Review and Reflection on the Construction of Ecological Moral Education in China and Abroad

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Abstract: At present, China is vigorously promoting the formation of new quality productive forces that will enable high-quality development, and the new quality productive forces themselves are green productive forces, which translates into the field of education, where the greening of education is to be promoted. Moral education is located in the first of the "five educations" in Chinese education, and it is undoubtedly of great significance to expand moral education from interpersonal moral education to ecological moral education. The main problems facing the construction of ecological moral education include lagging in the new direction of "big moral education," insufficient exploration of the mechanism of educational articulation, and imperfect construction of the relationship structure of various elements of moral education in schools. Based on this, we review the development and research on the construction of ecological and moral education in China and foreign countries and reflect on the implications for the construction of ecological and moral education in China and foreign countries to strengthen the government's implementation and supervision of ecological, moral education, to enrich and improve the construction of ecological, moral education curricula in schools, and to set up a platform for cooperation on "big ideology and politics" in order to promote the popularization of ecological, moral education.

Keywords: Ecological moral education; sustainable development; ecological civilization.

1. Introduction

Taking the road of sustainable development is the unremitting pursuit of mankind after entering industrial civilization, and it is also a major strategic plan for China to achieve the goal of high-quality development. From the perspective of economic and social practice, in recent years, global sustainable development has entered a new stage in which the green economy is the main driving force, and the "three new" economy (with new industries, new forms of business, and new business models at its core), which is typically characterized by the input of green factors of production, has given rise to new ways of growth, economic development, and new ways of working, and has reshaped the new knowledge and technologies required for new work. It has reshaped the new knowledge and technology needed for new jobs. And in China, new quality productivity is being vigorously promoted, and new quality productivity is green. This translates into the field of education or the education system, which is reforming the greening of education.

From environmental education to education for sustainable development to education for ecological civilization, the concept and content of education in Chinese schools have been continuously upgraded and enriched with the progress of society. In particular, moral education, as the first of the "five educations" in Chinese schools, is not only the primary means and mechanism for the independent implementation of "cultivating morality and nurturing people" but also a soulful element of the whole education that runs through or is intertwined with the other four educations. However, there are still some general problems, including the fact that the current study of moral education has not yet broken free of the shackles of "interpersonal moral education" and that the concept of "ecological, moral education" and its reform and innovation is insufficient.

For this reason, it is undoubtedly the demand of the times for the high-quality development of moral education in China to draw on the previous research on ecological moral education in China and foreign countries to integrate ecological moral education into the "five educations" of Chinese colleges and universities and the development of school construction, and to promote the in-depth fusion of education on ecological civilization and education, thus contributing to the new overall function of educating the people in colleges and universities and to the brand-new development of environmental ecology.

2. Major Problems Facing the Construction of Ecological Moral Education in China

2.1. Lagging in following up the new direction of "Greater Moral Education."

"Beautiful China" has appeared as a ruling concept in the report of the 18th National Congress and has been incorporated into the 13th and 14th Five-Year Plans. However, the moral education system still lacks an "ecological, moral education" section. However, the moral education system still lacks an "ecological, moral education" section. It fails to follow up on the new direction provided by Xi Jinping's idea of ecological civilization for a "great moral education." In terms of curriculum, although some schools have attempted to incorporate ecological and moral education into their curricula, such courses are often considered non-core courses with fewer hours of instruction. Specialized subjects usually squeeze them out. Many Chinese schools do not have specialized ecological or moral education courses, but they only occasionally mention them in class meetings or moral education activities. As for the content of teaching materials, there needs to be more systematic and comprehensive ecological moral education teaching materials. Existing teaching materials often introduce some ecological knowledge and environmental behavior and lack discussion of deeper content such as ecological ethics and responsibility.
This makes students' understanding of ecological, moral education stay on the surface, making it difficult to form a profound ecological, moral concept.

2.2. Insufficient exploration of educational articulation mechanisms

The mechanism of educational articulation is the key to ensuring a smooth transition of students from one educational stage to another. This mechanism is fundamental in the moral education system, as it is related to the continuous cultivation and development of students' moral qualities. An excellent bridging mechanism can ensure that students receive coherent and progressive moral education at different stages to build up solid moral concepts and behavioral habits gradually. The current moral education system focuses on the cognition of varying age groups and edits the teaching segments of the corresponding courses in this way. Although this approach considers students' cognitive ability to a certain extent, it ignores the coherence and wholeness of moral education. It needs to jump out of the thinking framework of physiological mechanisms and interpersonal moral education. It requires the innovative exploration of the close connection mechanism of the moral education system. Therefore, there is a need for a more in-depth study of the law of growth of human virtues, especially the developmental characteristics of human beings as natural and social beings in this process. Attention should be paid to students' physiological and psychological development, how students interact with the social environment, and how moral qualities are formed and developed in these interactions. At the same time, innovations are made in the organizational mechanisms and forms of curriculum and teaching. For example, by designing cross-age moral education programs, students at different stages can participate in moral education activities appropriate to their development level.

2.3. Incomplete construction of the relational structure of the elements of moral education in schools

Moral education, patriotism education, craftsmanship education, and "three views" education are all critical components; however, the relationship between these elements is often unclear. For example, patriotism education may be included with other aspects of moral education, but it may also have a parallel or superimposed relationship with certain elements. This ambiguity may lead to the duplication or omission of moral education content. Meanwhile, ecological, moral education is often neglected in the current moral education system. With the increasing prominence of environmental issues, the importance of ecological moral education is self-evident. However, for various reasons, such as educators' insufficient understanding of ecological and moral education and lack of related teaching resources, environmental and moral education is often marginalized in actual teaching. This lack is detrimental to cultivating students' awareness of environmental protection and may also affect their responsibility for the future of society.

3. Review and Synthesis of Ecological Moral Education Abroad

3.1. Review of Ecological Moral Education Abroad

Ecological and moral education has undergone three development stages in foreign countries. The first stage is the discovery and appeal stage in the 1960s and 1970s. With the increasing deterioration of the global ecological environment and the impact of the energy crisis, higher education's fundamental and forward-looking role was gradually connected with environmental issues. Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" became the cornerstone of ecological education. In 1969, Dr. William Bell Stapp of the University of Michigan first proposed that environmental education is civic education's primary content and requirement. 1972, the Stockholm Declaration signed by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment emphasized the importance of all kinds of educational institutions, including universities, in environmental protection, and the construction of green campuses has become a global phenomenon. In 1972, the Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment emphasized the importance of all educational institutions, including universities, in environmental protection.

The second stage is the unification of the global consciousness of sustainable development in the 1980s and 1990s. With the deepening of energy, climate, and ecological issues, ESD and higher education became more deeply integrated. One of the essential documents adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 was Agenda 21, a blueprint for action on a global sustainable development program aimed at encouraging development while protecting the environment, which, among other things, encourages governments to support universities and other higher education institutions to carry out environmental and sustainable development programs. Other higher education institutions provide education for the environment and sustainable development[1].

The third phase is the 21st century when the world is united in its commitment to sustainable development. Yale University has begun to commit itself to environmental governance, making sustainable development a "high priority" for all university endeavors and immensely stimulating the university and society to care for and cherish the Earth's environment [2]. In 2005, the United Nations launched the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESDE), encouraging governments of United Nations member countries to incorporate sustainable development into their national education policies and proposing five significant goals, including emphasizing the central role of education and learning in the pursuit of sustainable development. International organizations such as UNESCO, the European Union, and OECD have continuously promoted the concept and practice of eco-education by holding relevant conferences and publishing research reports and policy recommendations, which have profoundly impacted the practice of eco-education in countries around the world [3]. In 2015, the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 sustainable development goals, including green jobs and
education [4]. In 2021, UNESCO released Learning to Be Part of the World: Education for Future Survival, calling for the reconstruction of education around the future survival of the planet and a fundamental realignment of the role of education.

3.2. Research and Progress of Ecological Moral Education Abroad

In the 1920s, German scholars such as Bussermann and others studied education and various macro-environments. Japanese scholars such as Toshio Hosoya compiled the book "Environmental Studies in Education," which became the germ of eco-moral education in the 1960s and 1970s; developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan infiltrated eco-moral education into all aspects of the economy and society. The United States was the first country in the world to guarantee the implementation of ecological moral education through legislation. In addition, the United States also focuses on the practical aspects of education, such as the "Green Schools" program in the United States, which encourages schools to integrate the concept of environmental protection into their curricula and allows students to experience the importance of environmental protection through a variety of practical activities. Many non-governmental organizations and enterprises in the United States also actively carry out various environmental education projects, which are usually very practical and enable students to develop environmental awareness in participation. In the United Kingdom, the integration of environmental education into the curriculum is a unique approach to environmental education, and the 1990 National Curriculum Guidance VII: Environmental Education emphasizes that environmental education in schools must start with "education about the environment," "education for the environment" and "education in the environment." Education for the environment" and "education in the environment." This model of education is known as the Lucas Model. Under the guidance of this model, schools in the United Kingdom organize various practical activities for eco-moral education, such as speech contests on environmental protection themes and workshops on environmental protection to enhance students' environmental awareness and practical ability. In Japan, eco-moral education is carried out through outdoor activities. Students are organized to participate in various outdoor activities, such as hiking, camping, etc. These activities aim to enable students to get close to nature and cultivate their emotions and sense of responsibility towards nature. In this way, students can more intuitively understand the operation of the natural ecosystem to cherish and protect the natural environment more.

Measures related to ecological and moral education in major foreign developed countries are organized as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/organization</th>
<th>Related measures</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>The National Environmental Education Act, the National Environmental Education Development Plan, and other laws and regulations have been introduced, and a network of ecological moral education in schools has been formed.</td>
<td>Wei Liwei, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>The &quot;Education about the environment&quot; (knowledge transfer), &quot;Education for the environment&quot; (development of emotional values), and &quot;Education in the environment&quot; (exploration in the real world) educational models were proposed and promoted. The models of &quot;education about the environment&quot; (knowledge transfer), &quot;education for the environment&quot; (development of emotional values), and &quot;education in the environment&quot; (exploration in the natural environment) have been promoted.</td>
<td>Lucas M., 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>The school is organized into three phases according to age and proposes eight specific objectives for environmental education evaluation.</td>
<td>Guidance material on environmental education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>The National Core Curriculum includes environmental education as one of the educational objectives of general education, and environmental protection classes are offered two hours a week from the third grade of elementary school.</td>
<td>Wang Xianjuan, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Integration into the national education system, focusing on ecological and moral enlightenment and practice, and penetration into all disciplines.</td>
<td>Li Yanying, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Making &quot;environmental protection&quot; the first national policy and making ecological education a compulsory subject from kindergarten to university.</td>
<td>Ren Xueping, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU, etc.</td>
<td>&quot;Europe 2020 Strategy&quot; &quot;Skills for a Low Carbon Economy&quot; &quot;Green Skills and Innovations for Inclusive Growth&quot; &quot;Green Jobs Initiative &quot;</td>
<td>Yujing Li, 2017</td>
</tr>
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Data source: CNKI (self-organized)

In short, foreign research on ecological, moral education is mainly elaborated from the perspectives of environmental education and civic morality, highlighting the high degree of importance attached to it, the universality and all-ages nature of the education targets, the diversity and pioneering nature of the education forms, the penetration and networking of the education methods, and the legal and practical nature of the safeguards.
4. Review and Synthesis of Domestic Ecological Moral Education in China

4.1. Review of Ecological Moral Education in China

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), General Secretary Xi Jinping has made a series of important speeches on the construction of ecological civilization, elevating the construction of ecological civilization to an unprecedented level. In January 2015, the Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China explicitly stipulated that "education administrative departments and schools shall incorporate knowledge of environmental protection into the content of school education, and cultivate students' awareness of environmental protection." The Law on Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China clearly stipulates that "education administrative departments and schools shall incorporate knowledge of environmental protection into the content of school education, and cultivate students' awareness of environmental protection" and that "citizens shall enhance their awareness of environmental protection, adopt a low-carbon and thrifty lifestyle, and consciously fulfill their obligations to protect the environment," thus legally assigning the duty of publicizing environmental protection to education. In May of the same year, the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Accelerating the Advancement of the Construction of Ecological Civilization put forward the need to "adhere to the people-oriented and law-based approach, adhere to the basic national policy of saving resources and protecting the environment, put the construction of ecological civilization in a prominent strategic position, integrate it into all aspects of and the entire process of economic, political, cultural and social construction, and synergistically promote the new type of industrialization, informatization, urbanization, agricultural modernization, and the modernization of agriculture, informatization, urbanization, agricultural modernization and greening." Greening has become a specific path for ecological civilization construction and has become the "New Five." In October 2020, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee adopted the "Proposals of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Formulating the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Visionary Goals for the 23rd Five-Year Plan", which further clarified the need to coordinate the advancement of economic, political, cultural, social, ecological civilization construction, and the development of the economy, culture, social construction, and ecological civilization, cultural construction, social construction, and the overall layout of ecological civilization construction, and to widely form a green production and lifestyle by 2035, among other goals. It can be seen that an ecological atmosphere has been formed, guided by Xi Jinping's thoughts on ecological civilization and guided by ecological civilization construction.

At the educational level, in 1994, the Chinese Government adopted China's Agenda 21, which states that "the idea of sustainable development should permeate the entire educational process, from primary to higher education." By the end of the 20th century, more than 30 universities in China had created more than 20 specialties in environmental protection, covering a wide range of different levels of specialization, undergraduate and master's degree programs[5]. However, the overall integration could be more robust. In the 21st century, with the leapfrog development of China's ecological civilization construction, in 2001, the Central Propaganda Department, the former State Environmental Protection Administration, and the Ministry of Education jointly issued the "2001-2005 Outline of the National Environmental Propaganda and Education Work", which explicitly proposed the gradual implementation of the activity of creating a green university in the nation's higher education institutions. Academician Yang Shuzi and other academicians proposed a "green" modern higher education that integrates science and humanities[6], emphasizing the vital role of green ecology in education.

4.2. Research and progress in ecological, moral education in China

The study of ecological moral education in China started relatively late; in 1998, Liu Jingduo and others first mentioned "ecological moral education" in their book Ecological Moral Education and its Significance Across the Century. In recent years, China's eco-moral education has expanded its connotation and value and positioned itself as the comprehensive and accessible development of human beings[7]. There have been many studies on the logical basis of ecological and moral education, mainly involving Western ecological and ethical thought, Eastern traditional culture, Marxist ecological values, and Xi Jinping's thoughts on ecological civilization. For example, ontology believes that "human beings and nature are a community of life," epistemology proposes that "green water and green mountains are gold and silver mountains," the practical view of building a "beautiful China," and the values of "adhering to the people's main position" and "adhering to the people's main position." "adhere to the status of the people's main body" [8]. Discussions on education are mainly centered on education reform in the new era, such as realizing the ecological turn of higher education and promoting the construction of green universities in the new era with green campuses as the spatial carrier, green education as the kernel of the foundation, and green systems as the guarantee system in the "three-dimensional integration"[9]; To realize the ecological turn of moral education in schools by rooting humane moral education concepts, constructing synergistic moral education processes and cultivating living moral education scenarios [10]; Ecological, moral education for the comprehensive development of college students through sorting out the ecological, ethical view, constructing a value system of harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature[11], and so on.

5. Reflections and Insights on the Construction of Ecological Moral Education in China and Abroad

With the deepening of China's reforms and the significant changes in the economy and society, moral education's orientation, content, and system have also shown the characteristics of advancing with the times. Moral education first aims to accomplish a "person" and then, based on becoming a "person," create social roles and become a "builder and successor of socialism." "socialist builders and successors." Eco-moral education is the integration of Xi
Jinping's ecological civilization thought is incorporated into the whole process, all aspects, and all fields of moral education in primary and secondary schools and colleges; this integration is not a simple superposition, nor is it "input" or "implantation" of an independent external factor, but rather, it is the fundamental premise that the structure and function of the education system will not be changed. On the premise of the structure and function of the actual system, the requirements, goals, and contents of the construction of ecological civilization are reflected and integrated into the goals, tasks, and deployment of the current education system, which is based on the "five educations," to make it an organic part of the modernized education system, thus realizing the close integration of the construction of ecological civilization with the existing education functions. They are closely integrating the construction of environmental education with existing educational functions.

5.1. Strengthening the Government's implementation and monitoring of eco-moral education

They are strengthening the Government's implementation and supervision of eco-moral education in various aspects, such as policy orientation, cross-sectoral collaboration, provision of financial support, and enhancement of the effectiveness of supervision. First, clear policy orientation. The Government should formulate a clear policy on eco-moral education, establish the importance of eco-moral education in the national education system, and include specific goals, tasks, measures, and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the full implementation of eco-moral education—second, cross-sectoral collaboration. The Government promotes synergistic cooperation between the education sector and other related sectors (e.g., environmental protection, forestry, water conservancy, etc.) to jointly promote ecological moral education. The overall effect of environmental moral education can be improved through cross-sectoral information sharing and resource integration. Third, provide financial support. The Government provides the necessary financial support for schools to carry out ecological and moral education by setting up a special fund or increasing the education budget, which is used to research and develop relevant curricula, organize practical activities, and train teachers. Fourth, the use of modern information technology means to enhance the effectiveness of supervision. Using extensive data analysis, artificial intelligence, and other modern information technology means real-time monitoring and evaluation of the implementation effect of ecological moral education. Through data analysis and comparison, problems are discovered and corrected promptly to enhance the precision and effectiveness of supervision. Fifth, efforts should be made to increase information disclosure and public participation. The Government regularly publicizes information on the progress of ecological and moral education, problems, and improvement measures and accepts social supervision. At the same time, the public is encouraged to participate in the evaluation and feedback of ecological and moral education to improve the transparency and scientificity of governmental decision-making.

5.2. Enriching and improving the curriculum of ecological and moral education in schools

Regarding the curriculum construction of ecological, moral education in schools, it is necessary to clarify the objectives of the curriculum and make cultivating students' green literacy the primary goal of environmental, moral education. Green literacy is a comprehensive concept that covers multiple levels of individual cognition, emotion, attitude, and behavior towards environmental protection. It includes an individual's understanding of the green knowledge of harmony between man and nature, man and man, and man and society, the sentiment of ecological ethics, and the willingness and ability to practice green behaviors in real life.

Second, the curriculum content should be reorganized. Xi Jinping's thought on ecological civilization is that it is the collection of new concepts, ideas, and strategies for ecological construction in China, following environmental education and sustainable development, which is the fundamental guideline for ecological moral education. Xi Jinping's thoughts on environmental civilization should be integrated into specific curriculum content. On the one hand, ecological environmental knowledge, ethics and morality, and ecological protection practices can be integrated into the existing curriculum teaching. For example, environmental education in the United Kingdom can incorporate historical and cultural resources into the curriculum and promote students' understanding of the ecological environment and awareness of protection through comprehensive practical activities. On the one hand, some professional courses related to green literacy can be added. For example, Principles of Green Engineering, Environmentally Friendly Materials, Environmental Economics, Green Industrial Policy, Biodiversity Conservation, etc. This is not only in line with the current needs of the development of new quality productivity but also a must for the reform of high-quality development of schools. Thirdly, it is necessary to innovate teaching methods. Through the flexible use of case teaching, project-based learning, situational teaching, and other teaching methods, we can improve students' interest in and participation in education. For example, carry out environmental protection project practice, outdoor teaching, etc., so students can experience and understand the importance of green literacy. In addition, modern information technology means that virtual and augmented reality can provide students with a more intuitive and vivid learning experience.

5.3. Setting up a platform for cooperation on "Big Ideology and Politics" to promote and popularize eco-moral education

"Great moral education" is not only a physical place, such as school, family, and society. It also includes the political, ideological, ecological, and moral education needed for "human beings" to assume social roles. To carry out "Great Moral Education," it is necessary to build a cooperation platform for "Great Ideology and Politics" so that ecological, moral education can be carried out in an open system interconnected and synergized by various horizontal elements. The cooperation platform can be led by the government or colleges and universities, with the participation of enterprises, communities, families, and other parties through resource sharing, experience exchange, and project cooperation.
Specifically, to strengthen school-school cooperation through the establishment of cooperation networks between colleges and universities, colleges and universities and research institutes, and research institutes and research institutes, to carry out regular academic exchanges and teaching seminars on eco-moral education, etc.; to promote school-enterprise cooperation, to establish cooperation between schools and governmental environmental protection departments and eco-protection-related enterprises, and to jointly push forward the deepening and actualization of practical projects on eco-moral education; to carry out school-community cooperation. To strengthen school-enterprise cooperation, the school establishes cooperative relationships with government environmental protection departments and enterprises related to ecological protection and jointly promotes the deepening and actualization of practical ecological moral education projects; to strengthen school-community cooperation, the school integrates into relevant activities in the community, such as tree-planting festivals, searching for "green families," and carrying out environmental protection lectures, etc., to extend ecological, moral education to the community, and to help raise the environmental awareness of residents; to carry out international cooperation, to enhance the cooperation and exchanges with international organizations related to ecological protection, and to introduce the concepts of environmental moral education and educational resources advanced by the global community. To enhance the overall level of environmental moral education in China.

6. Conclusion

Strengthening the government's executive and supervisory power in ecological, moral education, enriching and perfecting the curriculum of environmental moral education in schools, and building a platform for cooperation in "big ideology and politics" to promote and popularize ecological moral education are some of the lessons that the construction of environmental moral education at home and abroad has taught China.

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