

The Inspiration of Bandura's Social Learning Theory to Moral Education in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: In the 1960s, American psychologist Albert Bandura founded the social learning theory based on behaviorism and cognitivism. After more than 60 years of experiments, discussions and researches by scholars, the value of social learning theory is increasing day by day, and it has become the most influential theory in modern social learning theory, and it also provides the theoretical basis for our colleges and universities to carry out moral education of college students and guide them to moral practice. The current moral education job in colleges and universities has problems such as outdated methods, lack of resources and lagging content, which may lead to the problems of shaky moral education concept and lack of moral education practice among college students in the long run and make it difficult to cultivate socialist successors with comprehensive development of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic skills. Based on the theories of triadic interaction, observational learning and self-efficacy in Bandura's social learning theory, this paper proposes four insights for ethics education in China's colleges and universities in response to the above problems.

1. Introduction

Social learning theory takes human learning behavior as the starting point, observational learning, triadic interaction, self-efficacy and other theories as the main board, with content about the behavior, process and influencing factors of learning, etc. It has important reference significance for the theory and practice of moral education in colleges and universities. In a speech, General Secretary Xi said that university students are the builders of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the reserve army of socialist modernization, and their moral cultivation affects the ideological and moral quality of the Chinese nation and the civilization level of society. To enhance the moral cultivation of university students, strengthening the construction of moral education in universities is the foundation. At the same time, analyzing the existing researches, we find that there are many researches on social learning theory, but there are fewer researches on its application in colleges and universities. Even if there are some researches focusing on the application of social learning theory in colleges and universities, they are in other aspects, such as college students' learning motivation, teachers' teaching mode and college students' entrepreneurship and employment problems, but there are fewer researches on moral education in colleges and universities. In this paper, we sort out three dilemmas of the current moral education in colleges and

universities through literature, and put forward four revelations of moral education in colleges and universities according to Bandura's social learning theory.

2. The Dilemma Facing Ethics Education in Universities

With the telling development of the economy and society, morality has changed, from moral to utilitarian from dependent to autonomous, from monolithic to multifarious. The most obvious is the secularisation and utilitarianisation of morality in society, i.e. people have an instrumentalist attitude towards morality, which has led to a crisis of moral belief. As a special group, most of the contemporary university students are in late adolescence, not yet fully mature psychologically, not yet formed in their outlook on life and values, and lacking sufficient independent life experience, they have insufficient ability to discern things and are easily influenced by the outside world. All these reveal that moral education in China's colleges and universities is facing serious challenges. By combing through the existing literature, we find that moral education in China's colleges and universities is currently facing the following three major dilemmas.

2.1. The Mode of Moral Education in Colleges and Universities is Unitary

The current moral education in universities is mainly taught by teachers in classrooms, and the teaching method is mostly one-way moral knowledge instilling, with teachers focusing on preaching and precepting, neglecting the cultivation of students' moral emotion and moral practice ability, as well as individual characteristics. However, moral education aims to achieve the overall development of the human being by tapping into the needs of the historical zeitgeist for the development of human nature and mastering the laws of individual moral development. This one-way approach to moral education, in which moral knowledge is transmitted to students, lacks the cultivation of students' critical thinking skills and defeats the essence of the purpose of moral education.

2.2. The content of ethics education in universities is lagging behind

In the background of the information age, university students are keen to pay attention to celebrities, games, fashion, pets and other entertainment information, and pay little attention to political and current affairs, social hotspots and other events that contain mainstream values. Under the conflict of multiple values, some university students are unable to maintain a clear position and attitude when discussing and speaking out on social hotspots, and they have the wrong value orientation and appear as "keyboard warriors". The main reason is that the content of moral education in colleges and universities has not kept up with the times and is out of touch with the daily life of college students, which is rather old.

2.3. Lack of Moral Education Curriculum Resources in Colleges and Universities

The main types of explicit curriculum resources for moral education in colleges and universities are textbooks, teaching aids, illustrations and film materials, among which textbooks are the main curriculum resources for moral education with the classroom as the main way. The educational authorities and local governments decide on the preparation of teaching materials and the development of curriculum resources in moral education, and moral education teachers in colleges and universities hardly participate in the development of new curriculum resources, which leads to the thinness and lack of variety of moral education curriculum resources in colleges and universities. The implicit moral education curriculum is an extension of the explicit moral education curriculum

and is one of the good carriers of moral education. This kind of moral education curriculum is implicitly included in various explicit courses in schools, quietly influencing students' ideology and morality and thus their behaviour in an invisible and subtle way, however, the current research on invisible moral education curriculum resources is insufficient and does not give full play to its role.

3. The Influence of Social Learning Theory on Moral Education in Colleges and Universities

3.1. The impact of the triadic interaction theory on moral education in higher education

Bandura's triadic interaction theory states that the individual, behaviour and the environment are mutually influential and that individual behaviour is driven by internal factors as well as stimulated, shaped and controlled by the external environment. The environment is a potential determinant of behaviour. Firstly, the environment does have an influence, even a decisive influence, on behaviour. The second is that this effect is potential and that the environment can only play this role if it is combined with human factors and activated by appropriate behaviour. This is because people are able to select, organise and process stimuli from the external environment acting on them and in this way regulate their own behaviour. The interdependent and mutually determining relationship between behaviour and environment is mainly manifested in the fact that environmental influences determine which potential behavioural tendencies become actual behaviour, and behaviour in turn determines which environment becomes the actual environment that influences behaviour.

According to the triadic interaction theory, as long as the activities between the individual, the behaviour and the environment are carried out, the subjective factor of the individual will naturally participate in the interactive activities between the three, and the role played by its participation is pivotal. In the case of moral education in higher education, teachers need to recognise that the activity-based autonomy of students and the subjective initiative of individuals play a decisive role in their development. Teachers in higher education should design activities that are conducive to students' subjective role, so that students can develop through these activities, and teachers can guide and influence students' development through these activities. The development of students' self-education and self-control, their ability to perceive their environment, to choose and change it, and to make use of it, is a fundamental task, and is implemented in all activities at all stages of their lives.

3.2. The impact of observational learning on ethics education in higher education

Bandura's observational learning is when a person acquires certain new responses or has certain behavioral response characteristics corrected that he already has by observing the behavior of others and its reinforcement results. It is present in large numbers in life and is the main way in which individuals acquire social behavior, especially morality. In addition, social learning theory states that observational learning is divided into four stages: attention, retention, replication, and motivation. On the one hand, selective attention plays a key role in observational learning, which determines what students will observe, what they will learn, and what kind of character they will eventually develop in the presence of a large number of demonstrative events. The characteristics of the objects of observation are an important aspect influencing students' selective attention, specifically, students are more likely to observe those that are novel, similar to themselves, or considered to be excellent role models, and use them these groups as objects of learning to imitate. On the other hand, whether something acquired by an individual is performed depends entirely on its motivational factors, i.e., motivation is the intrinsic force that drives learners to reproduce the modeled behavior, and it exists from three sources: direct reinforcement, substitution reinforcement, and self-reinforcement.

According to the theory of observational learning, educators should firstly purify the environment around students and provide a good external environment for the formation of students' noble morals, so that students' selective attention can be chosen in a good external environment. For example, college classrooms, canteens and playgrounds have socialist core values stickers everywhere, which is a good environment for creating a kind of moral education. Secondly, in providing role models, overcome the emphasis on preaching and neglecting teaching by example. The teacher himself or herself is one of the role models for the students, and teachers should focus on their own behaviour rather than just preaching. At the same time, it is important to increase the effectiveness of role models in positively influencing students and to provide role models that are authentic, contagious and authoritative in order to stimulate positive moral feelings in students.

In order to avoid a disconnect between knowledge and action in ethical practice, teachers need to develop the intrinsic motivation of university students to behave ethically and to embody the correct moral perceptions they have learned. Only when university students are sufficiently motivated and inspired does observational learning in its latent state have the opportunity to be transformed into action. Intrinsic motivation plays an important role in bridging the gap between the acquisition and performance of moral behaviour and comes from the following sources: direct reinforcement, i.e. students' tendency to operate on behaviour acquired through observation if they expect it to result in a reward; substitution reinforcement, i.e. when university students see that the behaviour of others has resulted in a reward, it enhances their own tendency to perform such behaviour; and self-reinforcement, i.e. the individual's own control the reinforcement of the reinforcing event, which is not implemented by the outside world but is achieved by the individual himself. Teachers should therefore use praise and criticism correctly in their educational practice in order to establish a reasonable and appropriate link between the student's thoughts and behaviour and the reinforcement of rewards and punishments.

3.3. Impact of Self-efficacy on Ethics Education in Higher Education

Self-efficacy, as proposed by Bandura, refers to an individual's judgments, beliefs, and subjective self-grasp and feelings about his or her ability to complete an activity at a certain level, as well as motivating individual behaviour, influencing individual effort, and an individual's persistence and endurance in the face of difficulties and setbacks. Social learning theory suggests that self-efficacy comes from three main sources: successful experiences in students' moral events - the most basic and primary route to self-efficacy, which is weakened by repeated failures; alternative experiences, which are primarily self-efficacy generated by observing the behaviour of others; and verbal persuasion, which is effective is not an empty lecture, but one that is relevant to the student, fosters belief in their own abilities and encourages them to strive for success, whereas negative verbal persuasion can undermine self-efficacy.

In the moral education process, teachers must help students with low moral standards to develop a good sense of self-efficacy, to convince them of their ability to correct their shortcomings and to behave nobly, and to motivate them to change their ways. Teachers should not use negative words such as "hopeless" or "obsessed", as these words will not help students and will only weaken their sense of self-efficacy. Teachers need to have positive beliefs and attitudes towards their students and believe that there is a positive motivation within each student.

4. Implications of social learning theory for moral education in higher education

Based on Bandura's social learning theory, in view of the problems of single approach to moral education in colleges and universities, lagging moral education content and lack of moral education curriculum resources, these problems can be solved by constructing favourable campus moral

education scenarios, grasping the key to moral education classrooms in colleges and universities, enhancing the self-efficacy of both teachers and students, and cultivating students' correct moral motivation.

4.1. Building a favourable moral education scenario on campus

A moral context is an environment in which people and the environment interact. By constructing a moral context, students' motivation and the moral role of the environment can be better exploited. On the one hand, "the environment is only a potential thing that can only become a reality through appropriate behaviour; it does not have the inherent characteristic of necessarily stimulating people". On the other hand, students cannot be taught without the influence of the environment, and interactivity means that the role of people and the environment in moral education is mutual. The construction of a favourable moral environment includes the construction of a good physical campus environment, a positive campus network and a harmonious campus interpersonal environment. The "hardware" physical environment and the "software" spiritual environment can be used to infect students, to cultivate their noble interests, to improve their moral character, and to stimulate their inner truth and beauty.

The construction of a positive campus network propaganda context can effectively alleviate several problems with moral education in higher education. As the environment has both positive and negative effects on an individual's morality, it is necessary to purify the environment around the individual and create a good moral atmosphere. Especially in the modern information society, the Internet has become an indispensable part of the daily life of university students. However, due to the anonymity of the Internet and the lack of supervision, there are a large number of low moral behaviours in the Internet that are not subject to social constraints, and even contain undesirable information such as violence, pornography and gambling. This requires university moral education workers to regard the internet as a new type of university moral education base, join hands with forces from all walks of life to strengthen technical monitoring of cyberspace and purify the internet environment; specifically, online platforms such as Jitterbug and Weibo can be used to actively guide society and campus culture.

To build a harmonious campus interpersonal context, teachers should change the traditional, one-way, compulsory moral education model, which is mainly based on positive indoctrination, and advocate the "implicit education" model - that is, educators hide the theme and purpose of moral education, play down the educated person's The "implicit education" model is a way of education in which the educator hides the theme and purpose of moral education, and dilutes the educated's awareness of their role. At the same time, moral education can be promoted through the development of good campus rules and regulations, the introduction of humanities and social science courses such as arts and world citizenship, and general education courses, and the creation of a good teacher-student relationship during the implementation of these courses to promote the effectiveness of moral education and cultivate students' humanistic and moral qualities, thereby enhancing their overall quality.

4.2. Grasping the key to moral education in the university classroom

In university moral education classes, teachers are prone to uphold the idea that college students who are relatively mature physically and mentally pay attention to relevant moral education. The fact is, however, that some students wander out of the moral education classroom at the outset. In order to prevent the observed learning that is delayed by lack of attention, to enhance the attractiveness of the moral education classroom and to promote the attention of students in the moral education classroom, university moral educators need to grasp three key aspects of the

university classroom. Firstly, moral educators in higher education need to systematically grasp the rules relating to the attentional process of students, and to promote the intentional attention of students in the absence of interest, i.e. teachers intentionally create activities to attract the attention of students in the process of moral education. In response to attentional distractions, such as messages on mobile phones, teachers can ask students to stay away from their mobile phones in class, not to read messages, and to concentrate on and study the moral education content in class in order to achieve intentional attention. In addition, the moral educator can also achieve students' intentional attention by clarifying the purpose and meaning of moral education in the absence of interest.

Secondly, the moral educator should promote the students' selective attention to moral education under the condition of interest, so as to ensure the unity of quantity and quality of the students' internalisation of moral education. The process of selective attention in the moral education classroom, as a mediator of the interaction between the moral educator and the moral education target, is influenced and determined by the moral educator, the moral education target and the moral education activity. To increase the effectiveness of the attentional process, moral education must be based on such physiological characteristics of the moral object. The existence of individuals with different levels of moral development means that there are differences in their moral reasoning abilities and differences in their focus of attention. Because of such differences, the moral educator's active role in the process of attention enhancement is all the more necessary. The effectiveness of the attention process can be enhanced on the basis of the characteristics of the moral object itself. The presence of the moral educator as a role model for the moral object and the charisma of the role model can enhance the attention of the moral object. For example, teachers with educational charisma are more likely to attract the attention of students and thus enhance the effectiveness of moral education than ordinary teachers.

Finally, moral educators should clarify the important value of moral education for the socialization of college students. Marx said that the satisfaction of material materials is the first historical activity of human beings, so moral education should pay attention to the reasonable material needs of moral education subjects, in addition to the spiritual value and significance of moral education to them. Specifically, moral education in colleges and universities should meet the realistic material needs of college students, and also meet the needs of college students themselves to view and deal with the relationship between themselves and others, and between themselves and society in a more reasonable manner under the guidance of certain moral codes, which means cultivating the ability of college students to deal with the realistic relationship between taking and giving. Moral education in higher education can contribute to the enhancement of the individual's ability to survive, and through certain moral norms to guide the contradictions encountered by the target of moral education in achieving personal development, to realise the harmony and difference between the individual and others, and to coexist and develop. In classroom moral education, the focus on the needs of the moral education target is mainly on the need for moral education to respond to reality, to pay attention to and actively respond to the students' problematic hotspots.

4.3. Enhancing the self-efficacy of both teachers and students

Enhancing teachers' moral efficacy is conducive to enhancing students' moral efficacy. Teacher moral efficacy is a teacher's beliefs and convictions about his or her ability to organise and implement moral education successfully in order to achieve moral goals, based on his or her own judgement of moral competence. As Bandura says: "Teachers with a high sense of educational efficacy believe that difficult students can be taught if they put in the effort and use appropriate techniques. Conversely, teachers with a low sense of educational efficacy believe that if students are

not motivated, there is nothing teachers can do; the extent to which teachers can contribute to students' intellectual development is limited by the confronting influences of the family and the environment", and the level of teacher efficacy influences teachers' educational perceptions and behaviours, as well as in moral education. Teachers with a high sense of moral efficacy believe in the concept of equality, that "nothing is forsaken, and no one is forsaken", and take their own initiative to improve their moral education and the subtle influence it has on their students. Enhancing teachers' sense of moral education effectiveness is conducive to the optimisation of the moral education process, the infection of moral education targets and the improvement of moral education effects.

Higher self-efficacy allows students to actively engage in the process of moral learning and practice, and to develop good moral character and moral behaviour. Moral education practice is the fundamental way to enhance the self-efficacy of university students. This requires that moral education work in universities should cultivate good self-efficacy in students through appropriate role models and verbal persuasion. The most important thing is that moral education work should be close to the life of college students. The reform of moral education curriculum should reflect the real needs of real life and conform to the trend of development of the times, set up moral education contents such as collective life and social volunteering which are closely related to the real life of college students in a targeted manner, provide students with opportunities to participate in moral behaviours and achieve success, and guide them to make summary reflections. For example, after students have participated in voluntary service activities, they can review and summarise the process and results of the activities through class meetings and group discussions, which can not only enhance students' self-efficacy in moral behaviour, but also deepen their moral cognition and moral emotion, thus being able to deepen and consolidate the effect of moral education.

4.4. Developing the right moral motivation in students

The role of motivation for moral behaviour should be emphasized in the moral education of universities. As mentioned earlier, whether or not something acquired by an individual is performed depends entirely on his or her motivational factors, i.e. motivational factors play an important role in bridging the gap between the acquisition and performance of moral behaviour. Therefore, in the process of moral education in universities, attention should be paid not only to improving students' moral cognition, but also to cultivating positive moral emotions, thus stimulating students' moral motivation. For example, in moral education, use reinforcement means such as motivation and criticism, so that students can establish a reasonable and appropriate connection between moral behaviour and reinforcement means such as rewards and punishments; pay attention to highlighting students' subjectivity, guiding them to cultivate correct value standards, attaching importance to the role of students' self-experience in the formation and development of moral character, guiding them to play an active subject role in moral education, and transforming from external normative constraints to university students' internal self-discipline; avoid excessive use of external reinforcement such as praise and criticism, which may weaken students' motivation for subjectivity.

5. Conclusions

To sum up, Bandura's social learning theory highlights both the important role of social environment factors as well as observational learning, and the important role of individual motivation, interest and self-efficacy in moral learning, which has important theoretical and practical guidance value for moral education work in China's colleges and universities, and helps consolidate the status of moral education in colleges and universities as the main position of moral education for college students, reverses the current dilemma of moral education in colleges and

universities, and improve the effectiveness of moral education in colleges and universities. There is still great value in exploring Bandura's social learning theory and its application.

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