

Optimization Paths of Labor Education in Rural Primary and Secondary Schools for Empowering Rural Revitalization

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Abstract

The report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly states the goal of "cultivating socialist builders and successors who are well-rounded in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education", which once again highlights the important status of labor education in talent cultivation, economic development and national construction. As an essential activity for human survival and development, labor runs through all fields of social division of labor and constitutes an indispensable core content of education. Rural areas are endowed with abundant natural and cultural labor resources, providing unique conditions for the implementation of labor education in primary and secondary schools. Under the background of the rural revitalization strategy, labor education in rural primary and secondary schools is not only an important part of the national education system, but also bears the comprehensive educational values of fostering morality, enhancing intelligence, strengthening physical fitness and cultivating aesthetic appreciation. It can help students establish a correct view of labor, shape the spirit of labor, improve labor ability and develop labor habits. Starting from the value implication of rural labor education for empowering rural revitalization, this paper analyzes the practical dilemmas faced by current labor education in rural primary and secondary schools, explores the specific optimizing paths of labor education combined with the concept of collaborative education involving families, schools and society, and provides theoretical support and practical reference for rural education revitalization and the all-round development of rural areas.

Keywords

Rural Primary and Secondary Schools; Labor Education; Rural Revitalization; Optimizing Paths; Collaborative Education

1. Introduction

1.1. Policy Background and Era Demands

The issuance of Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and

the State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Schools and Colleges in the New Era in 2020 marked that labor education has officially become an important component of the socialist education system with Chinese characteristics and been incorporated into the educational system featuring "simultaneous promotion of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education". The implementation of the Curriculum Standards for Labor Courses in Compulsory Education in 2022 further separated labor education from comprehensive practical activities, established it as a national curriculum, and provided clear guidance for schools at all levels to carry out labor education.

Against the backdrop of the in-depth advancement of the rural revitalization strategy, education, as a crucial pillar of rural revitalization, shoulders the important mission of cultivating local talents, inheriting rural culture, and boosting industrial development. Since the release of Opinions on Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization and Accelerating the Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Areas in 2021, how to empower rural development through education has become a core issue of concern in the education sector.

With its inherent connection to agricultural production and rural life, labor education in rural primary and secondary schools can not only address the imbalances of "agricultural modernization lagging behind industrial modernization" and "the modernization of rural culture falling behind economic modernization", but also help resolve the key contradiction of "the modernization of people lagging behind social modernization", thus emerging as an indispensable force in the rural revitalization strategy.

1.2. Research Significance and Core Objectives

In terms of theoretical significance, based on the Marxist view of labor and the theory of Weiye (harmonious adaptation), this study systematically expounds the internal logic between rural labor education and rural revitalization, enriches the applied research of labor education theories in rural contexts, and provides a new theoretical perspective for the revitalization of rural education.

In terms of practical significance, targeting the existing problems such as "de-ruralization" and "formalization" in current labor education in rural primary and secondary schools, this study explores optimized paths of labor education with rural characteristics. It is conducive to improving the effectiveness of labor education in fostering talents, cultivating new generations with rural sentiments and labor literacy, and injecting sustained impetus into rural revitalization.

The core objectives of this study are as follows: to clarify the value dimensions of labor education in rural primary and secondary schools for empowering rural revitalization; to analyze the practical dilemmas and their causes in the current implementation of labor education; to construct an optimized labor education system featuring "school-family-community collaboration, integration of knowledge and practice, and rural characteristics", so as to achieve the in-depth integration of labor education and

rural revitalization.

2. The Value Implications of Labor Education in Rural Primary and Secondary Schools for Empowering Rural Revitalization

2.1. Educational Value: Promoting Students' All-Round Development

Marx pointed out: "The combination of productive labor with intellectual and physical education is not only a method of improving social production, but also the only method of producing fully developed human beings." Through diverse labor practices, labor education in rural primary and secondary schools facilitates the all-round development of students in morality, intellect, physical fitness, and aesthetics.

In terms of moral education, the laws of farming such as "spring sowing and autumn harvesting" and "acting in accordance with local conditions" can inspire students to foster an attitude of respecting nature and following objective laws. Farming proverbs like "you reap what you sow" help cultivate students' moral qualities of diligence and honesty, and pass on the traditional virtues of diligence, frugality, hard work and perseverance.

In terms of intellectual education, labor practices integrate classroom theoretical knowledge with the reality of rural production and life. Students apply mathematical knowledge to count yields and biological knowledge to solve pest and disease problems during agricultural operations, thus realizing the positive interaction of "learning by doing and doing by learning" and fostering innovative thinking and practical abilities.

In terms of physical education, labor activities such as field work and handcrafting can effectively exercise students' physical coordination and stamina, replace part of the content in traditional physical education teaching, and achieve the educational goal of "strengthening physical fitness through labor".

In terms of aesthetic education, the unique aesthetic values embodied in rural natural landscapes, traditional farm tools and labor outcomes can cultivate students' aesthetic perception and creative abilities, enabling them to appreciate the beauty of rural culture and the harmony of nature in the process of labor.

2.2. Cultural Value: Inheriting the Root of Rural Culture

Chinese civilization is essentially an agricultural civilization. As the birthplace of farming culture, rural areas carry rich intangible cultural heritage, traditional customs and life wisdom. Taking rural areas as a natural classroom, labor education in rural primary and secondary schools integrates farming-and-reading culture, folk crafts and agricultural traditions into the educational process, which can effectively inherit the root of rural culture.

By participating in solar term-based farming activities, learning to use traditional farm tools and experiencing folk handicraft making, students can gain an in-depth understanding of rural living habits and cultural connotations, and enhance their sense of identity and belonging to their hometowns.

This kind of localized labor education can not only avoid the "de-ruralization"

phenomenon where rural children are "unable to do physical labor and unable to distinguish grains", but also cultivate "rooted" individuals, allowing rural culture to rejuvenate in intergenerational inheritance and laying a foundation for the cultural revitalization of rural areas.

2.3. Development Value: Boosting the All-Round Revitalization of Rural Areas

The core of rural revitalization lies in the revitalization of people, and labor education is a key approach to cultivating rural builders. On the one hand, labor education can cultivate students' labor skills and entrepreneurial awareness. In particular, labor practices related to modern agricultural technologies enable students to understand the development trends of smart agriculture and ecological agriculture, stimulate their enthusiasm for returning to their hometowns to start businesses and participate in rural construction, and provide talent support for rural industrial revitalization.

On the other hand, labor education can guide students to establish a labor value concept of "taking agriculture as glory", change the one-sided perception of "escaping from rural areas", encourage more young people to stay in and build rural areas, and alleviate the dilemma of rural talent loss.

Meanwhile, students' participation in rural public welfare services and ecological protection activities during labor practices can directly contribute to rural governance and ecological revitalization, forming a positive cycle of "education empowering development and development feeding back education".

3. Practical Dilemmas of Labor Education in Rural Primary and Secondary Schools

3.1. Deviation in Educational Concepts: Prominent Phenomenon of "Valuing Intelligence over Labor"

Affected by traditional concepts such as "all occupations are inferior except scholarship" and "mental laborers govern, physical laborers are governed", labor education in rural primary and secondary schools faces serious conceptual deviations. To pursue the admission rate, some schools arbitrarily occupy or divert labor course hours, reducing labor education to a "formalized" course; some teachers admonish students with remarks like "if you don't study hard, you'll only end up farming", artificially separating labor from learning and leading students to form the wrong perception that "labor is inferior".

At the family level, many parents take over all household chores and require their children to "focus solely on studying", neglecting the cultivation of labor habits; at the social level, prejudices against physical labor still exist, and the media's publicity of model workers is insufficient, making it difficult to form a good atmosphere of advocating labor. This "valuing intelligence over labor" concept has seriously weakened the educational value of labor education, preventing it from achieving its due educational effects.

3.2. Outdated Curriculum Design: Lack of Rural Characteristics and Contemporary Relevance

The current labor education curriculum in rural primary and secondary schools has an obvious "urbanization" tendency, blindly copying the curriculum model of urban schools and being divorced from rural reality. In terms of curriculum content, it mainly focuses on simple labor such as cleaning and handcrafting, failing to fully tap the rich labor resources in rural areas such as agricultural production and folk culture, and lacking "rural flavor" and practicality; in terms of curriculum setting, it fails to conduct hierarchical design in combination with students' age characteristics and cognitive laws—lacking labor enlightenment in primary school and skill improvement in middle school, making it difficult to achieve the progressive educational goal.

At the same time, the curriculum content is disconnected from the development of modern agriculture, with insufficient involvement in new labor forms such as smart agriculture and e-commerce for agriculture, which cannot meet the new requirements for labor capabilities in rural industrial revitalization. In addition, the integration of labor education with other disciplines is insufficient, failing to form a curriculum system of "integration of five educations", which greatly reduces the educational effect.

3.3. Insufficient Implementation Conditions: Shortage of Teachers, Venues and Resources

Weak teachers are a prominent problem facing labor education in rural primary and secondary schools. Most rural schools lack full-time labor education teachers, and most are part-time teachers from other disciplines. These teachers lack systematic professional training in labor education, with insufficient labor skills and teaching capabilities, making it difficult to carry out high-quality labor practice teaching.

In terms of venues and resources, although rural areas have natural labor venues, they lack standardized labor practice bases, and resources such as farmland and orchards have not been effectively transformed into educational resources; schools have limited funds and cannot purchase necessary labor tools and equipment, making it difficult to support diverse labor practice activities. In addition, the collaborative education mechanism involving families, schools and society has not yet been formed, with insufficient family participation and inadequate integration of social resources, leading labor education to be confined within the campus and making it difficult to form educational synergy.

3.4. Imperfect Evaluation System: Single Evaluation and Lack of Guidance

The current evaluation system of labor education in rural primary and secondary schools has many flaws. In terms of evaluation subjects, it is mainly dominated by schools and teachers, lacking self-evaluation and mutual evaluation among students as well as parental evaluation, resulting in a single evaluation perspective; in terms of evaluation content, it focuses on the evaluation of labor skills and results, ignoring the assessment of

core literacy such as labor attitude, labor spirit and innovative awareness; in terms of evaluation methods, quantitative evaluation is mostly adopted, lacking process evaluation and qualitative evaluation, making it difficult to fully reflect students' labor literacy. This imperfect evaluation system cannot play the guiding and incentive role of evaluation, leading to low enthusiasm of students in participating in labor and making it difficult to promote labor education sustainably.

4. Optimizing Paths of Labor Education in Rural Primary and Secondary Schools for Empowering Rural Revitalization

4.1. Establishing Correct Orientation: Constructing a Collaborative Labor Value Education System Involving Families, Schools and Society

4.1.1. School Level: Strengthening the Core Status of Labor Education

Incorporate labor education into the overall school-running plan, offer labor courses in strict accordance with curriculum standards to ensure sufficient class hours; create an atmosphere of advocating labor through campus culture construction, such as setting up labor culture walls, organizing speeches on model workers' deeds, and carrying out "excellent young laborer" selection activities, so that students can establish correct labor values imperceptibly; strengthen teacher training, change teachers' educational concepts, enhance their understanding of the educational value of labor education, and avoid marginalizing labor education.

4.1.2. Family Level: Giving Play to the Fundamental Role of Labor Education

Guide parents to change their parenting concepts and recognize the importance of labor education through parent-teacher meetings, parent-child activities and other forms; encourage parents to let their children participate in household labor, starting with daily life labor such as dressing, cooking and cleaning, to cultivate their self-care ability; parents should set an example by actively participating in labor, establishing a good model for their children, and forming a family style of "taking labor as glory".

4.1.3. Social Level: Creating a Good Atmosphere of Advocating Labor

The government should increase the publicity of advanced figures such as model workers and rural leaders in getting rich, and convey the values of "labor creates happiness and labor achieves success" through media reports and deed lectures; regulate media behavior, put an end to the dissemination of negative concepts of "despising labor", and guide the public to respect physical labor and attach importance to labor education; encourage enterprises and social organizations to provide labor practice resources for rural schools, such as opening farms and factories as practice venues, to support labor education.

4.2. Optimizing the Curriculum System: Building Labor Education Courses with Rural Characteristics

4.2.1. Based on Rural Reality, Tapping Local Labor Resources

Develop school-based courses with "rural flavor" focusing on rural agricultural production, folk culture, ecological protection and other core elements. Offer agricultural enlightenment courses in primary school, organizing students to participate in simple agricultural labor such as sowing, watering and harvesting in combination with the 24 solar terms to understand the growth laws of crops; offer agricultural skill courses in middle school, introducing content such as smart agriculture, agricultural product processing and e-commerce for agriculture to improve students' labor skills and entrepreneurial awareness. At the same time, tap rural folk culture resources, integrate traditional handicrafts and festival rituals into labor courses, such as organizing students to learn weaving, paper-cutting and making local delicacies to inherit rural culture.

4.2.2. Following Educational Laws, Conducting Hierarchical and Classified Design

Construct a progressive curriculum system according to the cognitive characteristics and ability levels of students of different ages. Lower grades focus on self-care labor and campus cleaning labor to cultivate labor habits; middle grades focus on agricultural experience and handicrafting to improve labor skills; higher grades focus on agricultural production practice and public welfare labor to cultivate social responsibility and innovative ability. At the same time, design differentiated courses according to the rural characteristics of different regions, such as mountainous schools focusing on labor related to forestry and animal husbandry, and plain schools focusing on labor related to planting and agricultural product processing.

4.2.3. Promoting Disciplinary Integration to Achieve "Simultaneous Promotion of Five Educations"

Deeply integrate labor education with moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic education, and tap labor education elements in various disciplines. Chinese courses combine ancient poems such as "Sympathy for the Farmers" to carry out labor-themed reading and writing; mathematics courses combine content such as yield calculation and area measurement in agricultural labor to improve students' application ability; science courses combine practices such as crop planting and pest control to cultivate students' scientific inquiry spirit; art courses carry out painting and photography activities based on labor results and rural landscapes to improve aesthetic ability; physical education courses incorporate field work and traditional sports games into teaching content to achieve the goal of "strengthening physical fitness through labor".

4.3. Improving Implementation Guarantee: Strengthening Support for Teachers, Venues and Resources

4.3.1 Strengthening the Construction of Teachers' Teams

Establish a labor education teachers' team dominated by full-time teachers and

supplemented by part-time teachers. Select teachers with labor skills and educational capabilities as full-time labor education teachers through open recruitment and on-campus post transfer; regularly organize teachers to participate in professional training covering labor skills, teaching methods and curriculum development to improve their professional quality; invite rural leaders in getting rich, skilled craftsmen and parents to serve as part-time teachers to make up for the shortage of full-time teachers and enrich teaching content and forms.

4.3.2. Building Diversified Labor Practice Bases

Integrate internal and external school resources to build a "campus + family + society" trinity labor practice base. Open planting gardens, breeding corners and handcraft workshops on campus to provide students with regular labor practice venues; cooperate with rural farms, cooperatives and enterprises to establish off-campus labor practice bases and organize students to carry out immersive labor practice; encourage students to carry out family labor practice using family farmland and courtyards, extending labor education to families.

4.3.3. Increasing Financial Investment and Resource Integration

The government should increase financial support for labor education in rural primary and secondary schools, which is used for the construction of labor practice bases, the purchase of labor tools and teacher training; schools should reasonably allocate funds to improve the efficiency of fund use; encourage social forces to participate in the construction of labor education resources, and provide schools with support such as labor tools and technical guidance through donations and cooperation. At the same time, use information technology to build an online resource platform, integrating high-quality labor education curriculum resources and teaching videos to provide convenient teaching support for rural schools.

4.4. Improving the Evaluation System: Giving Play to the Guiding and Incentive Role of Evaluation

4.4.1. Constructing Diversified Evaluation Subjects

Establish an evaluation system involving the joint participation of schools, teachers, students, parents and society, and comprehensively evaluate students' labor literacy based on opinions from all parties. Schools and teachers focus on the evaluation of labor process and skills; students reflect on their own labor performance and progress through self-evaluation and mutual evaluation; parents evaluate students' household labor; social organizations can evaluate students' public welfare labor and social practice.

4.4.2. Improving Evaluation Content

Incorporate labor attitude, labor skills, labor spirit, innovative awareness and cooperation ability into the evaluation content, focusing not only on labor results but also on

performance in the labor process. For example, when evaluating students' agricultural labor, not only assess the yield of crops but also pay attention to their sense of responsibility, perseverance and problem-solving ability during the labor process.

4.4.3. Innovating Evaluation Methods

Adopt a combination of process evaluation and summative evaluation, as well as a combination of quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation. Process evaluation records students' labor process and growth trajectory through labor logs, observation records and practice reports; summative evaluation comprehensively assesses students' labor literacy through labor skill tests and achievement displays; qualitative evaluation fully reflects students' labor attitude and spiritual qualities through comments and interviews. At the same time, incorporate the evaluation results of labor education into the students' comprehensive quality evaluation system as an important reference for students' evaluation of excellence and admission to higher schools, so as to give play to the incentive role of evaluation.

5. Conclusion

As an important carrier for empowering rural revitalization, labor education in rural primary and secondary schools has unique educational, cultural and developmental values. Currently, labor education in rural primary and secondary schools is facing practical dilemmas such as deviations in educational concepts, outdated curriculum design, insufficient implementation conditions and imperfect evaluation systems, which have seriously restricted its effectiveness in empowering rural revitalization. Therefore, it is necessary to construct optimized paths of labor education with rural characteristics, featuring collaboration among families, schools and society, and integration of knowledge and practice, starting from establishing correct orientation, optimizing the curriculum system, improving implementation guarantees and perfecting the evaluation system.

By changing the "valuing intelligence over labor" educational concept and creating a good atmosphere of advocating labor; tapping local rural resources and building labor courses with "rural flavor" and contemporary relevance; strengthening the construction of teachers, venues and resources to provide solid guarantees for labor education; and improving the diversified and all-round evaluation system to give play to the guiding and incentive role of evaluation, the quality and effectiveness of labor education in rural primary and secondary schools can be effectively improved. Ultimately, through labor education, cultivate new generations with correct labor views, excellent labor skills and profound rural sentiments, inject sustained impetus into rural talent revitalization, cultural revitalization and industrial revitalization, and realize the coordinated development of rural education and rural revitalization. Against the backdrop of the continuous advancement of the rural revitalization strategy, the optimization of labor education in rural primary and secondary schools

is a systematic project that requires the joint efforts of the government, schools, families and society. In the future, we should further strengthen the theoretical research and practical exploration of labor education, continuously improve the labor education system according to the new situation and new requirements of rural development, so that labor education can truly become a "booster" for rural revitalization, and contribute educational strength to building livable, productive and beautiful villages and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

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