

Investigation On the Path to Enhancing the Motivation and Participation of Higher Education Students in Practical Education

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Abstract. With the continuous improvement and development of higher education, the position of practical education in higher education has become increasingly important, and the participation of practical education also affects the quality of educational development. The importance of practical education has been widely recognized. The low motivation and involvement of students in practical education activities have received widespread attention, and there are still shortcomings in the content, process, and means of practical activities. This article analyzes the paths to enhance the motivation and participation of higher education students in practical education. The reasons for the low motivation and involvement of students in practical activities are that students' participation and goals are not clear, practical activities pursue quantity rather than quality, and the school society lacks effective guidance for college students' social practice. Based on this, this article proposes the following suggestions: stimulate interest to meet personal development needs, pursue the unity of quantity and quality of practical activities, and improve the encouragement mechanism of schools and groups.

Keywords: Higher education; practical educational activities; motivation for participation.

1. Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of national development and the key to national rejuvenation. With the updating and transformation of educational concepts and the continuous deepening of quality education, practical education in higher education has gradually become an important way to cultivate students' correct worldview, outlook on life, values, and comprehensive qualities, and enhance their competitiveness in employment. Theoretical education and practical education complement each other, and education should be a spiral upward process from theory to practice, and then from practice to theory. Whether entering universities or society in the future, practicality and hands-on experience are indispensable for individuals, because practical experience will bring real knowledge and improve skills. Therefore, implementing practical education and cultivating students' ability to integrate knowledge and action is one of the important ways for universities to cultivate talents [1]. Universities in the modern period are confronted with a complicated environment and several pressing issues related to higher education. As a result, they must conduct a thorough analysis of the situation, identify potential solutions, and establish the groundwork for developing an all-encompassing, multi-level education system. Practical education complies with the fundamental principles governing the growth and development of college students and is a crucial part of producing qualified builders and trustworthy successors in higher education [2]. Practical education is an indispensable part of the educational process and has a unique role that cannot be replaced by theoretical education. Higher education plays an important role in the overall national strategy. Only by becoming the center of higher education can a country develop into a global center for science, technology, and talent. However, the low motivation and participation of some students in practical education have become an important issue restricting the development of practical education. Although the importance of practical education has been widely recognized, some students' motivation and participation in practical education are not high. The practical stage is merely a formality, and the school places too much emphasis on theoretical teaching and neglects practical teaching, failing to effectively stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm. The inherent characteristics of practical activities can also affect

students' participation. Some practical activities may lack students' interest in participating due to improper organization, lack of attractiveness, or inconsistency with students' actual needs. In addition, factors such as difficulty, scheduling, and location of practical activities may also hinder student participation. This article aims to provide targeted solutions for the participation motivation and degree of higher education students in practical education through a survey on the path of participation motivation and degree and to improve the quality and effectiveness of practical education in higher education. At the same time, it provides useful references for the reform of higher education and teaching, promotes the close integration of higher education with social needs, and cultivates more high-quality talents that meet social needs.

2. The Role and Implementation Issues of Practical Education

2.1. Function Analysis

2.1.1 Improving oneself

Practical education is an educational method centered on practical activities, which is an important way to promote the comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills. College students' motivation is increased by the school's planned and coordinated practical activities, which not only help them realize their potential, expand their knowledge, widen their social circles, and gain practical experience but also allow them to earn credits and pursue higher-level needs like self-realization on the school's platform [3]. Off-campus practical education refers to the organization of practical education projects by universities based on their training objectives, through experiential and practical learning opportunities, to improve students' moral, learning, physical, artistic, and labor literacy. Extracurricular practical activities have complementarity, relevance, and reciprocity in the development of students' practical classrooms. Off-campus practical education refers to educational institutions organizing practical education projects through various visits, experiences, and practical learning opportunities based on training objectives, to improve students' moral, learning, physical, artistic, and labor literacy. Extracurricular practical activities have complementarity, relevance, and reciprocity in the development of students' practical classrooms [4]. Through extracurricular practical activities, students can broaden their horizons, be exposed to new cultural and educational environments, and enhance their skills. Practical activities are collective activities where one can communicate with people from all walks of life, gain knowledge, improve their communication skills, learn how to handle interpersonal relationships and get along with others, find their value in the collective, and realize their self-worth. It also helps students to apply the knowledge they have learned in their daily lives, better understand and master the knowledge they have learned, turn abstract into concrete, deepen their understanding of knowledge, and enhance their comprehensive thinking ability.

2.1.2 Cultivate innovative spirit and practical ability

Through practical activities, a series of research-based learning strategies, labor literacy education, after-school skill clubs, social practice, etc. have been incorporated into the curriculum system. Course management has also been implemented, and the breadth of course design has been improved. The curriculum system breaks the boundary between life experience and curriculum knowledge, cultivating innovative and independent talents, innovative spirit, and practical ability [5].

"Knowing it is not as good as liking it. Liking it is not as good as enjoying it". Practical activities, can stimulate students' practical hands-on ability, try various ways and perspectives to solve problems, experience the sense of achievement of solving problems firsthand, and thus experience the joy and value of innovation, and develop an innovative spirit. In collective practice activities, to promote team communication and collaboration, it is necessary to fully communicate, exert creativity and imagination under limited conditions, explore multiple solutions, and not be confined to one way of thinking. The collision of multiple ways of thinking and the exploration and reorganization of multiple solutions can help to try multiple possibilities, break conventions, and discover new

possibilities. Practice is the foundation of innovation, and innovation is the source of practice. Behind innovation, continuous and repeated practice is needed to verify the feasibility of the plan, identify shortcomings and areas for improvement, continuously optimize the plan, summarize and reflect on the experience and lessons learned from practice, and present the most perfect results for the final innovation activity.

2.2. Existing Problems

Compared with the world's educational powers such as the United States, there is a significant disparity between the ability to develop highly skilled inventive personnel and the real demand, meaning that higher education in China is still far from being innovative and high-quality. Practical education should incorporate needs-based, individualized courses that support students' healthy growth into the design of the curriculum. It should place a strong emphasis on the critical role that social education, family education, and school education play in forming students' life and work practice literacy as well as their professional ethics, personal conduct, and societal morality as they mature. It should progressively remove obstacles to the curriculum, enabling an increasing number of real-world experiences and hands-on learning opportunities that are typically outside of the curriculum to enter the educational system and be incorporated into practical instruction [5]. However, in real life, it is not satisfactory, and there are many problems in the practical process, such as formalism, fixed personnel participation, and single content and form of activities. In real life, some schools and teachers organize activities but lack sufficient preparation and planning. The seemingly complete and lively process is lacking in thinking and preparation and is not a beneficial educational activity for students. Students only mechanically complete tasks without truly understanding the significance and starting point of organizing activities. This kind of superficial practical activity not only wastes time and resources but may also generate resistance and resentment towards students towards practical activities.

3. Cause Analysis

3.1. Unclear Participation and Goals

Participation in practical activities is influenced by several critical elements, including student engagement and unclear goals. Currently, there are various incentives for college students to engage in volunteer work, such as compelled involvement, utilitarian involvement, and growth-oriented involvement [3]. Zheng Yongsun pointed out that college students' participation in volunteer service is more influenced by the motivations of conformity and pressure [6]. College students are in their adolescence and are curious about their surroundings, but their attention is not focused enough, their willpower is not firm enough, and their interests often change over time. More people are participating in practical activities during their freshman and sophomore years. However, in the third and fourth year of college and graduate school, due to employment reasons and weighing the pros and cons of internship opportunities, they may choose to give up volunteer service opportunities, resulting in low participation. In the long run, students have no clear goals, do not know whether this activity is worth participating in, and do not know what direction to move towards, so they choose to observe and observe practical activities and not participate in them. However, blindly participating in aimless practical activities will only affect students' interest in learning and the efficiency and effectiveness of practical activities. Students who lack interest in participating in practical activities will lose their sense of direction and motivation, and will inevitably gradually reduce their participation in practical activities. The low participation rate in practical activities directly affects the success or failure of the activities, as well as their progress and effectiveness. These two factors are interrelated and mutually causal.

3.2. Practice Activities Pursue Quantity, Not Quality

The stage of correction and implementation, along with the creation of rules and procedures, has now been reached by educational practice activities. Certain units have adopted a "basket of systems" that prioritizes quantity over quality [7]. Practical activities cannot blindly pursue quantity without considering quality. Improving quality is the eternal pursuit of teaching activities. Without high-quality practical activities, students' subjective initiative and creativity cannot be stimulated, and the vitality and vigor of education cannot be maintained. Adequate quantity does not mean that quality can be ignored. Only high-quality practical activities can promote the comprehensive development of students' morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills, adapt well to the development requirements of the new era, and better promote the development of quality education and labor education. It needs to ensure both sufficient quantity and high-quality educational practice activities.

3.3. Lack of Effective Guidance from School Society on College Students' Social Practice

The effective guidance of current schools and society for college students' educational practice activities is relatively insufficient, which to some extent affects the quality and effectiveness of practical activities. Some universities have insufficient awareness of the importance of social practice activities for college students' education, resulting in inadequate publicity and lack of active mobilization, leading to a relatively narrow audience and low participation rate in the activities. This not only dampened the enthusiasm of some students who wanted to participate in the activity but also failed to achieve the goal of allowing all students to participate and grow together. Universities have not realized the educational significance of engaging in social practice activities for students' growth and success. Although some universities have incorporated social practice activities into their educational management system, there is no clear implementation plan and comprehensive assessment methods in the actual management process, making social practice a mere formality. In the design and organization of practical activities in universities, there is often a lack of close integration with actual social needs, resulting in a disconnect between practical activities and course content, making it difficult for students to gain practical social experience and skills from them. The guidance of society on the educational practice activities of college students is also insufficient. The failure to effectively integrate social resources and provide students with sufficient practical platforms and opportunities has made it difficult for students to engage in practical exercises in a real social environment. At the same time, the recognition and support of college students' practical activities in society are relatively low, and there is a lack of promotion and reward mechanisms for excellent practical achievements.

4. Route

4.1. Stimulate Interest and Meet Personal Development Needs

College students find it difficult to sustain educational activities in the long term if they cannot find meaningful activities to satisfy their motivation. The initiators and organizers of planning and leading educational practice activities must consider students' motivations to make judgments that benefit those in need, while also fostering closer relationships with students [3]. The interest and determination of college students to continue volunteering are directly related to their level of self-actualization and enthusiasm for volunteer work [8]. Therefore, Universities should actively promote the nature, hosting methods, and content of practical activities. To arouse students' interest, they can spread information about educational practice activities through school broadcasts, official school accounts, and posters. By providing spiritual honor awards, such as honor certificates for students engaged in practical activities, the college can also motivate more students to participate in volunteer work. These forms can meet students' spiritual needs and increase their desire to participate. Universities that require a specific amount of practical work should establish frequent and long-term

volunteer service training so that college students can truly use universities as places to develop and implement practical activities, and cultivate and develop practical and innovative spirit [3].

4.2. The Unity of Quantity and Quality of Practical Activities

To achieve the unity of quantity and quality in educational practice activities, it is necessary to establish clear practical goals. Before carrying out practical activities, it is necessary to clarify the goals and significance of the practice, ensuring that each practice has a clear theme and task. Practical activities are an important way for humans to understand and transform the world. Essentially, they are a source of acquisition and a way to cultivate abilities. In practical activities, it should not only pursue an increase in quantity but also strive for quality improvement. Reasonably plan practical activities. When planning practical activities, it is necessary to fully consider the limitations of time and resources to ensure the feasibility of the practical activities. At the same time, it needs to arrange the sequence and content of practical activities reasonably, so that each practice can provide valuable experience and information for the learning and research. Improve the quality of practical activities. In practical activities, it should pay attention to details and focus on the rationality and scientificity of each link. People need to learn to discover, analyze, and solve problems through practice, constantly improving their practical and innovative abilities. After each practical activity, it needs to reflect and summarize, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the practical process, and provide experience and lessons for future practical activities; When designing and implementing any form of practical activity, both the quality and quantity of the activity should be considered to ensure that educational activities can achieve expected educational goals while effectively utilizing resources, avoiding ineffective practical activities, and promoting students' comprehensive development and practical ability enhancement.

4.3. School and Group Promotion

Schools and social organizations play an indispensable role in promoting students' deep participation in practical activities. Implementing a formative evaluation system to examine the multidimensional ability display of college students on the practical stage, not only helps students position themselves, and identify personal strengths and areas for improvement but also inspires them to play to their strengths and avoid weaknesses, clarify their growth path and goals. Universities actively establish a mechanism for evaluating the results of practical activities, so that every effort and achievement can be quantified and reflected, prompting students to face themselves, see the achievements of their efforts, and be brave enough to face their shortcomings. On this basis, outstanding practical pioneers will be publicly commended, and this honor will not only be crowned to their respective colleges in the form of teaching documents but also require substantial rewards from the school level, adding official certification and comprehensive evaluation points to their practical activity journey, so that every effort will have a response. At the same time, as a bridge, community organizations actively cooperate closely with the school's academic affairs office, student affairs department, youth league committee, and departments, innovatively incorporating social practice into the semester comprehensive evaluation system, making it an important consideration for student excellence and recognition. The glorious deeds of outstanding practitioners, conveyed through campus broadcasting, in-depth reporting by the school newspaper, and even public recognition throughout the school, not only greatly enhance students' sense of honor and belonging, but also create a good trend of advocating practice and pursuing excellence on campus [3]. Schools should actively communicate and cooperate with social institutions, and ensure that every student can devote themselves to their field of interest through carefully planned activities. Thus, it broadens the horizons of college students, allowing them to hone their skills through practice, laying a solid path for them to enter society in the future, seamlessly integrating theoretical knowledge with practical operations, and laying a solid foundation for the launch of their careers [8].

5. Conclusion

Practical educational activities are an extension of education, promoting students' comprehensive and personalized development, and cultivating their innovative and practical abilities. This study found that the motivation and participation of higher education students in practical education are not high, and there is a problem of form over content, quantity over quality in practical activities, and insufficient promotion by schools and social organizations. Finally, to promote the stable and far-reaching development of higher education, it is proposed that in educational practice activities, the initiators should carry out various promotional methods to greatly enhance the dissemination power of educational practice activities, stimulate students' interest, fully consider students' development needs, and enhance students' enthusiasm for participation. The higher the enthusiasm, the stronger the initiative; Drawing on the successful and failed experiences of practical activities from various aspects, planning educational practical activities reasonably, ensuring the quality of higher practical activities, controlling details, and truly starting from education; Schools and social organizations should fully and transparently disclose educational practice activities, allowing students to understand the content of the activities and preventing social practice from becoming a formality. Learning and social organizations should integrate social resources to provide practical opportunities, improve reward mechanisms, and effectively guide students' practical development. In the future, with the continuous development of higher practical education activities, the forms, contents, and means of higher education practical activities will continue to innovate and develop. It can look forward to seeing a more perfect practical teaching system, more flexible and diverse practical activities, and richer practical teaching resources. At the same time, through continuous exploration, there will be more effective methods to enhance participation in higher education practice and contribute to promoting the great cause of education.

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