability. Vocational education, as an extension of labor education, emphasizes skill training while combining labor spirit with professional competence. Vocational colleges should shift from single practice to

comprehensive quality training, integrating labor education with vocational skills development. The "National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan" issued by the State Council in 2019 highlights the crucial role of vocational education in improving workforce quality, calling on vocational colleges to align with industry demands and develop skilled, innovative talent. However, challenges remain in the labor education system within universities, including unstructured curricula, inadequate evaluation mechanisms, and a disconnect between practical labor training and professional quality development. To modernize labor education in universities, comprehensive innovation is needed in curriculum design, practical platforms, and evaluation systems. Building a well-structured system ensures the scientific and systematic nature of labor education, highlighting vocational characteristics and genuinely contributing to students' overall quality improvement.

1.2 Research Purpose and Significance. Labor education plays a crucial role in higher vocational education, supporting the ideological and political theory education system while strengthening its theoretical depth and practical effectiveness. Marxist labor view holds that the development of world history is essentially a continuous process created by human beings through their own work. Grounded in the Marxist concept of labor, enhancing the relevance and applicability of ideological and political courses through a labor-themed curriculum framework can significantly strengthen college students' practical and problem-solving skills. This approach remedies the traditional limitation of ideological and political education, which typically emphasizes theory over practice. Integrating labor education into these courses not only embodies the practice-centered educational philosophy but also improves the practical application and relevance of ideological and political teaching.

This discussion outlines the direction for education reform in higher vocational colleges. These institutions should establish an integrated talent training framework that seamlessly combines moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education to foster students' holistic development and enhance their overall quality. As an important way to cultivate students' practical ability, sense of responsibility and professional quality, labor education occupies a position that cannot be ignored in the education system of the new era. Integrating labor education helps students develop a correct labor concept and gain a deeper understanding of labor's value. Ye Zhong and other scholars believe that the purpose of higher education is to cultivate new era workers with ideals, skills and a sense of responsibility, which provides theoretical guidance for higher vocational colleges to effectively carry out labor education. Yang Liu and colleagues highlighted that labor education in colleges helps students form positive labor habits and ethics, nurture aesthetic values, reject the misconception that "labor is useless," and cultivate innovative and practical talents needed for socialist modernization in the new era.

Studying the construction and development of the labor education system in colleges and universities in the new era can enrich educational theory, promote innovative labor education practices in higher vocational colleges, and offer theoretical and practical guidance for enhancing students' ideological and political literacy, professional ethics, and social responsibility. It also supports the development of a well-rounded modern talent training system. Therefore, this study holds significant theoretical and practical value in improving the labor education curriculum in higher vocational colleges, enhancing its practicality and applicability.

2. The Current Situation and Analysis of Labor Education in Colleges and Universities

2.1 Current Progress of Labor Education in Colleges and Universities. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, labor education has gained increasing recognition, significantly elevating its status within the education system. Provinces, cities, and universities nationwide have actively implemented national policies, adapting labor education systems to meet new-era demands and making notable progress. For example, the General Office of the CPC Guizhou Provincial Committee and the Guizhou Provincial Government jointly issued the "Implementation Plan on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Universities and Schools in the New Era," aiming to build a province-wide education system promoting moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor development. Similarly, the Jilin Provincial Department of Education released

the "Implementation Opinions on Strengthening Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the New Era," offering systematic guidance for labor education across the province. In Hebei Province, labor education has been incorporated into school liability insurance, with all schools at various levels mandated to offer comprehensive labor education courses, further advancing its implementation. These policies reflect regional efforts and achievements in strengthening labor education.

Significant progress has also been made in advancing labor education within vocational colleges. In December 2018, the National Labor Education Research Institute of Vocational Colleges designated 36 institutions, such as Beijing Commercial School and Zhejiang College of Mechanical and Electrical Technology, as the inaugural "Labor Education Research Centers." These schools not only strengthened the content of labor education in the curriculum, but also carried out active exploration and innovation in educational activities and practice site construction, which further enriched the practice form of labor education. These initiatives have ensured that labor education in higher vocational colleges goes beyond theory, becoming an integral part of daily teaching and learning, demonstrating a strong integration between labor education and professional skills training. Additionally, provinces and cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Zhejiang, and Hubei have actively followed the directives of the Party Central Committee, customizing labor education initiatives to fit local conditions and advancing its implementation through multiple channels. For example, in terms of curriculum, more and more vocational colleges take labor education as a compulsory course, and pay attention to the combination of curriculum content and actual labor skills. In terms of practice platform, many colleges have built practice bases closely integrated with local economy to ensure that students can better transform theoretical knowledge into practical operation ability through labor practice.

Through these measures, higher vocational colleges have achieved fruitful results in the construction and improvement of labor education system. Especially in the curriculum system, practical teaching, evaluation system and other aspects of innovation and breakthrough, not only to provide students with more diversified education options, but also to promote social recognition and support for labor education. In this process, labor education not only improves students' vocational skills and social responsibility, but also promotes the modernization of the university education system.

2.2 The Problems of Labor Education System in Higher Vocational Colleges. The labor education system in higher vocational colleges encounters several challenges. These issues are analyzed from the perspectives of labor values, social environment, and students' own initiative, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

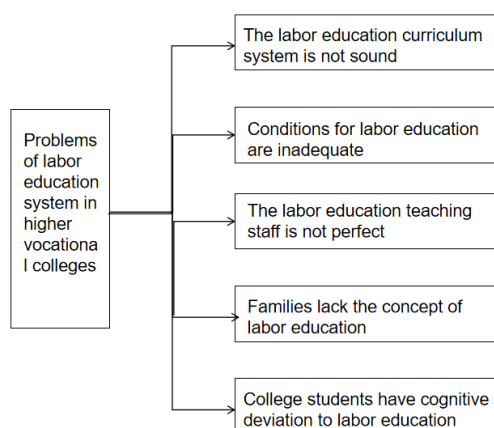


Figure 1. Problems existing in the labor education system of higher vocational colleges

(1) Lack of labor spirit and deviation of labor values

At present, labor education in Chinese colleges and universities faces several challenges. Firstly, some students have a vague understanding of labor and fail to appreciate its true value and the

significance of the fruits of labor. Secondly, many students lack clear future planning and hold the misconception that simply entering the workforce will guarantee a high income. This mindset leads to reluctance in engaging in manual labor, with a preference for intellectual work after graduation. Lastly, some students prioritize personal interests over collective and national interests. To address these issues, ideological and political education must play a pivotal guiding role. It should firstly help students establish correct labor values and perspectives, making this a fundamental aspect of education. Secondly, colleges and universities need to leverage various platforms—such as classroom instruction and digital media—to cultivate good labor habits and enhance labor quality among students. Thirdly, the use of exemplary role models should be emphasized to positively influence students' thoughts and behaviors. Finally, practical labor activities should be organized to deepen students' understanding of the importance and value of labor through firsthand experience.

(2) The content of labor education lags behind social development, and students lack practical ability

In the traditional education system, labor education is the educational content from primary school to university. Students are instilled with some basic labor concepts and are not guided to have a correct understanding of labor. The content of labor education is relatively monotonous. At the same time, influenced by exam-oriented education, colleges and universities tend to focus more on teaching and mastering theoretical knowledge in labor education, often overlooking the development of students' practical skills. As a result, students receive insufficient training in practical skills during their studies, hindering their ability to meet the demands of future social development. Colleges and universities have frequently overlooked the emphasis on labor value orientation in ideological and political courses. In many institutions, ideological and political education is not effectively integrated with labor education, and course content frequently fails to highlight the significance of labor values. Students lack a correct understanding of some negative phenomena existing in society and life, thus developing a negative mentality towards life and generating negative behavioral responses. Therefore, colleges and universities must reform and innovate traditional course content by effectively integrating theory with practice in their teaching. Meanwhile, efforts should also be made to strengthen the cultivation of students' labor awareness and labor skills. For instance, students' practical abilities can be enhanced by offering social practice courses and establishing specialized internship bases.

(3) Students have a biased understanding of labor and lack the initiative to actively participate

Under certain social conditions, labor is a way of life for people. Labor can not only enable people to obtain means of subsistence, but also enable people to obtain spiritual life. Marxism holds that labor has created humanity and the entire world. In traditional Chinese culture, there is a saying: "Those who cultivate their minds lead others, while those who labor with their bodies govern others." Therefore, people usually regard physical labor as a kind of hard labor, and only those who "work hard on their minds" are the most outstanding people. However, as society continues to evolve, lifestyles have changed significantly. Many individuals now focus more on their personal interests, often neglecting physical labor.

Modern education in our country primarily follows an exam-oriented model. Throughout their schooling, students focus mainly on cultural knowledge, professional skills, and political theory courses. After graduation, they either enter the workforce or pursue further studies. During this time, students rarely engage in social practice activities. Many tend to view labor solely as hard physical or manual work, which diminishes their enthusiasm for labor education. As a subtle yet vital component of education, ideological and political education plays a unique role in labor education. It helps students understand the enduring and complex nature of the labor process, while also guiding them to develop a correct perspective on the relationship between labor, money, and material wealth, promoting the establishment of proper labor values.

(4) Colleges and universities do not attach sufficient importance to labor education and lack systematic and effective safeguard measures

Colleges and universities often undervalue labor education, which is reflected in several ways: primarily, they treat labor education as non-essential and separate it from professional courses, failing

to clarify its importance and role. Second, in the teaching process, there is a lack of scientific planning for the content of labor education, which fails to vary from person to person and from event to event, and neglects the imparting of labor knowledge and skills to students. Thirdly, many universities face a shortage of qualified labor education instructors. Additionally, imperfect teacher assessment systems result in low enthusiasm and initiative among some educators, leading to neglect in instilling correct labor values in students. Fourthly, campus culture often lacks sufficient emphasis on promoting the spirit and values of labor. These reasons have led to students' lack of correct understanding of labor and their failure to form correct values. At present, colleges and universities generally lack systematic and effective safeguard measures to ensure that college students can carry out various practical activities. On the one hand, there is a lack of an effective organizational management mechanism. Although some colleges and universities have established departments specifically responsible for labor education of college students, there is still a lack of an effective organizational and management mechanism for conducting labor education for students. On the other hand, there are still certain deficiencies in the curriculum design of colleges and universities. There are also some contents related to labor education in ideological and political courses, but due to reasons such as class hour restrictions, no special related courses have been set up. Furthermore, many colleges and universities do not have dedicated places and facilities for conducting labor education. Both ideological and political education and labor education are essential for moral development, talent cultivation, and training socialist builders and successors. By examining their relationship in colleges and universities, it becomes clear that effective ideological and political education relies on guiding students to adopt correct values, cultivate sound ideological beliefs, and establish proper value orientations. Achieving these goals requires engaging students in various practical activities. Therefore, ideological and political education and labor education are closely linked and mutually reinforce each other within higher education institutions.

(5) There are deficiencies in theoretical research and poor accumulation of experience

In higher education, labor education is a vital yet complex undertaking that demands both theoretical research and practical experience across multiple areas. Currently, many colleges and universities still face shortcomings in implementing labor education, with the primary issue being a lack of systematic theoretical research. Labor education in colleges and universities is still at an early stage, with limited theoretical research and practical experience. There is a shortage of effective methods for implementing labor education. Currently, labor education mainly centers on ideological and political theory courses, but these have not been well integrated, and the teaching approaches remain quite monotonous. Additionally, the content of labor education is outdated, focusing mostly on ideological, moral education, and quality cultivation, which no longer aligns well with the rapid pace of social development.

3. Research on Countermeasures for the Construction of Labor Education System in Higher Vocational Colleges in the New Era

In order to solve the problems faced by labor education in higher vocational colleges, this paper proposes the relevant strategies as shown in Figure 2 to help higher vocational colleges build a more effective labor education system structure.

3.1 Establish and Improve the Curriculum System of Labor Education. To shape college students' positive outlook on labor, willingness to participate and sense of social responsibility, the key lies in conducting in-depth education on their labor concepts, values and skills. Higher vocational colleges should innovate traditional educational concepts, promote balanced development of moral and labor education, add compulsory courses on labor education, deepen the integration of labor education with ideological and political education and professional knowledge, closely integrate basic theories with current political hotspots and professional skills, and help students better understand the Marxist view of labor. Higher vocational colleges should set up courses in combination with the advantages and characteristics of their own regions and schools, and create comprehensive labor education courses that adapt to local conditions, regional differences and school needs. Take the major

of agriculture as an example. Higher vocational colleges can rely on the courses of agriculture-related majors and take labor education as the entry point to offer labor education courses with agricultural characteristics, guiding students to apply theoretical knowledge to productive and service labor, stimulating students' sense of pride in labor and sense of achievement in the discipline, and establishing correct values of labor. Cultivate in students the labor spirit of not fearing difficulties, working hard and rising to challenges.

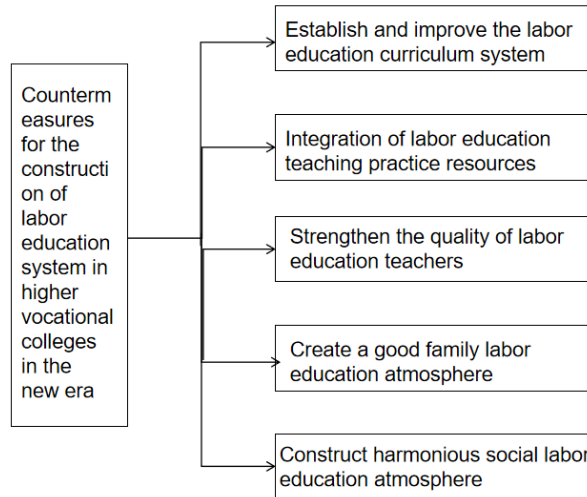


Figure 2. Countermeasures for the construction of the labor education system in higher vocational colleges in the new era

3.2 Integrate Practical Resources for Labor Education and Teaching. Marx emphasized that truth is derived from practice, and practice is the source of genuine knowledge. Traditionally, labor is classified into two main types: physical labor and intellectual labor. Higher vocational colleges can leverage this classification to fully utilize and integrate practical resources for labor education and teaching, thereby broadening the approaches to labor practice. For instance, through several major modules such as students' personal hygiene, dormitory hygiene, classroom hygiene, and campus hygiene, they can regularly conduct quantitative assessments of hygiene conditions to encourage students to engage in basic labor practice. Meanwhile, various forms of labor education theme activities such as labor education publicity Week, Publicity month and cultural festival are carried out to create a strong atmosphere of labor education. In terms of intellectual labor, students are encouraged to participate actively in competitions such as the China "Internet Plus" College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, the "Challenge Cup" China College Students Business Plan Competition, and the National Vocational College Skills Competition. Participation rewards are set up to enhance students' involvement and train their innovative thinking and practical abilities. Higher vocational colleges should also strengthen the construction of labor bases, actively explore off-campus internship and training platforms, further promote school-enterprise cooperation, arrange for students to intern and train in production positions, and incorporate professional practice content into the scope of labor education assessment.

3.3 Strengthen the Construction of the Level of the Labor Education Teaching Staff. Firstly, schools should boost funding by creating special financial resources. Continuous training for labor education teachers is necessary to enhance their teaching, research, and practical abilities, with a focus on developing educators who possess dual qualifications. Through a blend of "going out" and "bringing in" strategies, teachers are regularly sent to school-enterprise cooperation bases for hands-on training, addressing the common gap in practical skills among instructors. Meanwhile, experts from enterprises can be invited to teach on campus, helping students gain a clearer understanding of the current social landscape and stay informed about social trends. Second, improve the evaluation mechanism for labor education, regularly carry out research and learning activities such as teachers' lesson presentation and demonstration classes, stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and initiative in

learning, and enable teachers to conduct teaching design and teaching reflection in the process of self-evaluation and mutual evaluation, so as to achieve the effect of improving professional knowledge level. Third, improve the incentive mechanism to attract more talents. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, higher vocational colleges can address the material needs of labor education teachers by improving the salary system for teachers, providing welfare guarantees, and setting up special allowances. Meanwhile, in terms of professional title evaluation, commendation and awarding, etc., enhance the comprehensive competitiveness of professional teachers in labor education to meet their self-actualization needs.

3.4 Foster a Favorable Atmosphere for Family Labor Education. The family is a child's first school and parents are the child's first teachers. When parents are conducting labor education for their children, on the one hand, they should learn labor education knowledge and parenting knowledge in advance, and learn to effectively implement labor education at different ages and stages. During labor education, parents should lead by example, encouraging their children to actively engage in labor and helping them progress from "learning labor" to "consciously working," then to "persisting in labor," and finally to "sharing in labor." Additionally, parents need to shift any negative attitudes toward labor, embrace the belief that "labor is the most honorable," and guide their children to develop a proper respect for physical labor and manual workers. Through outdoor practical labor, such as experiencing farming, fruit and vegetable picking, and community service, children are imparted with labor experience and knowledge, enabling their moral, intellectual and labor education to develop comprehensively.

3.5 Build a Harmonious Social Atmosphere for Labor Education. First, the government needs to enhance policy direction, develop and refine related laws and regulations, and clearly define the responsibilities of all levels. The government should support and advocate that schools and various industries carry out labor education research and study, and establish a special fund for labor education of college students in the new era. Sufficient financial support should be provided for the construction of labor education bases to prevent the occurrence of shoddy work. Relevant departments should conduct necessary educational qualification reviews and raise the entry threshold for socially supported education such as labor education bases. Secondly, efforts should be made to actively foster a positive labor culture through social media platforms. Relevant authorities need to enhance oversight and regulation of the online environment, remove unhealthy trends on the internet, and encourage social media to promote the correct values and spirit of labor in the new era. This involves transforming hierarchical perceptions of labor, promoting broad participation in labor and labor education, and fostering a harmonious social environment that supports labor education.

4. Summary

Labor education has become a fundamental and integral part of the modern education system. It not only improves students' labor skills, literacy, and social responsibility but also serves as a crucial foundation for the long-term growth of the national economy and overall societal progress. In the new era, labor education goes beyond basic skills training, aiming to nurture well-rounded individuals who embody a strong labor ethic, innovative mindset, and a commitment to social responsibility. These talents will play a vital role in driving the country's future social development. In this process, the effective implementation of labor education requires the joint cooperation of all aspects such as schools, society and families. Schools, as the primary base for nurturing talent, ought to take the lead in promoting labor education. They should not only promote students' recognition and love for labor through curriculum design and practical activities, but also organically combine labor education with ideological and political education, vocational skills training, etc., to truly achieve the educational goal of "cultivating people through labor". In particular, higher vocational colleges should focus more on practical and applied aspects when carrying out labor education. Higher vocational colleges need to integrate multiple educational resources, build a more complete labor education system, and actively create a new situation in labor education for college students. Through reasonable curriculum design, complete practical platforms and scientific evaluation mechanisms, higher vocational colleges

can not only cultivate students' professional skills, but also help students establish correct labor concepts and enhance their abilities of teamwork and solving practical problems. In the end, labor education in the new era aims to develop skilled workers who align with society's demands. These talents can not only satisfy the demand for high-quality technical and skilled talents in economic development, but also create greater value for society. By thoroughly carrying out the core mission of cultivating moral character and talents, expanding the meaning and scope of labor education, and steadily realizing theoretical advancements and practical achievements, we will undoubtedly add greater insight and power to the cause of socialist modernization and the all-around revitalization of the nation.

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