

Research on the Application Strategies of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in Moral Education in Junior High Schools

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Abstract

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture is a crucial embodiment of the spiritual lifeblood of the Chinese nation, encompassing abundant moral education resources and educational values. Junior high school students are in a critical stage of shaping their worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. Effectively integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into moral education not only facilitates the inheritance of the nation's cultural genes but also holds great significance for enhancing students' moral literacy, strengthening their cultural confidence, and fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. By defining the basic connotations of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture and moral education in junior high schools, this paper systematically analyzes its application value in moral education, and proposes practical approaches from five dimensions: concept renewal, environment creation, curriculum development, institutional guarantees, and evaluation mechanisms. The aim is to promote the in-depth integration of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture and moral education in junior high schools, and achieve the educational goal of nurturing people through culture and fostering virtue.

Keywords

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture, Moral Education in Junior High Schools, Practical Approaches.

1. Introduction

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture is the crystallization of wisdom passed down from generation to generation, embodying the deepest spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation. Its core ideological concepts such as self-cultivation, family harmony, national governance, and world peace, as well as exploring things to acquire knowledge; the Chinese humanistic spirits like seeking common ground while reserving differences and advocating frugality and self-restraint; traditional virtues and spirits including patriotism, benevolence, loyalty, and righteousness; and cultural achievements such as poetry, ci, qu, fu, architecture, and cultural relics, all serve as the unique spiritual symbols of the Chinese nation. The middle school stage is a critical period for the physical and mental development of adolescents, especially with significant changes in psychological development, which poses greater challenges to moral education. Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into middle school moral education not only contributes to the inheritance and development of culture but also provides strong support for better conducting middle school moral education and achieving favorable moral education outcomes.

2. The Application Value of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in Moral Education in Junior High Schools

With a long history and profound connotations, Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture, nurtured over more than 5,000 years of civilization, has condensed profound moral wisdom and ethical spirits. Its application value in junior high school moral education is irreplaceable, playing a vital role in enhancing students' moral cultivation, strengthening their cultural confidence, and promoting comprehensive quality-oriented education.

2.1. Creating a Favorable Moral Atmosphere and Enhancing Students' Moral Cultivation

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture emphasizes core values such as "benevolence", "propriety and righteousness", and "integrity", and contains rich core value concepts, Chinese humanistic spirits, and traditional Chinese virtues. For instance, the noble character of "being the first to worry about the affairs of the state and the last to enjoy oneself"; the life pursuit of "living as a hero and dying as a martyr"; the gratitude of "fallen petals are not unfeeling things, but turn into spring mud to nurture flowers"; and the patriotic feelings of "since ancient times, no one has escaped death, but I will leave a loyal heart to shine in the annals of history". All these embody the moral cultivation unique to the Chinese nation that has lasted for thousands of years, such as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and integrity. They are not only the unique symbols of the Chinese nation but also an inexhaustible source of inspiration for students to engage in self-reflection and practice, providing abundant spiritual nourishment for students to understand and transform the world[1]. The goal of moral education in junior high schools is also to cultivate students' moral qualities, teach them to uphold virtues and observe etiquette, help them develop good behavioral habits, and internalize and externalize good moral qualities such as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and integrity.

Therefore, with Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture as a medium, schools can guide students to personally experience the charm of traditional culture by organizing a variety of cultural activities. For example, in the process of interpreting the allusions of historical figures, digital technologies (such as AR or VR) can be used to enhance the interest and embodiment of moral education activities, break the boundaries of time and space, enable students to "communicate" with ancient people, feel the greatness of ancient sages, and deeply understand the profound connotations and value implications of traditional Chinese virtues such as integrity, friendliness, and filial piety[2]. These activities can inspire students to think, help improve their moral qualities and cultivation, and shape their sound personalities. In addition, relying on junior high school moral education work and activities, which complement the courses of various subjects, students can learn about the wisdom of self-cultivation in Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture, which also helps to enhance their ability of self-restraint and self-improvement, thereby improving their moral literacy.

2.2. Inspiring Students' National Pride and Strengthening Their Cultural Confidence

Against the backdrop of digital technology and globalization, with the improvement of China's international status and the increase in openness, the impact of foreign cultures inevitably affects junior high school students' cognition and recognition of Chinese culture, putting them in the practical dilemma of "information explosion". From the perspective of the external environment, the rapid development of information technology is a "double-edged sword". On the one hand, it enriches students' access to knowledge, broadens their horizons, and enhances their critical thinking and innovation capabilities. On the other hand, it also imperceptibly spreads some negative foreign cultures to students, affecting the shaping of their correct values.

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture is a treasure of the Chinese nation and an important source of inspiring students' national pride and sense of belonging. From the perspective of students themselves, junior high school students are in a critical stage of physical and mental development, with obvious changes in their bodies and minds. Meanwhile, they are in the formative period of their worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. They are highly malleable but also easily influenced by the outside world. Once affected by negative foreign cultures, it is difficult to reverse the impact later. As the essence inherited by people from generation to generation, Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture concentrates the wisdom of ancient people. Therefore, integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into junior high school moral education, absorbing its essence and discarding its dross, can not only inherit and promote the fine traditional culture but also help students deeply understand the essence of their national culture, awaken their cultural genes, inspire their national pride, strengthen their cultural awareness and confidence, thereby resisting the impact and invasion of negative foreign cultures and establishing a positive and correct cognition of the national image.

2.3. Enriching Moral Education Resources in Junior High Schools and Promoting Comprehensive Quality-Oriented Education

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture also contains rich moral education resources. For example, the ethical and moral norms such as "benevolence", "integrity", "filial piety and fraternity", "propriety and righteousness", and "sense of shame"; the value concepts like "constantly striving for self-improvement", "having a broad mind and carrying great responsibilities", "do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you", and "exploring things to acquire knowledge, being sincere in one's intentions and upright in one's heart"; and the harmonious concepts and ecological wisdom such as "harmony between man and nature" and "harmony without uniformity"—all these are precious moral education resource pools that need to be further explored and creatively transformed. By relying on multiple carriers such as school-based courses, themed activities, campus environment, club activities, social practice, or online platforms, and linking the main forces inside and outside the school, these resources can be effectively introduced into junior high school moral education, and the unique value of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture as a moral education resource can also be exerted.

In 2019, the State Council issued the "Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Education and Teaching to Comprehensively Improve the Quality of Compulsory Education", which emphasizes the core position of moral education in comprehensive quality-oriented education, and requires highlighting the effectiveness of moral education and deepening education through curriculum, culture, activities, practice, management, and collaboration. Therefore, integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture as a moral education resource pool into moral education work has the following effects: Firstly, it deepens moral education, directly providing rich moral nutrients, strengthening the socialist core values such as integrity, friendliness, and patriotism, and consolidating the foundation of students' ideological and moral character. Secondly, it enlightens intellectual education. Through the study of classics, students' dialectical thinking and logical thinking are exercised, their historical wisdom is enhanced, and the philosophical thoughts contained in traditional culture inspire their minds. Thirdly, it strengthens physical education. Traditional sports such as martial arts and archery contain the will qualities of "martial spirit", "etiquette norms", and "perseverance", which help to promote students' physical and mental health and the cultivation of their will. Fourthly, it cultivates aesthetic education. Traditional art, poetry, architecture, etc., are important carriers of aesthetic education, which can improve students' aesthetic taste and humanistic literacy. At the same time, "the integration of beauty and virtue" promotes the sublimation of moral emotions. Fifthly, it develops labor education. The traditional farming culture and craftsman spirit emphasize diligence, frugality, and the pursuit of excellence, which can be integrated into labor

education to cultivate students' labor concepts, skills, and qualities. Based on this, integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the five aspects of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education can improve students' comprehensive quality and further promote comprehensive quality-oriented education.

3. The Practical Approaches of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in Moral Education in Junior High Schools

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture and junior high school moral education are highly consistent in their goals, and can provide strong support for students to practice socialist core values and shape sound personalities. To enhance the effectiveness of integrated education, teachers should focus on the core spirits of traditional culture, such as constantly striving for self-improvement, having a broad mind and carrying great responsibilities, and being honest and trustworthy, deeply explore the connotations of moral cultivation, personality, and spiritual will contained in it, and promote the effective transformation of traditional culture resources. At the same time, a path of in-depth integration should be constructed from multiple dimensions such as concept renewal, publicity and guidance, practical experience, institutional guarantees, and evaluation mechanisms to build a more systematic and efficient moral education system and achieve the coordinated development of traditional culture and junior high school moral education.

3.1. Renewing Concepts and Establishing Scientific Moral Education Concepts

At present, although teachers can perceive the important value of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in moral education, in terms of moral education behaviors and habits, they have not established a stable moral education concept. This leads to the phenomenon that cultural inheritance and moral cultivation are "two separate aspects". For example, students may know how to write the character "filial piety" (孝), but they do not understand the ethical significance of "respecting parents and complying with their aspirations"; they may be able to recite "do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you" fluently, but it is difficult for them to practice the "doctrine of forgiveness" in interpersonal conflicts. As a result, when applying Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture to junior high school moral education, they fall into the three misunderstandings of superficiality, fragmentation, and instrumentalization. Based on this, teachers should renew their moral education concepts and truly recognize the important value of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in junior high school moral education.

3.1.1. Shift from "knowledge imparting" to "value internalization" and overcome superficiality

Teachers should deeply understand that the moral education value of traditional culture does not lie in how many famous sayings, aphorisms, or historical allusions students can remember, but in guiding them to understand, recognize, and internalize the core ideological concepts, traditional Chinese virtues, and Chinese humanistic spirits contained in it[3]. This means that in moral education, we should focus on in-depth exploration of the ethical concepts, value orientations, and life wisdom behind cultural symbols. Especially in teaching, we should go beyond simple literal interpretation and story-telling. For example, when explaining "filial piety", teachers should not only enable students to write the character and know related stories, but also guide them to discuss the specific manifestations of "respecting parents and complying with their aspirations" in modern family relationships. Through situational discussions, role-playing, life practice, and other methods, students can develop a deep understanding and emotional resonance with the core values of "gratitude, responsibility, and respect" carried by "filial piety", realizing the transformation from "knowing what it is" to "understanding why it is" and "being willing to do it".

3.1.2. Shift from "scattered activities" to "systematic integration" to overcome fragmentation

Teachers need to abandon the practice of equating traditional culture education with occasional festival activities, recitation competitions, or themed class meetings. They should establish a systematic and holistic view of moral education, and regard the spiritual core of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture as an organic component and important support of moral education goals. This means that the elements of traditional culture should be systematically sorted out and organically integrated into the junior high school moral education system, running through classroom teaching (especially in subjects such as Chinese language and literature, history, and ethics and rule of law), class management, campus culture construction, social practice, and other links.

3.1.3. Shift from "emergency tool" to "spiritual nourishment" to overcome instrumentalization

Teachers should not only regard traditional culture as an "emergency tool" to solve specific moral education problems. They should truly recognize ideologically that Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture is a rich spiritual resource for nurturing students' moral character, shaping their sound personalities, and laying the foundation for cultural confidence. This means that in moral education practice, teachers should focus on students' long-term development and spiritual growth, and take traditional culture as a source of nourishing the soul, inspiring wisdom, and cultivating sentiment. For example, guiding students to learn the spirit of "constantly striving for self-improvement" is not only to solve the current academic difficulties, but also to cultivate their resilience and enterprising spirit in the face of life challenges. Teachers themselves should be practitioners and models of cultural spirit. Through words and deeds, they can enable students to imperceptibly feel the spiritual charm and enduring value of traditional culture, so that students can truly recognize and love it from the bottom of their hearts.

3.2. Strengthening Publicity and Creating a Favorable Cultural Atmosphere

In current junior high school education, some teachers and students pay more attention to academic performance, and the content related to Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in teaching materials is limited. Therefore, the construction of the external environment is also an important part of junior high school moral education. The construction of a good environment will have an imperceptible impact on the formation of students' moral qualities. By integrating the moral education elements and content contained in Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the class environment and campus environment, we can create an external moral education environment with a strong cultural atmosphere, allowing Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture to exert an imperceptible influence on all aspects of students' study and life.

3.2.1. Create an immersive campus physical environment to make the elements of excellent traditional culture "visible everywhere"

Make full use of campus space, carefully design and arrange, so that the stories, maxims, and values of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture can be imperceptibly integrated into students' daily life and study. For example, in public areas such as teaching building corridors and stairwells, set up publicity boards, murals, or reliefs themed on traditional virtues such as "benevolence, integrity, propriety and righteousness, sense of shame, loyalty and filial piety, diligence and frugality, self-improvement, and harmony", with graphic introductions of classic quotations and historical figures' stories. Establish "Sinology corners", "classic reading areas", and "traditional art exhibition corners", and provide relevant books, tools, or exhibits, so that students can have access to and experience traditional culture in their spare time. In addition, names with profound traditional cultural implications can be given to landscapes such as

pavilions, buildings, roads, and gardens, such as "Siqi Garden" (Garden of Learning from the Virtuous), "Mingde Road" (Road of Upholding Virtues), and "Sansheng Pavilion" (Pavilion of Self-Examination Thrice a Day), with explanations of their origins and connotations attached, turning the naming of the environment itself into a part of cultural education. At the same time, in classrooms, encourage each class to incorporate traditional cultural elements into the classroom decoration, such as setting up a "classic recitation corner", formulating "class conventions", and posting calligraphy works, traditional Chinese paintings created by students, or handwritten newspapers themed on traditional virtues[4]. Through these measures, students can be in a "living museum" of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture even on campus, and be influenced by it through constant exposure.

3.2.2. Plan campus cultural activities to make cultural experience "vivid and perceptible"

Through rich and diverse campus cultural activities that can be carried out continuously, students can experience the charm and spiritual connotations of traditional culture in the process of participation, experience, and interaction. For example, on the Qingming Festival, organize themed class meetings or memorial activities with the theme of "remembering ancestors and cherishing life"; on the Dragon Boat Festival, carry out activities such as making zongzi (glutinous rice dumplings), making sachets, telling the story of Qu Yuan, and holding dragon boat races, and discuss their cultural implications such as "patriotism" and "hygiene and disease prevention". Regularly organize large-scale or small-scale classic recitation competitions, Chinese poetry contests, idiom story competitions, and campus drama/textbook drama performances themed on traditional virtues. Through recitation, understanding, and interpretation, make the classics "come alive". In addition, folk artists, inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, calligraphers, and traditional Chinese painters can be invited to the campus to set up workshops, give lectures, or offer short-term courses, allowing students to have close contact with and experience the beauty of skills and spiritual values of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture.

3.2.3. Build a diversified communication network to make the "voice of culture" deeply rooted in people's hearts

Fully utilize modern communication media and internal school communication channels to construct an all-round, multi-dimensional publicity network. This network should continuously amplify the voice of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture, expand its influence and coverage, and guide teachers and students to develop cultural awareness. For example, use platforms such as campus radio stations, TV stations, official websites, and WeChat public accounts to launch regular columns like "Sinology Mini-Lectures", "Stories of Virtues", "Classic Appreciation", and "Origins of Festivals", and push relevant content on a regular basis. Meanwhile, in the publicity process, it is essential not only to tell historical stories but also to explore and promote role models around us. For instance, select and commend "Campus Virtuous Youths" who excel in areas such as "filial piety to parents", "integrity", "helping others", "diligence and frugality", and "self-improvement". Publicize their deeds and invite them to share their experiences and insights on practicing traditional virtues, thereby enhancing the sense of connection and persuasiveness. In addition, promote the importance of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in moral education to parents through channels such as parent-teacher meetings, letters to parents, and lectures at parent schools[5]. Recommend activities like family co-reading of classics and celebrating traditional festivals together, and encourage parents to set an example in family life to foster a positive family culture. At the same time, collaborate with community resources to carry out off-campus practical activities or publicity initiatives.

3.3. Strengthening Publicity and Creating a Favorable Cultural Atmosphere

Junior high school students are in a transition period from perceptual intuition to rational thinking, and life experiences can help them understand theoretical knowledge. Therefore, teachers need to use Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture to improve the moral education curriculum system in junior high schools, developing characteristic courses and teaching methods. By aligning with the actual conditions of junior high school students, we can create curriculum content and teaching materials that meet their developmental needs, thereby enabling more scientific implementation of curriculum-based moral education.

3.3.1. Construct a hierarchical curriculum framework for moral education rooted in traditional culture

In terms of school stages, based on the cognitive development laws of junior high school students and the overall goals of moral education, refine specific moral education objectives for each grade regarding the learning of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture. For example, the 7th grade should focus on the cognitive understanding and emotional recognition of basic ethical norms such as "filial piety to parents and respect for teachers" and "honesty and trustworthiness"; the 8th grade should deepen the cultivation of social qualities like "distinguishing right from wrong", "sense of responsibility", and "harmony without uniformity"; and the 9th grade should emphasize higher-level value guidance and spiritual shaping, such as "patriotic feelings", "constant self-improvement", and "ideals and aspirations". In terms of curriculum design, break down disciplinary barriers and avoid fragmentation. Systematically sort out the moral education resources contained in Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture, and under the policy guidance of the Guidelines for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Primary and Secondary School Curricula and Textbooks, organically integrate these resources into the existing junior high school curriculum of Ethics and Rule of Law, while complementing related subjects such as Chinese Language and Literature, History, Art, and Physical Education[6]. For example, systematically teach the connotations and contemporary values of traditional virtues in the Ethics and Rule of Law course; deepen the interpretation of cultural spirits in classic texts in Chinese Language and Literature classes; analyze the national spirit reflected in historical figures and events in History courses; experience the aesthetic pursuit and humanistic spirit embodied in traditional art forms in Art classes; and learn the "martial virtues" in martial arts in Physical Education classes.

3.3.2. Develop experiential characteristic courses and teaching resources.

In response to the thinking characteristics and developmental needs of junior high school students, avoid empty preaching and develop student-centered characteristic curriculum content and teaching methods that emphasize experience and practice. Firstly, schools should develop school-based moral education courses centered on Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture with distinct school characteristics. The curriculum content should be closely linked to students' real lives and social hot topics, selecting classic stories, maxims, deeds of historical figures, and cases of contemporary role models that are appropriate to students' cognitive levels[7]. It should also design situational and problem-oriented learning tasks. For example, around the theme of "integrity", activities such as discussions, debates, and simulated practices can be designed based on campus life, online behavior, and social phenomena. Secondly, abandon the single indoctrination-style teaching method, and vigorously promote experiential, inquiry-based, cooperative, and project-based learning. Widely adopt teaching methods such as situational simulation, role-playing, cultural project creation, and thematic debates. Thirdly, systematically collect, organize, and develop moral education resources related to Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture suitable for junior high school students, including selected classic readers, multimedia courseware, case collections, activity plan databases, excellent teaching

cases, and lists of practical bases. These resources provide strong support for teachers' teaching practices.

3.4. Strengthening Publicity and Creating a Favorable Cultural Atmosphere

Evaluation is an indispensable and vital part of moral education in junior high schools. It can summarize the implemented moral education practices and provide feedback on educational effectiveness. In the process of applying Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture to junior high school moral education, it is necessary to give full play to the role of evaluation: incorporate the crucial codes of conduct in Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the evaluation content and standards. This not only standardizes the words and deeds of teachers and students but also enhances the comprehensiveness of moral education evaluation.

3.4.1. Construct a moral education evaluation index system that integrates elements of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture

When formulating evaluation standards, core content of traditional culture regarding moral cultivation, codes of conduct, and value concepts—such as "benevolence", "propriety and righteousness", "integrity", and "filial piety and fraternity"—should be incorporated to form codes of conduct with cultural roots and contemporary significance. The evaluation content should not only focus on the development of students' external behaviors (e.g., etiquette, sense of responsibility, and collective awareness) but also pay attention to the shaping of their internal values (e.g., respect for tradition, love for national culture, and patriotic feelings). This makes moral education evaluation more in-depth and culturally connotative.

3.4.2. Promote the diversification and process-oriented development of evaluation methods.

Beyond the traditional teacher evaluation, student self-evaluation, and peer evaluation, other channels such as parental evaluation, community participation, and feedback from social practice should be introduced to construct an all-round, multi-dimensional moral education evaluation mechanism. At the same time, attach importance to daily behavior observation and growth records. Through the establishment of student growth files and traditional culture learning logs, dynamically reflect students' real performance and development trajectory in moral education practice, thereby enhancing the scientificity and effectiveness of evaluation.

3.4.3. Strengthen the feedback and application mechanism of evaluation results

Moral education evaluation is not only a summary of students' behaviors and ideological status but also should serve as an important basis for improving subsequent education. Schools should regularly analyze evaluation data, adjust teaching strategies and the design of moral education activities in a timely manner, and enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into moral education. Meanwhile, through commending advanced models and setting up moral role models, play a positive incentive role. Guide students to continuously internalize the spirit of traditional culture, consciously practice socialist core values, and ultimately achieve the fundamental goal of nurturing people through culture and fostering virtue through education.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, moral education in junior high schools is a vital part of school education and a key link in shaping students' sound personalities. As a unique symbol of the Chinese nation, Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture is our most precious spiritual treasure. Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into junior high school moral education and maximizing its inherent value is conducive to the in-depth development of quality-oriented education and the cultivation of more all-round talents for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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