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# Research of Moral Education for College Student in China

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**Abstract:** In the proceeding of attending and having courses, the issue of moral education is ignored for college students. Chinese college students are supposed to attach more importance to the development of gratitude and moral education. First of all, the current situation of moral education is in the state of lacking and governments and colleges should raise their attention. What is more, this paper analyzes the reasons about the current situation in terms of parents, schools and teachers, and social atmosphere. Especially most family in China, there is the only child and parents always spoil their children, thus they lack the independence and responsibility for the society, which is also affected by the social environment. Moreover, this paper demonstrates the moral education reform in terms of college courses and social practice. Last but not least, the paper discusses and analyzes the law issue on moral education in China, especially for college students.

**Keywords:** Moral Education, Courses Reform, College Students

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## 1. Introduction

As the society develop so fast in current times of China, more and more students and their parents are paying much attention only to the grades of courses so that they ignore the importance of moral education. What is more, as the Opening-up deeply carries on, people have realized that education is one of the most necessary and effective ways to switch and change the present situation in all aspects. Furthermore, even though China has taken a series of measures to reform the moral education for different grades, it produces very little effect. As a consequence, the common and the whole society in China hold the question that where is the morality and how to build up the morality for the society. As a result, in this paper, it will discuss the aim and objectives, principles, methods and some related theories.

For the moral education courses reform, in fact, China has launched the "Quality-Oriented Reform" since 1949, which consists of eight times of reforms. In "Regulations on Primary and Secondary School Moral Education Work" [6], the author stated that "Moral education research is an important component of primary and secondary school moral education work. With the guidance of Marxism Leninism,

Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory, it should serve educational administrators' decision making" (p.38). However, even if there are some contents regarding the moral education reform, the effects and fruits always cannot reach the expected and ultimate objectives. And each reform has enough and sufficient materials and theoretical basis to support the moral education reform, but it always go astray to some extent and ultimately cannot reach the goal. Thus as far as I am concerned, it should be considered and solved in terms of the educational structure, educational system and the social reflection.

All above, in recent times, there are some actual cases, which has arisen the discussion about moral education for college students. For instance, the case of "Yao Jiabin"- A young man drove his car and hit a man, instead of aiding the injured, but he stabbed for eight times; the case of "Peng Yu"- A young man who held an old lady up that fell down, but he was regarded as the assailant. We cannot deny the fact that there are too many such cases in Chinese society, which make people to appeal the government to take some feasible measures to manage the status quo. In point of my view, it is the best way to raise the awareness of citizen and responsibility by educating and give a new definition to "good students".

## 2. Definitions and Current Situation of Moral Education in China

### 2.1. Definitions of Moral Education

Analyzing the moral education reform in China, it is supposed to have a clear definition. In point of my view, the moral education should be defined as a series of characteristics that can reflect the underlying conceptions and demonstrations. As far as I am concerned, the definition of moral education should be based upon macroscopic perspective and microscopic perspective.

#### 2.1.1. The Definition of Moral Education in Terms of Macroscopic Perspective

Definitely, from the macroscopic perspective, moral education refers to the concept that the government and country encourages to promote the development of national culture, economy and even other aspects. Stuart [11] stated that "...education policies designed to foster a belief in spiritual unity of the Japanese people in order to promote the perceived economic and political interests of the state in modern Japan" (p.96). And the moral education has both positive and negative understandings because the government can use the guidance for minds to lead the common, especially students to comprehend and learn the morality.

#### 2.1.2. The Definition of Moral Education in Terms of Microscopic Perspective

From the microscopic perspective, the moral education should be defined from a series of positive characteristics and quality. It includes:

- (1) *Inherit for the fine traditions;*
- (2) *Capacity to do researches and learn knowledge;*
- (3) *Methods to boost needed to get physical;*
- (4) *Capacity to communicate and negotiate with other.*

(The above factors and characteristics are combinations of moral education, but do not mean it only includes such factors.)

### 2.2. The Current Situation of Moral Education in China

In the meanwhile, the moral education reform has been set up for several years and many times, thus it is necessary to introduce the current situation so that we are able to have a big picture for furthermore steps and action. According to the social historical process, China has carried out eight times' moral education reforms in different ways in the proceeding of the exploration for practice. Lu and Gao [5] demonstrated that "For decades, moral education has been undertaken in several ways, through: the subject of Moral Education (i.e. the Ideological Moral Character course); Young Pioneer activities; the work of the teacher in charge of a class; the management and ethos of the school; and through other curriculum subjects" (p.495-496). However, the ultimate effect is not satisfactory for the moral education reform in China even though the several reforms and studies coming out. For instance, the phenomenon of Plagiarism is becoming common, and the case

of "Yu Yanru" in Peking University is known to the public, who majors in the Department of History. And she plagiarizes the paper in 2014 titled "'Frondeur' Journalism in the 1770s: Theater Criticism and Radical Politics in the Prerevolutionary French Press", and this has brought much attention for the academic circles and the whole Chinese society. After all, Peking University is one of the most famous universities in China. As a result, we cannot deny that there are some issues and problems for current moral education system in China.

## 3. The Analysis of Issues and Problems for Moral Education System

For the issues and problems for moral education in China, I divide and analyze it from three dimensions, including the institutional issues dimension, social issues dimension and guidance issues dimension. And the logical structure and frame is as follows (see Figure 1):

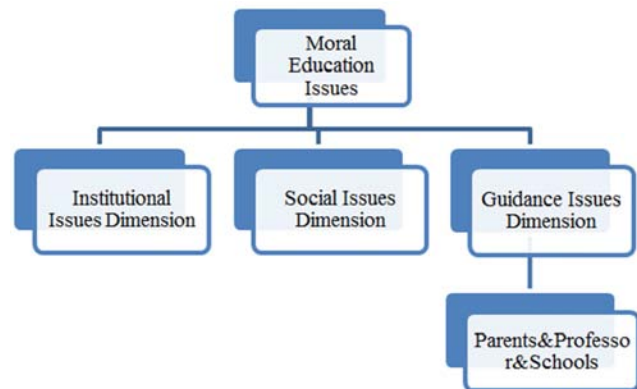


Figure 1. The logical sketch map for moral education issues dimensions.

### 3.1. Analysis of the Institutional Issues Dimension

The first dimension, also called governmental-oriented issues dimension, mainly with the perspective of the whole structure of education system in China, which is led by the Ministry of Education to make relevant reforms. And the ministry arranges the whole structure of curriculum for different stages' students and the College Entrance Examination is a typical consequence for the institutional issue dimension, which usually causes the result that students cannot receive and get the moral education.

However, we cannot deny the phenomenon that even some related moral education courses are arranged for students; in practical way schools always neglect the courses to arrange more time for students to study instead of paying attention to moral education. Ross and Wang [9] argued that "As a number of contributors to this issue point out, despite the rapid expansion of the Chinese higher education sector, the CEE remains a high-stakes, highly competitive examination that is still widely regarded as socially legitimate, albeit flawed, largely because it is the primary avenue through which the majority of high school graduates enter China's increasingly stratified colleges and universities" (p. 4). All above, the

students under too much pressure have to attend courses so that they are able to pass important examinations. According to Wu [14] “There are 14,940,000 undergraduates and 1,790,000 postgraduates in China, but in 52 universities that involved in the research, around 62.5% has fixed professors on mental health and moral education. And the average number for professors is only not more than 2, and the ratio for the professor and students is 1:3465” (p. 2). Furthermore, even though those students in colleges have the chances and opportunities to take part in various activities on campus, these activities are not usually reflect the necessity for moral education. From the original term, it is the institutional issues that cause the unbalanced state in present circumstance in China.

**3.2. Analysis of the Social Issues Dimension**

The second dimension, also called society-influenced-oriented dimension, explains that according to the institutional issues dimension (the realm of superstructure); the social atmosphere is also crucial for the moral education and the current situation of Chinese college students’ morality status quo. And as Fang and Luo [1] concerned that “Some students are lack of basic qualities, value intelligence while despising moral cultivation, pay attention to utility while looking down on virtues, and indifferent, selfish and worldly-wise when dealing with interpersonal relationship; and put personal interests first when handling relationship among country, collective and individual, are weak in social responsibility and return consciousness” (p. 171). In terms of social aspect, the case of “Guo Mingyi”, which is a typical instance who always devotes himself to the society in China, however, such an excellent behavior has even incurred some critics that he is so foolish in current times. This phenomenon reflects that the whole society lacks the sense of civilization which is also called “positive energy”. When analyzing the deep gradation, the society as a part of culture and impact-side approach should be considered into different definitions and ways in terms of moral education.

- (1) *Social resources*. For the extra and surplus resources, people are able to acquire more materials and they have the sense and awareness of competency. However, to some extent the exaggerated competency can result in the lopsided and abnormal development, which would affect the minds of the youth.
- (2) *Social pace*. With the fast pace of life, people are focusing on the beneficial interest and ignore the spiritual civilization construction for their minds, which cause the curved characteristics.
- (3) *Life faith*. In China, people can hold different believes and some people even do not have any belief. On the contrary, we cannot ignore the power and effect of belief, thus the lacking of life faith to extent can also influence the level of morality.
- (4) *Media and propaganda*. As the important approach to reflect the facial appearance of society, the media and propaganda plays the vital role. Some media reports

news in bias way, and some media is directly in vacancy and omission.

**3.3. Analysis of the Guidance Issues Dimension**

For the third dimension, also named leading-oriented dimension, refers that some parties have the introductory effect on moral education for the youth, and those guidance are crucial for the whole process of developing morality. Thus I divide the dimension into three parts, parents, professors and teachers and schools included.

- (1) *Parents exert pressure and prone to the grades of studying*. As the above issues we discussed, parents intend to make their children become excellent and have a better future, thus parents ignore the moral education and even the health condition for their children. (Importantly stated, more students suffer from scoliosis-a disease indicating the spinal appearance tends to be curved because of lasting incorrect sitting gesture, especially for teenagers.) Furthermore, according to Sheng [15] listed that “There are 49.94% students have to attend the courses on weekends at school; 36.1% students play after classes; 7.77% students will attend the tutorship courses after the weekends’ courses at school; and 6.17% students have to receive the tutor education at home after all the courses at school on weekends in Yan’an city” (p. 37).
- (2) *Professors and teachers in courses just carry on knowledge teachings, and moral education excluded*. In practice, even though the teaching plans have the goal of moral education, professors and teachers usually make up the time to initiate main subjects instead of morality terms.
- (3) *Schools do not attach sufficient importance and vigor to moral education*. Under the current and existing policy, schools pay more attention to the enrollment rate and employment rate. And even some colleges do not offer moral education or related courses. When considering the selection of outstanding students mainly rely on four parts, which make up different rates. (See Table 1 as follows)

**Table 1.** The criteria of selecting outstanding students in some college.

Criteria	Rating
Political and ideological standpoint	20%
Grades for professional training and study	50%
Professional ability of practical training	25%
Scientific research achievement	5%

From the above materials, they indicate that the moral education is in the improper position in the process of education courses reform. And the criteria of selecting outstanding students do not include the quality and level of morality for students. Thus it should be reconsidered and evaluated from innovated perspective and have an emphasis on the moral level.

## 4. The Principles, Objectives and Methods for Moral Education Reform in China

### 4.1. The Principles for Moral Education Reform in China

There are four main principles for moral education reform, which are deliberated in terms of social context, political background, historical traditions and students' attitudes. Elisabeth, Eleanor and Robert [10] asserted that "Teachers increasingly feel the need to instill in their pupils manners and modes of conduct, which used to be taught at home, and thus compensate for the lack of parental 'input' to children's social skills. As teachers are increasingly faced with pupils' disparate lifestyles and cultural backgrounds, they realize the imperative of establishing common ground on which the school community can operate, and this is provided by values that are not tied to any one cultural community" (p. 338). Furthermore, apart from the college students, those in primary schools and secondary schools are also chase this trend, as Zhan and Ning [13] commented that "...moral education in primary and secondary schools should be based on sound educational principles and pedagogies; according to the needs of contemporary social development, more emphasis should be placed on co-operation, environmental awareness, and so on; the moral education curriculum should be rooted in the virtues of traditional culture; and a new course model for moral education should be explored" (p. 514). And Ekaterina and Irina [16] concluded that "It is necessary to point out that in pre-school educational establishments there is no special activity devoted to civic and patriotic education" (p. 2226). Thus, the moral education reform is supposed to abide by relevant principles.

- (1) *Promote social positive energy principle.* The youth have exoteric and active ideologies, which are always influenced by outer factors and conditions easily. Thus the positive energy and thinking that transferred into their minds is necessary, and also teens should receive advanced minds; otherwise would produce the opposite effects.
- (2) *School-led and students-actively joining principle.* For the moral education reform, the schools are supposed to play the leading role, and organize students to become trained through various activities or courses so that the youth realize the importance of morality level and improve the quality.
- (3) *Social Co-action principle.* From the above issue discussed, social context cannot be denied that it is a negligible factor to develop and reform the moral education. By connecting and coupling society with other aspects powers, students are willing to hold the opportunities to have attempts for grasping and pursuit the morality study.
- (4) *Inherit the excellent traditional culture principle.* China has always been a state of ceremonies reputation, and to improve and develop the moral education level for students, advanced traditional cultures cannot be left

away. At last the reform should achieve to bring forth the new through the old and discard the old ways of life in favor of the new.

### 4.2. Objectives for Moral Education Reform in China

Through unremitting efforts from all ranges personage, the moral education reform should form special prevailing customs. Fannie [3] emphasized that "The moral behavior of students in college today is likely to carry over to the workplace in the future., and given the importance of ethical awareness in the accounting profession, the findings of this study may have implications for ethical training in accounting" (p. 142). We should notice that the objectives of moral education reform should not only just focus on some specific fields and subjects, but to radiate all spheres. In conclusion, the objectives for moral education reform in China are as follows:

- (1) *Cultivate moral-knowledge compound style talents.*
- (2) *Build up healthy social atmosphere.*
- (3) *Develop students' correct values.*
- (4) *Form a well-run educational education system.*
- (5) *Encourage students to hold the virtues of self-esteem, robust mental and physical body, unity and friendship.*

### 4.3. The Methods for Moral Education Reform in China

To accomplish the established goal of Talent Development Program in China, and from the crucial parts for moral education reform, the methods to implement are of vital significance. Analyzing in a deep way, I induce the approaches and methods into five levels and terms. (To see the Figure 2 as follows) Mercedes and Ana [7] concluded that "Moral and citizenship education should go far beyond the introduction of a course or a topic in the school curriculum. It needs to be based on the cultivation of a moral environment that promotes reflection on and critical discussion of social practices as well as the development of the discourse of argument" (p. 528). To improve the current situation of moral education, the five terms and levels must be a combination for all factors; in other words, each component cannot depart from any other. And only those five terms can operate and take effects for the moral education reform.

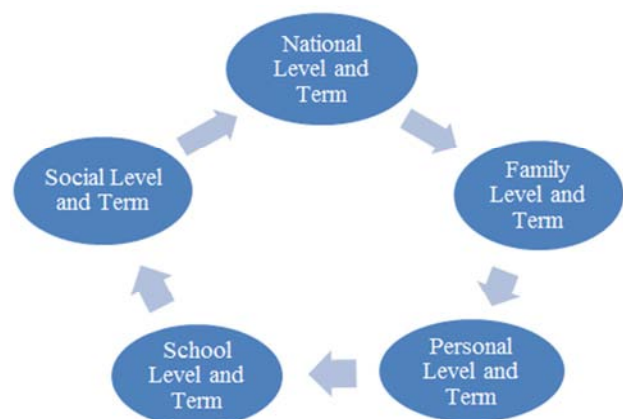


Figure 2. Five levels and terms for moral education reform methods.



**4.3.1. The National Level and Term**

For this level and term, governments should hold the responsibility and duty to construct the rule of law of the society to promote the fair atmosphere so that the common have the awareness of proper competency. A good legal social environment is the basis and necessary guarantee for the reform and construction of moral education.

In the meanwhile, the public power should also set up feasible measures to offer sufficient positions to meet the needs for youth, and extensively research about what the youth need when they intend to take active part in various beneficial extra-curricular practical activities. On the one hand, the extra-curricular practical activities can help students build up a sense of cooperation, which is a crucial part of moral education. On the other hand, moral education reform does encourage students go outside of campus so that college students can use their professional skills into social practical fields.

**4.3.2. The Social Level and Term**

For this level and term, Yu [12] conducted that “The socialization channels for moral behavior comprise both tangible ethics curricula and nonstandard potential curricula” (p.344). In this paper, I chiefly discuss the tangible ethics term for media and propaganda as the above referred.

For the first part, Medias should assume and bear the social responsibility to propagate news or events in a fair objective perspective but not ill-natured way. Media is a typically powerful tool for moral education reform to assure the social equity, which will influence the youth in proper way. College students more often focus on different channels to acquire fresh information, especially internet and TV, and they have much passion on social hotspot issues to express their ideas. However, it is the ideas that easily produce controversial viewpoints, if media cannot guide and propagate issues and events in proper and fair way, it would affect the moral development for college students.

For the second part, the media are supposed to propagate the positive energy ideas to the youth because college students, as the young generation, are prone to constructing their philosophy on their minds. And the potential effect from media would result in the unpredictable fruits.

**4.3.3. The School Level and Term**

For all the five levels and terms, school is the best and the most important channel to guide the college students to have an accurate sense of morality because students are able to acquire ideas and knowledge through both positive and negative way and they spend almost most of their time on campus. Thus schools have an inescapable obligation to improve college students’ morality level and develop their sense of morality by offering various relevant courses and even taking some practical activities. Robert [10] noted that “Curricula that help students explore and understand various moral rationales and motivations from a variety of cultural sources, religious and otherwise, provide the opportunity for students to engage with difference and develop the capacity for mutual respect and (when necessary) reasonable

disagreement”. (p. 260).

In this paper, I particularly suggest three main streams and directions for the notification of moral education reform. Firstly, the setting of curriculum must fully reflect the significance of moral education, for instance, schools can establish systematic general moral education courses to make college students receive moral education and get influenced to some extent. Secondly, the ways of teaching is another remarkable factor for moral education reform. During the moral education classes, teachers should innovate their ways of teaching and create more chances for college students to go outside of campus to acquire and experience morality. Thirdly, the teachers and professors’ quality is the most vital element for improving and reforming the moral education. Before giving courses to college students, the teachers and professors have to receive full and systematic training on moral education.

Importantly, I particularly state that schools are supposed to develop the sense of law to build up the lawful belief so that the college students have the internal standards to clarify which is right and which is wrong. Basically, I have made a survey about the sense of law for college students and there are 222 available samples, specially, in this survey, for the question that “what is your attitude towards studying law issues” indicating that there are 90.09% (200 samples) think it is necessary to know some issues about law; 8.56% (19 samples) hold that this is indifferent; and 1.35% (3 samples) think that they do not need to study on law at all. From the survey, it can be inferred that college students actually intend to study about law; however, for some limitations they cannot receive relative courses at all. Thus, it is should be considered for leaders in schools to open law classes to develop the sense of law for college students; after all, the sense of law can promote the process of moral education reform.(See Table 2 as follows)

*Table 2. The sense of studying law for college students.*

Choices	Total	Ratio
Very necessary	200	90.09%
Indifferent	19	8.56%
No need	3	1.35%
Available samples	222	

**4.3.4. The Family Level and Term**

For the family term, especially for parents, they have to build up themselves and develop their children the sense of efforts and rewards. Due to the One-child policy in China, most families only have one child, and parents always spoil their children. Lu [4] provided that “... the majority of rich Chinese parents are giving too much money to their kids and making life too easy for them” (para.8).

For parents, they should turn to foster their mental world and give them a positive mental guidance on the right attitude to money because parents are the first teachers for their child. And the behaviors of parents will influence children, which would intimate parents’ action.

### 4.3.5. The Personal Level and Term

For college students, under receiving appropriate edification from all aspects about moral education, they will grasp the skill of learning both in terms of scientific knowledge and the moral one. The only notification for college students I talk to is that they have to understand how to master the opportunities and actively apply and utilize them to improve themselves. And also college students should have clear and positive objectives and strive for them, and during the process of studying they will harvest self-esteem, independence, respect others, sense of cooperation and other preeminent quality and characteristics for moral education reform, which is the ultimate goal and objectives for moral education reform.

## 5. Conclusion

Moral education reform is an urgent program that China should carry out to adapt to the development of advanced market economy. Ross and Wang [8] pointed out that “Yet many educators and families (and not just in China) believe that high performing students tend to be those who are presented with clear expectations and incentives and resources to live up to them” (p. 6). We have to recognize the reality that grades cannot represent the achievement of a person, and more importantly the level of morality is the decisive factor for college students, as citizenry, can also prompt the advance and progress of the country. Thus the moral education reform in China should be analyzed and reconsidered from the aspects I discussed for several dimensions.

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