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The practical significance of labor education on college students

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Abstract

In the dual context of the high-quality development of higher education in the new era and the profound transformation brought about by AI technology, labor education has emerged as a crucial medium for college students to enhance comprehensive qualities, reinforce value guidance, and foster holistic development. Labor education serves not only as a pivotal aspect for colleges and universities to fulfill their fundamental mission of moral education, but also as a core avenue for guiding college students in establishing correct labor values, honing willpower, enhancing practical skills, cultivating labor spirit, and adapting to evolving labor forms in the era. Grounded in the essence of labor education in the new era and aligned with the developmental patterns of college students, this paper systematically elucidates the practical significance of labor education for college students across five dimensions: ideological value guidance, moral personality shaping, practical ability enhancement, labor spirit cultivation, and era development adaptation. Furthermore, it delves into the unique value of labor education in the growth and success of college students, addressing practical requirements such as promoting the model worker spirit, redefining labor boundaries, and fostering labor literacy. Research indicates that labor education effectively assists college students in developing correct value orientations, sound personalities, robust practical abilities, and distinct characteristics of the times. It serves as a vital support for college students to mature into enterprising pioneers worthy of the significant task of national rejuvenation.

Keywords: Labor Education; College Students; Practical Significance; Labor Literacy; Labor Spirit; AI Era

1. Introduction

Labor education is a crucial component of the socialist education system with Chinese characteristics, a significant aspect of ideological and political education in colleges and universities in the new era, and an indispensable key link in promoting the comprehensive development of college students and fulfilling the fundamental task of cultivating students' moral character [1]. As China enters a phase of high-quality development, the demand for talents has shifted beyond professional knowledge and theoretical ability, emphasizing instead the comprehensive integration of labor quality, practical ability, responsibility consciousness, and innovative spirit. Simultaneously, the rapid dissemination of AI technology, ongoing transformations in labor forms, and continuous adjustments to occupational structures have brought profound changes to the connotation, forms, and value boundaries of labor, posing new demands on college students' labor concepts, labor abilities and labor literacy [2].

College students are currently in a crucial phase where their worldview, outlook on life, and values are being formed. Their perception, attitude, and habits towards labor directly influence their future career development and life trajectory [3]. Presently, a majority of college students face issues like a diminishing labor concept and a lack of practical skills. Numerous students underestimate labor and indulge in the so-called "joyful life". These problems hinder the development of college students' personalities and abilities, while also limiting their overall capacity to integrate into society and fulfill their potential.

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Therefore, it is essential to conduct an in-depth and systematic study on the practical significance of labor education for college students. It not only meets the inherent need for colleges and universities to deepen the reform of labor education in the new era but also fulfills the practical requirements of promoting the comprehensive development of college students, enhancing their social adaptability, and bolstering their core competitiveness. This paper will integrate relevant research findings within the context of labor education in the new era, and comprehensively elucidate the practical significance of labor education for college students from five perspectives: value guidance, personality shaping, ability enhancement, spiritual cultivation, and era adaptation, grounded in the laws of college students' growth and development. The aim is to provide a theoretical reference and practical basis for colleges and universities to deepen the implementation of labor education and foster students' willingness to work.

2. Labor Education Aids College Students in Establishing Correct Labor Values and Laying a Solid Ideological Foundation

Values are the soul of college students' growth and development, and labor values are the important cornerstone of the value system^[1]. The core and fundamental practical significance of labor education in the new era lies in guiding college students to form correct values that respect, love, advocate, and embrace labor, thereby addressing the fundamental questions of "why to work, for whom to work, and how to work" from a deep ideological level^[3].

Labor education aids college students in profoundly comprehending the essence and value of labor. Labor serves as the cornerstone for human survival and development, represents the driving force behind social progress, and is the indispensable path for individuals to fulfill their life values. Systematic labor education enables college students to recognize through practical experience that all labor deserves respect, all workers merit admiration, and all jobs are of no distinction. Every position and form of labor holds social significance, leading to a fundamental abandonment of erroneous labor perceptions and the establishment of a scientific and rational labor cognition system.

Labor education can guide college students to consciously resist erroneous social ideologies. Faced with the impact of money worship, hedonism, and the "lying flat" mindset, some college students' labor values have deviated. Through theoretical explanation, practical experience, role modeling, and cultural immersion, labor education enables college students to experience the hardship and glory of labor, understand the significance of struggle, consciously resist ideas such as impetuous utilitarianism and the desire for unearned gains, and establish the firm belief that "happiness is the result of struggle"^[4].

Labor education can strengthen college students' sense of social responsibility and patriotic sentiments. Labor possesses both personal and social characteristics, and its value is reflected in personal gains and social contributions. Through labor education, colleges and universities combine personal labor with national development, social needs, and national rejuvenation, guiding college students to establish the pursuit of "working for the country", integrate personal ideals into the national cause, realize the value of life through service and dedication, and build a solid ideological foundation for growing into an enterprising pioneer.

Labor education can promote college students to develop a stable and positive value pursuit. Once labor values are formed, they will have a long-term impact on college students' learning attitude, lifestyle, and career choices. College students who receive systematic labor education possess a more down-to-earth attitude, a spirit of struggle, and a sense of responsibility. They maintain a positive and pragmatic state in their studies, work, and daily life, which is a valuable quality for talents in the new era.

Labor education shapes correct value orientation from the ideological source, consolidates the spiritual foundation, and keeps the life direction steady for college students throughout their lives^[1].

3. Labor Education Aids in Shaping the Well-rounded Personality of College Students and Enhancing Their Moral Character

The improvement of personality is a significant indicator of college students' growth and success. Labor education serves as the most direct and effective practical avenue to foster sound personality, enhance moral character, and cultivate habits^[1]. College students are in a critical phase of personality formation and moral development, where the experience and discipline gained from labor practices are irreplaceable by classroom instruction^[3].

Labor education hones the resilient and persevering qualities in college students. Labor involves physical exertion and challenges, assisting college students in overcoming effeminacy, laziness, and fear of difficulties. Through continuous

practice, it enhances their psychological resilience and ability to resist setbacks, thus laying a foundation for tackling academic, employment, and work challenges.

Labor education cultivates college students' awareness of responsibility and rules. Campus labor, voluntary service, social practice, etc. all require clear tasks, fulfillment of duties, and adherence to norms. Through collective labor, students learn to be responsible for themselves, others, and the collective, to follow procedures and cherish results during the labor process, gradually forming a sense of responsibility and rules. These are essential qualities for standing on the foundation of society and integrating into the professional world.

Labor education promotes college students to develop good habits of thrift and cherishing achievements. Real labor experiences enable college students to understand that achievements are hard-won, consciously resist the trends of waste, comparison, and extravagance, cultivate a frugal and pragmatic lifestyle and moral integrity, and establish a healthy consumption concept.

Labor education enhances college students' sense of cooperation and communication skills. Most tasks require teamwork and division of labor, enabling students to learn listening, understanding, tolerance, and mutual assistance, break away from self-centeredness, strengthen their collective and team consciousness, and support career development, interpersonal communication, and social adaptation.

Labor education fosters college students' self-management skills and self-discipline. Labor involves planning, persistence, and execution, effectively cultivating time management, goal setting, and action execution abilities. College students who regularly participate in labor become more self-disciplined, down-to-earth, and organized, with more well-rounded personal development.

Using practice as the medium, experience as the pathway, and character development as the objective, labor education plays an irreplaceable role in shaping college students' personalities, enhancing their moral values, and fostering good habits, making it a crucial aspect of promoting comprehensive development.

4. Labor Education Can Significantly Enhance College Students' Comprehensive Practical Abilities and Improve Their Social Adaptability

In the new era, higher education emphasizes the coordinated development of knowledge, skills, and qualities, with practical ability being a key component of college students' core competitiveness^[3]. The most direct and evident practical significance of labor education lies in enhancing practical, innovative, problem-solving, and social adaptability skills, facilitating the transition of college students from being "good at learning" to "capable of action".

The fundamental aim of labor education is to bolster college students' practical and knowledge application abilities. Labor education primarily involves hands-on and personal practice in real-world scenarios, aiming to assist college students in transforming theoretical knowledge into practical skills, thereby enhancing their ability to apply knowledge and facilitating career advancement and social recognition. Additionally, during their university years, labor education is particularly significant for college students in terms of problem-solving and adaptability in life. In daily emergencies, they need to actively think and respond flexibly. By assisting them in solving problems, we can help them develop a complete thought process and improve their logical and orderly thinking through honing their observation, analysis, judgment, and execution skills.

Labor education serves as a pivotal method for stimulating college students' innovative thinking and fostering their creative abilities. Amidst the wave of educational development in the new era, the core value of labor education increasingly emphasizes the collaborative cultivation of creative literacy, innovative thinking, and creative practice^[2]. Through labor practice, college students gradually deepen their thought processes, engage in continuous improvement, and actively innovate, thereby awakening their inherent exploratory spirit and creativity. The nurturing of an innovative spirit and the enhancement of innovation abilities will prove to be significant sources for shaping college students' core competitiveness in their future lives and careers.

Labor education serves as a crucial tool for enhancing college students' social adaptability and professional competencies. Labor education establishes a bridge between campus education and social life, facilitating college students' early recognition of social development needs through diverse methods like social practice and volunteer service activities. This helps students quickly familiarize themselves with professional job norms and grasp the pace of work, thereby effectively reducing the adaptation period upon initial employment and enhancing their understanding

of job suitability during the job search process. Notably, cultivating professional dedication, a sense of responsibility, a service-oriented mindset, and collaborative skills constitute the core components of college students' professional competencies [4].

In the new era, where AI technology is deeply integrated into social development, the practical significance of labor education for enhancing college students' personal abilities has become increasingly prominent [2]. With the advancement of AI technology, repetitive labor is gradually being replaced by AI. In the future, societal demand for labor will shift towards creative, emotional, value-based, and comprehensive decision-making labor. Therefore, labor education is particularly urgent at this moment. It is essential for labor education to guide college students to understand the connotative characteristics of labor in the new era, cultivate irreplaceable comprehensive abilities at an early stage, and further enhance their core competitiveness in future career development [5].

Labor education serves as a direct and effective means for college students to enhance their practical abilities, bolster their social adaptability, and boost their employment competitiveness. It holds an indispensable significance during the students' developmental stage.

5. Labor Education Aids in Fostering College Students' Labor Spirit and Reinforcing the Spirit of the Times

The labor spirit, the model worker spirit, and the craftsmanship spirit are essential qualities for college students in the new era [4]. By emphasizing practical experience and aiming to instill a sense of purpose, labor education internalizes the labor spirit within the hearts and externalizes it in actions, shaping it as a lifelong foundation.

Labor education cultivates college students' labor spirit characterized by a love for their professions, dedication, steadfastness, and diligence. This labor spirit centers on passion, respect, diligence, and practical work. Continuous practice helps college students develop a conscientious and meticulous attitude, fostering a professional demeanor of "loving, excelling, and specializing in one's field," which ensures career success and fulfillment.

Labor education promotes the model worker spirit, guiding college students to emulate exemplary figures and strive for excellence. Model workers embody traits such as unwavering faith, dedication, perseverance, selflessness, and pursuit of excellence. Through role models and storytelling, college students are inspired by these examples, fostering grand aspirations and a belief in their endeavors.

Labor education fosters the craftsmanship spirit of striving for excellence among college students. High-quality development demands talents with the craftsmanship spirit. Labor education underscores focus, persistence, meticulousness, and rigor, guiding college students to attend to details, pursue quality, and develop a patient and dedicated work ethic— invaluable traits for various professions.

Labor education strengthens college students' dedication and sense of service. Labor is about serving others, contributing to society, and realizing value. Volunteer service and public welfare work allow college students to experience the joy of dedication, enhance their sense of social responsibility, and cultivate the value pursuit of "integrating the self into the greater good," embodying the character traits expected of young people in the new era.

Labor education hones college students' perseverance and stimulates their youthful vitality. National rejuvenation demands the continuous struggle of young people. Labor education enables college students to appreciate the significance and value of struggle, inspires a spirit of vigor, ambition, and perseverance, and serves as a driving force for facing challenges and realizing dreams.

The labor spirit, model worker spirit, and craftsmanship spirit are precious spiritual wealth for college students, and labor education serves as a direct and effective approach to cultivating these spirits.

6. Labor Education Aids College Students in Adapting To the New Forms of Labor in the Era of AI and Grasping Future Development Trends

AI, big data, and automation technology have driven profound changes in labor forms, structures, and boundaries [2]. Traditional occupations are being replaced, while new occupations are emerging. Future labor relies more on creative, comprehensive, emotional, and valuable abilities [5]. The significance of labor education becomes prominent, serving as a crucial foundation for adapting to the future and seizing opportunities.

Labor education enables college students to deepen their understanding of the core of labor in the new era, thereby establishing a scientific and reasonable labor cognition system. In the current era of widespread popularity of AI, labor forms have exhibited diversified characteristics.

Labor education plays an irreplaceable role in enhancing college students' labor literacy [2]. Labor literacy encompasses a multi-dimensional concept, including core elements such as labor concept, labor ability, labor habits, and labor quality. While AI demonstrates high efficiency in various fields, it still lacks the unique abilities of human creativity, flexible judgment, situational empathy, collaboration, and value decision-making. Labor education serves as a pivotal means to bolster these core competencies and preserve the competitive edge of college students. In the context of technological transformation, the boundaries of labor are being redefined, leading to the elimination of numerous repetitive jobs. Furthermore, labor education fosters the development of lifelong learning skills. Additionally, the rapid advancement of technology in this new era demands higher capabilities from workers, such as continuous learning, swift adaptation, and flexible career transitions. This is essential to align with current market employment demands and minimize the risk of being replaced.

The vigorous development of technology in the new era is accompanied by uncertainty about the future, which can easily lead college students to experience negative emotions such as anxiety and confusion. Labor education instills a stable value system in college students, making it clear that the continuous advancement of technology will not alter the core value of labor or the subjective value of individuals. This enables college students to face future challenges with a rational and positive mindset.

In the era of AI, labor education holds both practical and strategic significance. It helps college students better adapt to future market competition and realize the practical application of the educational value of labor practice.

7. Conclusions

Labor education is a crucial aspect for colleges and universities to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering moral and intellectual development in the new era. It carries comprehensive, profound, and long-term practical significance for the growth and success of college students. At the ideological level, it solidifies the foundation of values; at the moral level, it perfects personality traits; at the ability level, it enhances practical innovation; at the spiritual level, it imbues a deep understanding of the times; and at the era level, it boosts future competitiveness [1].

College students in the new era are witnesses, participants, and builders of national rejuvenation. Their labor concepts, abilities, and qualities are pivotal to national development, social progress, and the future of the nation. Colleges and universities should deepen labor education reforms, enrich its content, innovate its forms, strengthen its effectiveness, and guide students to learn, grow and succeed through labor. College students should actively engage in labor practices, forge their character, enhance their abilities, improve their qualities, and evolve into socialist builders and successors who are comprehensively developed in morality, intelligence, physique, art and labor.

The practical significance of labor education pertains to immediate growth and lifelong development, as well as personal success and the future of the country. In the new era and on the new journey, labor education will continue to play an irreplaceable role, providing solid support for cultivating enterprising pioneers who will shoulder the great task of national rejuvenation.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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