

Issues and Countermeasures of Student Labor Education under the Semi-Militarized Management Mode

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Abstract: The semi-militarized management mode, by adopting military management principles, has gradually developed into a distinctive educational approach aimed at cultivating students' discipline, sense of responsibility, and teamwork abilities. Within this context, labor education has become an essential component of semi-militarized management, enhancing students' labor skills and professional qualities through collective labor and practical activities. However, as educational practice deepens, several issues have emerged in this mode, including a lack of diversity in educational methods, superficiality in the educational process, and low student engagement, all of which undermine the effectiveness of labor education. The root causes of these problems primarily lie in the excessive emphasis on discipline and obedience, a lack of diversity in educational content, and an underdeveloped educational management system. Additionally, the inadequate emphasis placed by society and families on labor education exacerbates these challenges. To address these issues, this paper proposes the improvement strategies, including strengthening the recognition of labor education concepts, enriching educational content and methods, enhancing the quality of the teaching workforce, promoting student participation, and fostering stronger home-school cooperation and social support. These strategies aim to provide theoretical guidance and practical pathways for effectively conducting labor education in universities within the context of the new era.

Keywords: Semi-Militarized Management, Labor Education, Universities, Teaching Workforce

1. Introduction

The application of the semi-militarized management mode in China's education system has a deep historical foundation, dating back to 1982. At that time, the Chinese government approved the reinstatement of semi-militarized management in certain universities, establishing a hierarchical structure akin to the military's "battalion-company-platoon-squad" system^[1]. This approach was further supported by the Ministry of Transport through provisions for uniforms, funding, and weaponry. In 1985, the government formally endorsed the expansion of this mode by designating specific universities as pilot institutions for student military training, creating an integrated educational approach combining management, education, and training^[2]. Over time, through the introduction of regulatory documents and practical implementation, the semi-militarized management mode gradually became a unique hallmark of China's maritime education, reaching its peak development in the late 20th and early 21st centuries^[3].

Against this historical backdrop, labor education has also evolved. The theoretical foundation of labor education can be traced back to the Marxist concept of labor, emphasizing the role of labor in achieving comprehensive human development. In China, labor education, as a crucial component of quality education, has garnered increasing attention in recent years, particularly following the release of the *Outline of Patriotism Education in the New Era*. This has elevated the importance of labor education in China. Labor education encompasses not only the development of labor skills but also the cultivation of labor spirit, professional ethics, and social responsibility^[4].

The integration of semi-militarized management with labor education is based on the alignment of

their objectives: both emphasize discipline, responsibility, and collective consciousness. However, existing research reveals several issues in this integration. For instance, some scholars argue that the content of labor education under the semi-militarized management mode is overly uniform, with rigid formats that lack innovative labor projects aligned with contemporary developments. Additionally, research indicates that the excessive focus on discipline and obedience often undermines student autonomy in labor education, thereby affecting the educational outcomes^[5]. These issues highlight a disconnect between the theory and practice of labor education within the semi-militarized management mode, necessitating enhanced theoretical research and innovative practices for optimization.

In this context, this paper first systematically reviews the connotations and characteristics of labor education under the semi-militarized management mode, drawing on existing research findings. Second, it analyzes current issues and their underlying causes from various dimensions, including management philosophy, educational content, and student participation. Finally, based on these issues and their causes, the paper proposes targeted countermeasures to provide robust theoretical support and practical guidance for universities to more effectively implement labor education in the context of the new era.

2. Characteristics of Labor Education under the Semi-Militarized Management Mode

Semi-militarized management refers to a mode in which non-military institutions adopt military-style standardized management practices. This approach involves establishing unified standards to regulate the behaviors and thoughts of both teachers and students, and providing strong guidance to instill good habits in students. In the context of labor education, semi-militarized management emphasizes collective labor and practical activities to cultivate students' labor values, skills, and habits^[6]. However, in practice, this management mode tends to focus heavily on discipline and obedience while overlooking the diversity of labor education and the individuality of students^[7].

Labor education under the semi-militarized management mode has the following characteristics:

1) **Combination of discipline with a sense of responsibility:** Discipline is fundamental in semi-militarized management, and labor education as a key component of this mode similarly stresses students' discipline and responsibility. Students are required to complete labor tasks within a specified time frame according to set standards, which not only improves their time management and execution skills but also nurtures their sense of responsibility by helping them understand the value of each labor task and approach it with seriousness^[8].

2) **Fostering collective collaboration and teamwork:** Labor education under semi-militarized management is typically conducted in a group setting, requiring students to establish effective collaborative relationships to accomplish tasks together. In this process, students learn to listen to others' opinions, respect others' contributions, and solve problems through teamwork. This collective experience is essential in cultivating students' team spirit, strengthening their sense of collective honor and belonging^[9].

3) **Enhancement of labor skills and professional ethics:** Labor education involves not only physical labor but also skill acquisition and professional ethics training. Under semi-militarized management, labor education focuses on integrating theoretical knowledge with practical operations. Through specific labor practices, students develop essential skills such as tool usage and safety procedures. Additionally, labor education emphasizes the cultivation of professional ethics, including dedication, integrity, and service awareness, laying a solid foundation for students' future careers^[10].

4) **Promotion of self-management and self-education:** Labor education under semi-militarized management encourages students to engage in self-management and self-education. During labor activities, students are responsible for planning, organizing, and supervising their own work, which fosters independence and autonomy. Moreover, labor education serves as a self-reflective process where students evaluate their behaviors, draw lessons from their experiences, and continually improve themselves to achieve personal growth^[11].

5) **Shaping of labor values and broader worldviews:** Labor education is not only about imparting skills and knowledge but also about instilling values and perspectives. Under semi-militarized management, labor education allows students to experience both the challenges and rewards of labor, guiding them to develop a correct understanding of labor's value and significance. At the same time, labor education emphasizes the cultivation of social responsibility, helping students recognize the connection between individual labor and societal progress, as well as the development of country^[12].

3. Issues in Labor Education under the Semi-Militarized Management Mode

Undeniably, with the support of policies in China, labor education in universities has made significant progress, contributing positively to the overall development of students. However, within the framework of the semi-militarized management mode, several prominent issues persist in labor education, which are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

Firstly, labor education lacks diversity in its format. Under the semi-militarized management mode, labor education is predominantly focused on collective labor and campus cleaning, with insufficient integration of innovative content that aligns with modern technology and industrial development. This monotony fails to spark students' interest and enthusiasm for learning, resulting in suboptimal educational outcomes. The rigid and uniform approach to labor education lacks personalized and differentiated teaching methods, making it difficult to cater to the diverse learning needs of students^[13].

Secondly, the educational process is superficial. Within the framework of semi-militarized management, labor education is sometimes conducted merely to fulfill requirements, lacking depth and substantial experiential learning. Students may engage in labor tasks in a mechanical manner without truly understanding the significance and value of labor. Moreover, there is often a lack of in-depth instruction and demonstration of labor skills during the educational process, leading to difficulties in students acquiring practical skills and applying their knowledge in real-life situations, which results in insufficient educational depth^[6].

Thirdly, student participation is generally low. Due to overly strict and meticulous management, students often find themselves in a passive role during labor activities, lacking autonomy and creativity. Additionally, some students perceive labor education as an extra burden due to inadequate understanding, leading to low engagement and enthusiasm^[5].

Fourthly, outdated perceptions of labor education prevail. In some schools and families, labor education is still regarded as a secondary matter and has not received adequate attention. Schools tend to prioritize academic performance and university entrance rates over labor education, neglecting its critical role in students' holistic development. Furthermore, some parents and students hold the misconception that labor is menial work, resulting in a reluctance to participate in labor activities. Such biases severely hinder the in-depth promotion of labor education^[12].

Lastly, safety and management issues are prominent. In labor education, students often lack safety awareness and self-protection skills, leading to frequent safety incidents. Additionally, some labor projects carry potential safety risks, necessitating strengthened management and supervision by schools. Although semi-militarized management imposes strict institutional and disciplinary requirements, the large number of students and their diverse characteristics present significant challenges in practical implementation^[11].

4. Causes of the Issues in Labor Education under the Semi-Militarized Management Mode

In implementing the semi-militarized management mode, some universities overly emphasize discipline and obedience while neglecting the essence of education and the need for individualized student development. This misalignment in management philosophy directly leads to a rigid, monotonous approach to labor education that fails to meet the diverse developmental needs of students^[13].

Currently, the management mechanisms for labor education in many universities remain underdeveloped, lacking scientific and rational evaluation and support systems. This deficiency hinders the effective implementation and continuous improvement of labor education. Establishing a comprehensive support system is essential for the smooth advancement of labor education in the context of the new era. Given the rapid socioeconomic development, building a complete and scientifically sound labor education framework for university students is not only of significant practical importance but also carries profound historical value^[14]. Labor education, as a complex and systematic endeavor, urgently requires a robust support system. Such a system would not only enhance students' labor skills and practical abilities but also promote their all-round development across the dimensions of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education. However, the current support mechanisms remain inadequate, with critical issues such as insufficient funding, inadequate facilities, and a lack of essential resources, severely limiting the progress of labor education^[7].

Moreover, the level of emphasis on labor education in some universities is still insufficient.

Presently, labor education in Chinese universities is primarily carried out through entrance education, professional internships, and social practice. While these methods have yielded some positive outcomes in improving labor education, traditional approaches lack continuity, relevance to modern contexts, and targeted effectiveness, making it difficult to address the evolving demands of labor education in the new era^[15]. Therefore, it is imperative to continuously explore new educational content that aligns with the characteristics of contemporary students, making labor education more relevant, targeted, and sustainable. Although labor education has long been a recurrent and significant topic, many institutions still fail to fully recognize its importance, leading to insufficient attention and suboptimal educational outcomes^[16].

5. Countermeasures to Enhance the Effectiveness of Labor Education under the Semi-Militarized Management Mode

In advancing labor education, it is crucial to draw on effective practices from the semi-militarized management mode, facilitating an organic integration between the two to enhance the overall effectiveness of labor education. The specific strategies are as follows:

First, it is essential to strengthen awareness of labor education concepts. Currently, many university students in China lack a solid understanding of labor values and possess insufficient labor skills. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate students' labor consciousness and abilities through enhanced publicity, improved institutional frameworks, and diverse practical activities. In strengthening the conceptual foundation of labor education, university educators should prioritize theoretical research. Presently, theoretical studies on labor education in higher education remain underdeveloped, with limited academic works and research outcomes available. Some studies even reduce labor education to technical training due to a narrow understanding of the concept. Therefore, universities should clarify the objectives of labor education and integrate them within the overall framework of semi-militarized management, emphasizing its crucial role in cultivating students' comprehensive qualities, fortifying their character, and enhancing practical abilities. Through targeted publicity and education, students can be guided to recognize the value and significance of labor, fostering a culture of respect, enthusiasm, and appreciation for labor.

Second, labor education content and methods should be optimized. Universities should design diverse labor education courses and activities based on their unique circumstances and students' characteristics, such as campus greening, hygiene maintenance, community service, and labor skill training. Additionally, innovative approaches should be adopted, such as project-based learning and task-driven teaching modes, to guide students in experiencing and reflecting on labor through specific tasks. Furthermore, modern information technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), can be utilized to provide students with more engaging and immersive labor education experiences.

Third, the organization and management of labor education need to be strengthened. Universities should refine their management systems by establishing a comprehensive labor education management framework under the semi-militarized mode. Clear roles, responsibilities, workflows, and evaluation standards should be defined to ensure the orderly implementation of labor education. Additionally, supervisory mechanisms should be enhanced to monitor the execution of labor education, promptly identify and address issues, and ensure that educational outcomes are effectively realized.

Fourth, improving the quality and capabilities of the teaching workforce is crucial. Universities should provide regular training and exchange opportunities for educators involved in labor education to enhance their professional skills and teaching abilities. Moreover, establishing an incentive mechanism is necessary to encourage active participation by teachers in curriculum development and instructional practices, thereby boosting their motivation and creativity.

Fifth, emphasis should be placed on student participation and experience. Labor education should fully leverage students' agency by encouraging them to independently design, implement, and evaluate labor projects and activities. Through activities such as labor competitions and skill exhibitions, students' labor experiences can be enriched, allowing them to derive enjoyment and value from their participation.

Lastly, strengthening home-school cooperation and social support is key. A communication mechanism between schools and families should be established to regularly provide feedback to parents on students' performance and progress in labor education, thereby gaining parental

understanding and support. Concurrently, it is essential to seek the backing of government departments, community organizations, and enterprises, providing students with more opportunities and platforms for social practice and labor training.

6. Conclusion

The application of the semi-militarized management mode in Chinese universities, particularly in labor education, demonstrates its unique value in shaping students' discipline, sense of responsibility, and teamwork abilities. However, a systematic analysis of labor education under this mode reveals several persistent issues in current practice, including a lack of diversity in educational formats, insufficient content innovation, and limited student autonomy. These challenges not only weaken the effectiveness of labor education but also hinder the comprehensive development of students' overall competencies. Further investigation shows that these problems stem primarily from rigid management philosophies, deficiencies in educational mechanisms, and outdated perceptions of labor education.

First, while the semi-militarized management mode's emphasis on strict discipline and obedience helps regulate student behavior in labor education, it also tends to result in inflexible and overly standardized approaches that stifle creativity. Second, current labor education programs in universities rely heavily on traditional collective tasks and repetitive activities, without effectively integrating the demands of modern technology and industry, leading to a lack of appeal and relevance. Additionally, the absence of comprehensive educational mechanisms—such as single-dimensional evaluation criteria and incomplete support systems—hinders the sustainable improvement and optimization of labor education.

In response to these challenges, this paper proposes a series of countermeasures, including enhancing awareness of labor education concepts, optimizing educational content and methods, refining management systems, improving the quality of the teaching workforce, and strengthening home-school cooperation and social support. These strategies are not only based on a detailed analysis of existing problems but are also aligned with the future development trends of labor education. Particularly in the context of the new era, labor education's mission should extend beyond skill acquisition to focus on cultivating students' professional ethics, social responsibility, and innovative abilities.

Looking ahead, the integration of the semi-militarized management mode with labor education requires ongoing exploration and adjustment in practice. On the one hand, universities should maintain discipline and structured management while also exploring more flexible and diverse approaches to labor education that enhance student agency and engagement. On the other hand, educational administrators need to further innovate evaluation mechanisms, aligning them with individual student development needs by incorporating diverse evaluation criteria and incentive systems, thereby realizing the true value and enriched content of labor education.

From a theoretical perspective, research should continue to deepen the understanding of the internal logic between semi-militarized management and labor education, exploring optimal pathways for their integration in various educational contexts to provide a more systematic theoretical foundation for university management. Simultaneously, in educational practice, universities should actively adopt modern information technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance the interactivity and effectiveness of labor education, thereby better meeting the new challenges posed by future societal demands for talent development.

In summary, advancing labor education under the semi-militarized management mode requires not only innovation based on the strengths of traditional management but also systematic reform at both theoretical and practical levels. Through multi-layered and multidimensional exploration, the modernization of labor education in universities can be more effectively promoted, laying a solid foundation for cultivating innovative talents with comprehensive development in the new era.

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