

# Psychological Capital, Positive Moral Education and Improvement of College Students' Ideological & Moral Qualities

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## ABSTRACT

There are many social factors that impact on students' behavior norms, their ideological and moral at present. Compared with the traditional negative moral education, positive moral education pays more attention to "promoting the good" and excavating the moral motivation and potential of students. Guided by the theory of psychological capital, this paper discusses how to improve students' moral experience, develop their moral energy, understand their moral value, and hope to help them enhance their sense of social responsibility and improve their ideological and moral level from the dimensions of self-efficacy, self-confidence, hope and resilience.

**Key words:** positive moral education, psychological capital, ideological and moral

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this digital age, we are facing a mixture of good and bad internet information, and the value evaluation is biased. With the continuous social and cultural change, many factors influence college students' behavior standards and brought a series of psychological and moral problems. The ideology and morality of college students are becoming more and more complicated, moral education, as an important part of ideological and political work, has become the mission and responsibility of college teachers. Traditional moral education generally pays attention to the problems existing in students, and adopts more negative education strategies such as criticizing and questioning. However, it pays less attention to the potential good quality, development potential and positive desire of students, which leads to the negative education tendency of paying attention to problem correction and neglecting the exploration of quality potential. Under the guidance of psychological capital theory, which focuses on the positive energy contained in human beings, this paper will explore the path of positive moral education, aiming to stimulate students' positive potential, guide them to actively improve their personal moral quality and overcome their bad behavior, enhance the effect of moral education. It is expected to explore feasible strategies and provide useful reference for moral education workers.

## 2. THE NECESSITY OF STRENGTHENING POSITIVE MORAL EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

According to a nine-year survey conducted by the Education School of Peking University, the current moral education of students is facing severe challenges [1]. Qian Liqun, a well-known scholar at Peking University, also believes that some students are becoming "delicate egoists" and lack the sense of independence, innovation and social commitment. Chen and Li (2019) conducted a survey on students in 119 colleges and universities, and found that the contradiction between moral knowledge and moral conduct was prominent, the choice between collective interests and individual interests was biased, and moral value orientation tended to be inversely linked to interests [2]. In the network age, influenced by the complex network information, students' Ideological and moral also presents negative factors that can not be ignored. According to the questionnaire survey conducted by Shi et al. (2019) on three schools in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province, it is found that students' online learning violations are common, such as plagiarism and cheating. In addition, watching pirated movies, using pirated software and watching blue images exist in specific student groups [3]. Wang (2019), starting from the Tik Tok and other popular micro media background, pointed out that a lot of bad, false or illegal information flooded the young students' minds quickly because of lack of supervision, and caused widespread discussion or formed public opinion influence in the student group, which increased the students'

difficulty in choosing and judging the correct values [4]. However, students' public awareness is weak, most of them only enjoy the freedom and rights given by micro media in the process of using them, ignoring the responsibility boundary of their own behavior, and lack of clear cognition of their own behavior in micro media. Therefore, in the digital age, the ideological and moral of students are impacted by many negative factors, and the freedom and anonymity of the network also contribute to the immoral behavior to a certain extent.

As an old Chinese saying, "The way of the great learning involves manifesting virtue, loving the people, and abiding by the highest good". It is precisely to strengthen the cultivation of students' conduct, and the key is to make them manifest their virtues, reform the old cloth, and achieve perfection. Cai Yuanpei, a famous Chinese educator, said "moral education is the foundation of complete personality." Tao Xingzhi, another famous Chinese educator, also pointed out that "the foundation of the great wall of building personality is morality". Therefore, moral education is the foundation of education, and "morality" is placed before "cultivating people", which is adhering to the fine education tradition of China.

Although colleges, universities and teachers have done a lot of work, the ideological and moral status of students has not change better enough. College students' independence, innovation, gratitude and sense of social commitment need to be further improved. In this Internet information age, school moral education is facing unprecedented challenges. However, the traditional negative moral education mode with "restraining evil" as the core makes students easily have a psychological conflict and reduces the effect of moral education. The positive moral education with "promoting good" as the core focuses on the development of students' bright side, the improvement of students' positive emotional experience, the formation of positive thinking, and the cultivation of individual positive and conscious moral behavior [5]. In this path of moral education, the mutual promotion of students' moral needs and pursuit, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation constitutes the dynamic mechanism of moral education, and the important psychological capital theory in the field of psychology can provide theoretical guidance for this moral education path.

### **3. THE BASIC CONNOTATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL THEORY**

Our potential is infinite, and its root lies in people's psychological capital. Psychological capital theory pays attention to the positive energy contained in human, which goes beyond the traditional human capital and social capital. The concept of "psychological capital" was first found in 1997. Economists Goldsmith, Veum and Drity used "psychological capital" to express people's perception of self, attitude to work, ethical orientation and general view of life [6]. In 2007, Luthans, Youssef and Avolio revised the connotation of psychological capital. They

think that psychological capital refers to "individual's positive psychological development state, which is characterized by: (1) self-confidence to perform and make necessary efforts to successfully complete challenging tasks; (2) to adhere to goals, have the spirit of cooperation, and be able to re select the route to achieve goals when necessary; (3) To make positive attribution to the current and future success; (4) when encountering problems and difficulties, be able to persist, recover quickly and take circuitous approaches [7]. The four characteristics in the definition also represent the four main dimensions of psychological capital: self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. And psychological capital, as the high-order core potential factor behind the four dimensions, is not only the simple superposition of the four dimensions, but also plays a role as a whole.

**Self-efficacy.** Self-efficacy refers to the individual's confidence and belief in stimulating self-motivation, mobilizing cognitive resources and taking necessary actions to achieve specific goals. Self-efficacy does not represent the real ability of an individual. It is a feeling, a sense of self-confidence in the ability to complete a task [8]. It focuses not on the technical ability itself, but on the evaluation and judgment of self-ability. Self-efficacy can help people to better tap the power of inner goodness.

**Hope.** Hope is a positive expectation for the future, and it is a positive motivation state based on the experience generated by the intersection of success motivation and path. Motivation, namely willpower, refers to the firm belief and psychological energy to promote the continuous progress of individuals; the path refers to the methods and strategies to achieve goals. Hope gives people the direction.

**Optimism.** Optimism is a cognitive characteristic of positive expectation and positive causal attribution. This style of attribution lies in the permanent, universal and internal attribution of positive events, and temporary, specific and external attribution of negative events. Optimism is the basic factor and cornerstone of psychological capital.

**Resilience.** Resilience refers to the individual's good adaptation to life adversity, trauma, threat or other major life pressure, which means "resilience" in the face of life pressure and setbacks. People with high resilience can thrive in setbacks and adversity, recover to the initial or even higher state when encountering difficulties, and find the value of life in the process of recovery. Resilience is the lubricant for growth.

Psychological capital advocates that organizations should pay attention to the positive psychological state of individuals, and that both organizations and individuals should pay attention to the advantages as well as the disadvantages. In addition to improving deficiencies, they should also cultivate talents and develop potential. However, the existing school moral education focuses on the change of students' bad habits and morality, and lacks the development and excavation of students' positive psychological energy. We should take the development of positive psychological energy as an important part of moral education, develop students' potential good quality,

help students establish a positive attitude towards life, close to the bright side, away from the dark side, and face life and learning correctly. The difficulties in learning make life full of positive power, and take the cultivation of personal morality as a necessary element of growth, so as to strengthen the sense of life meaning and social responsibility.

#### **4. POSITIVE MORAL EDUCATION PATH BASED ON PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL THEORY**

Zeng Guofan, a famous politician in Qing Dynasty of China, once said, "it is always useless to shout and discuss the affairs of the world outside the task. It is possible to succeed only if you try to do and be responsible". When some college students are pragmatic and shrewd, when the media accuse college students of declining moral standards, prominent psychological problems, and lack of moral education, college teachers are just the player in the business. They are in the forefront of contacting with college students, they can clearly feel the change of students' thinking and behaviours from freshmen to seniors under the influence of the outside world. From the perspective of psychological capital theory, college teachers should focus on enhancing college students' self-efficacy and improving students' positive moral experience; provide social support for students to make them full of hope for the future and have confidence and trust in others; cultivate students' gratitude psychology by paying attention to students' emotional needs and emotional communication; and help students adapt to the environment. It is necessary to establish a strong determination to deal with temptations, setbacks and difficulties with good moral character.

##### ***4.1. To enhance students' self-efficacy and enhance positive moral experience***

Positive moral education emphasizes that the educated experience the value of good moral cultivation and produce good psychological experience. Therefore, it is necessary to set up corresponding moral education activities so that students can correctly understand their moral potential through personal experience. Teachers should make it clear that every student has both good and bad moral character. At the same time, they should let students know and accept this theory, let them know themselves, treat themselves correctly and accept themselves through direct experience, so as to achieve real self-confidence and understand and tolerate others on this basis. In this way, they can make full use of their own talents and coexist peacefully with others. Through the development of these activities, teachers should help students cultivate positive moral motivation, create positive emotional experience such as happiness and sense of belonging for them in moral education activities, feel

the beauty of life, the warmth of others, and their own value in the activities, and deal with the impact of negative emotions through positive moral experience.

##### ***4.2. To provide social support and give hope for a better life***

According to the questionnaire survey and analysis conducted by Zhu et al. (2016), social support is an important factor influencing students' optimism. That is, the support from parents, teachers and classmates will make students more optimistic about the future, and it will also make students have the idea of returning to society and actively taking social responsibility [9]. Therefore, teachers should create an atmosphere of mutual support among students, provide positive help to students, and introduce social resources support for students' learning and extracurricular activities, so that students can feel the care from teachers, classmates and society, help them correctly understand the relationship between self and society, between self-value and social value, and cultivate optimism and care for others. Good moral quality of giving back and enhancing the sense of social responsibility.

##### ***4.3. To pay attention to and protect emotional needs and cultivate students' gratitude***

Gratitude is one of the most important virtues of human beings. It is closely related to many variables such as mental health and well-being [10], and helps individuals expand cognitive schema, enhance activity flexibility, construct personal psychological and social resources, and eliminate the negative effects brought about by negative emotions [11]. Hui et al. (2018) found that there is a close correlation between gratitude and depression symptoms, and there is a mutual prediction relationship or a certain degree of quasi causal relationship between them, that is, gratitude has a significant negative predictive effect on depressive symptoms, and depressive symptoms have a significant negative predictive effect on gratitude [12]. Therefore, teachers should focus on Thanksgiving Education for students. Thanksgiving education is a kind of education with emotion, and the key point is the cultivation of emotion. We should pay attention to the students' emotional touch and emotional communication, respect and protect their emotional needs, so as to enhance their understanding of gratitude, cultivate their gratitude feelings, exercise their gratitude will and establish their gratitude belief [13]. We can integrate the excellent traditional culture, especially the excellent traditional filial piety culture and other classic works of thanksgiving education related sentences embedded in daily education and network communication, to achieve the excellent traditional culture "turn" people, leading people.

#### ***4.4. To help students learn to adapt to the environment, with good moral character to deal with temptation and frustration***

Leaving the college and entering the society, the environment faced by college students is constantly changing. They need to become part of different groups, learn how to deal with people, learn to think in different places, and gradually transform from a college student to be a professional and social man. In this process, they may face all kinds of difficulties and obstacles. If they can't deal with them properly, many negative psychological factors may be caused. In the case of weak willpower, they may even lead them to play the edge ball or take immoral behaviors in order to achieve their goals. The environmental change that students are facing is actually the change of human beings [14]. Only when they get along with others better, have a better understanding of setbacks and failures, recognize the important role of personal quality in long-term growth, clearly grasp their own strengths and weaknesses, and correctly view various challenges and temptations, can they better adapt to the environment. Teachers should bring into temptation and frustration education in their daily education, actively help students to understand the environment correctly, understand the value of personal moral cultivation in coping with environmental changes, help students reasonably match their own ability, personal morality and pursuit of goals, keep away from the bad thoughts of "utilitarianism", "money worship" and "pragmatism". Teachers can help students to realize the necessity of the existence of external temptation and life setbacks, and establish the goal that effectively combine their own value and social value. When encountering temptation and frustration, they can actively adjust their mentality, adhere to good moral character and conduct principles, and pursue long-term development.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Under the background of social moral education and the guidance of core socialist values, it is an important mission for educators to help students establish correct world-views, life-views and values, and cultivate good moral quality. According to the mission, moral education has become a core responsibility of school teachers. Although moral education in colleges is facing greater challenges than skill education, and it has a long way to go, relying on positive moral education, college teachers can focus on promoting the good quality of students, excavate students' moral motivation and potential, make them gradually realize the value of morality through continuous experience and feeling, and promote their moral pursuit which is of great significance for moral education. Teachers also need to constantly learn and improve themselves, tap their moral potential, and strive to set examples for them. Based on all these measures, moral

quality of college students will continue to be improved in the process of moral education.

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