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Exploration on Cultivating College Students' Core Socialist Values Under the Marxist Moral Perspective

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Abstract

In the long history of human thought, Marx, with his profound insight and outstanding wisdom, outlined a grand blueprint for the progress and development of human society. Marx, with a deep concern for the fate of humanity, aspired to construct an ideal moral concept, namely, "to liberate labor economically and achieve comprehensive human development." He pointed out that morality does not exist in isolation, but is part of social ideology, with its roots deeply embedded in the economic foundation, changing with the changes of the economic foundation. At the same time, morality originates from life practice and needs to return to life to guide people's behavior. The core socialist values draw on the essence of Marx's moral view and have been innovated and condensed. An in-depth analysis of Marx's moral view can not only allow us to perceive the shortcomings of the core socialist values in moral practice, but also provide profound inspiration for our countrymen to establish core values, guiding us to better practice and promote them.

Keywords

Marx; Moral View; Core Socialist Values; Contemporary Enlightenment

1. Current Research Status of Marxist Moral View and Core Socialist Values at Home and Abroad

1.1 Domestic research

In China, the study of Marxist moral philosophy began in the early 20th century. With the dissemination and acceptance of Marxism, scholars began to apply the basic principles of Marxism to the field of moral philosophy. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Marxist moral philosophy became an important part of national ideological education, and its research was also further developed. Domestic scholars' research on Marxist moral philosophy mainly focuses on the following aspects:

(1) Basic principles of the Marxist moral view. Zhang Duan believes that the Marxist moral view "fundamentally breaks through the limitations of traditional moral views, liberates morality from abstract dogmas, and injects it with vivid social practical significance" (Zhang, 2025). Scholars have explored the basic concepts of the Marxist moral view, such as the class nature, historicity, and relativity of morality, as well as the relationship between morality and economic foundation and superstructure. They try to reveal the theoretical framework and core content of the Marxist moral view.

(2) The integration of Marxist moral views and Chinese traditional moral culture. In the context of globalization

and modernization, how to integrate the Marxist moral view with Chinese traditional moral culture has become an important topic of concern for domestic scholars. Yan Lianfu believes that "there is a high degree of compatibility between Marxism and Chinese excellent traditional culture, providing an inherent basis and connection point for activating Chinese excellent traditional culture with Marxism (Yan, 2025). They studied the excellent elements in Chinese traditional moral culture, such as benevolence, etiquette, harmony, etc., and explored the value and significance of these elements in modern society.

(3) Marxist moral view and core socialist values. In the context of strengthening the construction of core socialist values in China, how to combine Marxist moral views with core socialist values has become a hot topic among domestic scholars. Studying and practicing Marxist moral view, and combining Marx's specific viewpoints with the current reality of our country, can not only better guide the construction of Core Socialist Values in China, enable citizens to establish moral concepts of fairness and justice, but also provide new ideas and methods for solving moral issues at this stage (Man, 2024).

1.2 Foreign research

Currently, the academic community worldwide is paying close attention to the research on values education, with a particular emphasis on the issue of core values construction education. Countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom started their research on values education relatively early, beginning their studies in the 1960s and 1970s in response to the crisis in values. Nowadays, various schools of thought have emerged, developing into diverse theories. Foreign research on values issues mainly focuses on the examination and analysis of values themselves. In some countries, core values tend to advocate blood relationships, interpersonal relationships, self-cultivation, and moral rationality. Others emphasize individuality while neglecting collectivism. Only socialist countries have core values that are more distinctly influenced by socialist ideology.

Compared to foreign countries, China's research on values education started relatively late. In recent years, there has been a surge in research and numerous research outcomes. Since the proposition of the "socialist core value system" in 2006, research on the socialist core value system in China has gradually increased. The Core Socialist Values advocated by China, which encompass "prosperity, democracy, civilization, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendliness", are a high-level summary of the Chinese national spirit lineage and represent positive and affirmative values.

2. Basic Explanation of Marx's Moral View

Marxism embodies a theoretical system that addresses fundamental questions such as the essence, value, and laws of moral generation and development (Jin, 2020). Marx believed that morality is a social ideology, representing the sum of behavioral norms and standards that govern relationships between individuals and between individuals and society. Morality is not compulsory; it relies on social consensus, people's beliefs, habits, traditions, and education to function. Morality emerges within a certain mode of production in human society, is constrained by people's economic relations, and changes with the evolution of socio-economic relations. Morality is historical; the common morality of primitive society, which is compatible with its ownership system, is characterized by equal and mutual assistance among clan members and a sense of overall responsibility towards the nation as the norm for behavior. In a class society, morality is class-specific, with a unified common morality splitting into class morality. The morality of the exploiting class, which is compatible with private ownership of the means of production, becomes the dominant morality in various social forms. Opposing this is the morality of the working class in various societies, which advocates diligence, bravery, solidarity, and mutual assistance, and opposes exploitation and oppression. Bourgeois morality, with egoism and money worship as its behavioral norms, is the typical and last historical type of exploiting class morality. Proletarian morality, centered on collectivism, or communist morality, is the highest type of working-class morality. It is rooted in the class status and economic conditions of the proletariat and reflects the fundamental interests of the proletariat and working people.

3. Analysis of the Current Situation of Cultivating and Practicing the Core Values of Socialism

The core values of socialism have greatly disseminated and promoted the excellent traditional virtues of China. Whether it is the goal of building a socialist modernized country, the vivid expression of a better life, or the basic moral norms of citizens, these 24 words are a high-level summary and precise condensation of China's excellent

traditional culture. This core value system deepens the profound meaning of self-confidence in the Chinese path, theory, system, and culture from the three aspects of individuals, society, and the country, enriching the life connotation of the spiritual home of the Chinese nation. It should be pointed out that integrity education, as the support for the core values of socialism to inherit and promote excellent traditional virtues, has penetrated into the lives of the masses. The credibility of interactions between people has been greatly improved, and the socialist harmonious society is steadily moving forward. However, there are still many urgent issues to be addressed in cultivating and practicing the core values of socialism. These issues are listed as follows:

Firstly, there is confusion in personal value cognition. With the deepening exchange between Chinese and Western cultures, people, while being influenced by Western culture and updating their concepts, are also eroded by some decadent Western ideas. At the same time, the lack of practical opportunities for value education makes it difficult for students to translate theory into practice (Guo, 2024). Over time, there are adverse manifestations such as mental sluggishness and loss of values. What's worse, some people abandon the basic morality of being human, engaging in unscrupulous behavior, counterfeiting and fraud in production and business activities, abusing power for personal gain, corruption and bribery, extravagant lifestyles, etc., in their workplace. These misconducts, illegal behaviors, and corrupt practices are very frightening and dangerous phenomena.

Secondly, there is a lack of moral and intellectual education in both family and school. We come into this world to pursue a better life, and we will successively receive education from family and school to better understand and adapt to social development, among which, values education is essential. However, morality varies from person to person. Some parents and schools overly focus on the academic achievements of the educators while neglecting their values cultivation; they offer ideological and political education courses but ignore educational practice; and even instill in the educators the idea that morality is useless, making moral education a mere formality. It can be seen that students do not receive proper moral education, and their low moral quality will inevitably affect the cultivation and practice of core values.

Thirdly, the emphasis on online education regarding social and national values is insufficient. In the micro-network perspective, public opinion is changing rapidly, and people's expression of opinions is more liberal. The Internet has become an important channel that influences the development of the public's worldview, outlook on life, and values. The virtuality and anonymity of the network also easily lead college students to relax their moral constraints in online behavior, resulting in uncivilized, immoral, and even illegal behaviors (Liu, 2024). Additionally, the faculty strength for online moral education is relatively weak, the content is relatively outdated, and the methods are relatively monotonous, making people susceptible to the influence of backward and vulgar ideas. In severe cases, this can lead to distorted values, reckless dissemination, and publication of irresponsible remarks online, hindering the development of others, society, and the country.

4. Adopting Marxist Moral View as a Cultivation Perspective, and Practicing the Core Values of Socialism

Adhere to the people-oriented principle and promote the comprehensive development of individuals. Although Marx did not write specialized works to elucidate moral issues, his attention and contemplation on moral issues permeated throughout the development of his thought (Li, 2025). As Marx pointed out, humans are social beings who engage in social interactions and social practices. Furthermore, humans possess subjective initiative and are capable of making value judgments and choices regarding their own actions. Firstly, Marx emphasized that human development should be aligned with human abilities and needs. People not only need to sustain their survival and development, but also enhance their own abilities. Individuals should strive for comprehensive development. In contemporary China, drawing on Marx's moral view can better construct Core Socialist Values in the whole society. We must base ourselves on the essence of modernization—the modernization of people (Huang 2025), and promote their all-round development. Secondly, in Marx's socialist theory, a society where "everyone can achieve free and comprehensive development" is envisioned. The most crucial aspect of this society is the development of moral character, which necessitates moral education throughout society. It requires us to continue organizing mass activities for spiritual civilization, enhance the overall quality of the people, and guided by advanced socialist culture, inherit and promote excellent traditional and revolutionary cultures. This approach not only focuses on propaganda and education but also emphasizes translating moral theory into moral practice. Thirdly, to achieve comprehensive development of individuals, it is essential to promote harmonious development between individuals, individuals and society, and individuals and nature. Instead of abstractly understanding moral self-discipline and moral heteronomy, we should organically

combine the two in reality and allow them to play a role in specific situations. This enables people to pursue more diverse values and make judgments and choices that are more aligned with their own development, ultimately becoming comprehensively developed individuals.

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