

# Constraints and Improvement Paths of Teacher Ethics Construction for Chinese Higher Education Institutions in the New Era

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**Abstract:** Since the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party, the connotation for teacher ethics construction has been continuously enriched in Chinese colleges and universities. In the new era, the construction of teacher ethics has basically achieved standardization and legalization, forming a relatively complete institutional system in colleges and universities. Based on the relevant theories of teacher ethics construction, this paper reviews the existing literature of domestic and foreign scholars on teacher ethics construction. Research suggests that the main body of teachers demonstrates the political and professional advantages that should be given to the construction of teacher ethics. The good professional literacy and professional knowledge of teachers provide a solid foundation for the construction of teacher ethics. Institutional norms effectively empower the construction of teacher ethics through a long-term mechanism. However, the transformation of teacher roles lags behind the differentiated educational needs currently. The construction of teachers neglects moral cultivation and humanistic qualities. The imbalance exists between applied teaching and research functions. There are significant differences in the allocation of educational resources in colleges and universities. Therefore, this paper puts forwards some suggestions, including strengthening the ethics of university teachers should adhere to the socialist core values as the basic principle; optimize the evaluation system of teacher ethics and motivate teachers to improve their self-cultivation; strengthen the supervision of teacher ethics and effectively prevent misconduct in teacher ethics; rectify the academic atmosphere and create a good atmosphere for teacher ethics construction. This provides a strong decision support for the research on the construction and evaluation system of progressiveness and forward-looking teacher ethics in colleges and universities in the new era.

**Keywords:** Teacher Ethics Construction, Higher Education Institutions, Socialism Core Value, the New Era

## 1. Introduction

Talents are the core force of social development. Teachers' moral quality is an important embodiment for the realization of talent value in colleges and universities. Teachers play a leading role in the process of talent training quality, scientific research level, social service and sustainable development. Development of teachers' human resources focuses on the construction of teacher ethics. Strengthening the construction of teacher ethics is the basis for cultivating a team of teachers with noble quality, firm politics and brave dedication.

At present, the social economy has developed rapidly, and the social structure and the ideology have undergone profound changes. Value diversification has become the most distinctive feature in the new era. This has also had a profound impact on the construction of teacher ethics. It is relatively weak for the internal self-discipline and external constraints of teacher ethics, which are mainly manifested in the loss of ideals, the anomie of norms, the disorder of behaviors and the spiritual fault of teacher ethics. The construction of teacher ethics in colleges and universities has also fallen into a dilemma to some extent. The frequent phenomenon of anomie of teacher ethics has broken through the scope of colleges and universities and even the educational field, caused widespread social concern, and become a hot topic in the field of ideological and political education.

The high-level nature of higher education requires teachers not only to educate students with a wealth of learning, but also to influence students with good virtue. Compared with other industries and

other levels of education, the public has put forward higher requirements for teachers' professional ethics in colleges and universities. With the deepening of reform and open up, the values have shown a diversified trend of development, which has lashed and weakened the traditional moral concepts to a certain extent. It has a profound impact on the teaching faculty in colleges and universities. The great development of higher education has brought unprecedented changes to the structure and influence of teachers.

## 2. Literature Review

With the in-depth study of the relationship between market economy and socialist moral construction, relevant research results have gradually emerged, and provide new support for the theory of socialist teacher's moral construction<sup>[1]</sup>. Some domestic scholars study the issue of socialist moral construction in different stages<sup>[2]</sup>. At the same time, research scholars have also conducted research on socialist moral construction and experience summary in specific historical periods<sup>[3]</sup>. Some scholars also focus on the socialist moral construction of specific figures. In the new era of social development, the CPC Central Committee has put forward a series of major strategies based on the goal of building a well-off society in an all-round way<sup>[4]</sup>. To guide ideological and moral construction is an important research topic in the development of ideological and moral construction in China.

Foreign scholars have different views on the concept and category of morality. In general, scholars from the Soviet Union and some Marxists have a scientific understanding of morality, while the early Western scholars have one-sided and limited ideas. In the view of most western scholars, morality originates from religion, and is generated to meet the interests of social classes with strong political color. With the continuous growth of the socialist camp, the profound understanding and application of Marx's theory has gradually enriched the connotation of morality. Most scholars study the role, significance and status quo of morality from an objective and positive perspective<sup>[5]</sup>. However, a few scholars are biased in their research on morality, exaggerating the role of morality, and even thinking that morality can replace the role of education. In general, most scholars at home and abroad are not optimistic about the current situation of morality construction, and are still discussing how to establish a new moral system.

The research on teacher ethics abroad has been very mature, and formed evaluation standards and systems. The analysis of foreign research status can provide reference and help for the research on teacher ethics in China. Referring to teacher ethics, there is no special vocabulary to describe it in English. Modern western philosophers begin to put forward new views on the theoretical research of Marxist philosophy. To explore the position of moral value in Marxism and the nature of Marxist capitalist criticism has become the focus of western Marxist research in recent years. From the previous summary, it can be seen that the focus of domestic scholars is to summarize the reality of the group, find the corresponding reality display from a theoretical perspective, and then analyze the reasons and draw conclusions. Western scholars pay more attention to studying university teachers from the perspective of practice, finding outstanding teachers, and studying the process of becoming outstanding teachers. It is more realistic and persuasive to explore the reason and essence from their own experience summary. In the new era, it should further promote and practice the socialist core values, adhere to the direction of serving the people, and promote the comprehensive development of spiritual and material civilization. By studying the historical process of socialist moral construction profoundly, it could clarify the evolution of Chinese moral development in the new era.

## 3. Status Quo of Teacher Ethics Construction in Colleges And Universities

### *3.1. The Main Body of Teachers Demonstrates the Political and Professional Advantages Required for Construction of Teacher Ethics*

College teachers are active in thinking and good at accepting new things. Since the reform and opening up, education has obtained great development vigorously. Under the fierce impact of different cultural trends and new technological revolution, college teachers highly agree with the Party's basic line, principles and policies. They spread Marxism, advocate the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and actively promote the cause of ideological and political education. The intellectuals' sense of responsibility makes them dissatisfied with the shortcomings in the current social development, but they are the most important force that can be completely trusted and relied on politically.

### ***3.2. Good Professional Attainment and Knowledge Solidify the Foundation for Teacher Ethics Construction***

Through higher education, college teachers have certain professional qualities. Democracy, justice, honesty and trustworthiness are the basic moral values of college teachers. In order to expand political education, the Party Central Committee has carried out several large-scale ideological liberation movements, bringing the pursuit of truth into young teachers. The professional characteristics of teachers determine that teachers should be higher than other professions in ideological realm. Teachers need to have a strong sense of career, put the interests of the country and the people first, and have the faith and determination to devote all their knowledge, talent and youth to the education cause. In professional ethics, the inner faith supports teachers to earnestly implement professional codes, which is the source of dedication.

### ***3.3. Institutional Norms Effectively Empower the Long-term Mechanism for Teacher Ethics Construction***

Teachers in colleges and universities pay attention to teaching by precept and example and being a model for others. Most college teachers have reasonable knowledge structure and solid theoretical foundation. In particular, young teachers have made great contributions to the development of college education and the cultivation of talents. In current society, the employment situation is severe. Most college teachers can be content with their own work, love education and devote themselves to scientific research. They have the ability to explore the essence of things and can undertake scientific research in different professional fields. Its achievements will be transformed into social productive forces directly or indirectly, enriching theoretical research and promoting education practice. Teaching promotion through scientific research is a concrete manifestation of college teachers' love for education.

## **4. Constraints on the Construction of Teacher Ethics in Colleges and Universities**

### ***4.1. The Transformation of Teacher Roles Lags Behind the Differentiated Educational Need***

Since the expansion of higher education in 1999, local universities have undertaken most of the increase in undergraduate enrollment. The gap in admission scores between key universities and local colleges has been further widened. According to the survey, most college teachers believe that the quality of the enrolled students has declined significantly after the enrollment expansion. The student groups receiving higher education in local universities are becoming more and more heterogeneous, and the demand for higher education is becoming more and more diversified. Compared with key universities, the size and structure of student sources are more complex and diverse. In other words, the popularization of higher education has obviously widened the gap between local universities and key universities in terms of the quality of students. Local universities and key universities show different characteristics in theoretical teaching and practical teaching.

From the perspective of education quality, key universities still retain the connotation of elite education to a certain extent after enrollment expansion. Local universities, on the other hand, more reflect a view of higher education quality under education popularization. The most profound change of this quality view lies in its diversity. The diversified educational outlook emphasizes the all-round development of talents and the diversified quality outlook. This requires that university teachers must change their roles from knowledge teaching to student development. In the process of education, it is quite necessary to fully respect the democratic rights of students, pay attention to the individual differences of students, attach importance to the independent development of students, and build a democratic and harmonious teacher-student relationship.

### ***4.2. The Construction of Teachers Neglects Moral Cultivation and Humanistic Qualities***

High quality teacher resources are an inexhaustible source for a university to win sustainable development ability and core competitiveness. Compared with the key universities, the contradiction is particularly prominent between the scale and quality for local universities. This is mainly reflected in the construction of the teaching staff.

With the rapid expansion of the higher education in recent years, teachers have made great progress both in quantity and quality for local university. On the whole, however, the growth of the number of

teachers lags far behind the growth of the size of students. Due to the expansion of the higher education, the ratio of students and teachers is too large in local universities. The shortage of full-time teachers has increased, and the structural shortage has seriously exceeded the reasonable range. In particular, the shortage of teachers is more serious in newly-built undergraduate colleges and some local universities in remote areas. It has become a strategic issue concerning the success of local universities to have a sufficient number of high-quality teachers to ensure the quality of popular higher education.

In order to alleviate the contradiction caused by the shortage of teachers, local universities have increased the efforts to introduce teachers. A large number of young teachers with newly graduated masters and doctors as the main body have entered the teaching staff, and the trend of young teachers is prominent. On the whole, young teachers are highly educated, knowledgeable, professional and active, and are gradually becoming an indispensable new force for college teaching and talent training. However, the basic teaching skills and professional ethics for some young teachers need to be improved. Local universities pay more attention to the educational level and academic ability of candidates, and neglect moral cultivation and humanistic quality, which aggravates the possibility of teachers' moral decline.

In terms of working environment and living treatment, the competitive advantage of local universities is generally weaker than that of key universities. In recent years, a large number of high-level talents from local universities have flowed to key universities, especially from those with remote regional locations. Stabilizing the high-level faculty has become an important aspect of the construction of the faculty in local universities. All these put forward new requirements for the construction of teacher ethics in local universities.

#### ***4.3. The Balance between Applied Teaching and Scientific Research Functions Has Been Broken***

The function of higher education constantly enriches, but talent training is always regarded as its most basic function. At present, under the guidance of relevant national policies, universities attach great importance to improving the overall scientific research level and scientific research strength in order to gain greater competitive advantage. In view of this, teachers generally pay attention to the improvement of their academic level, and virtually ignore the development of teaching ability. The two cannot develop in harmony, and it forms a situation where the development of teaching ability lags behind the development of scientific research ability.

Local universities are mainly characterized by application type. Such colleges and universities mainly cultivate undergraduate application-oriented talents, and carry out applied and developmental research at the same time. In teaching, scientific research and social services, this requires teachers in local universities to reflect different professional moral requirements from the teachers in key universities and higher vocational colleges. Teachers in local universities have a solid foundation in professional theory and strong practical ability in professional skills. Different from traditional knowledge teaching itself, modern teaching in local universities needs to combine scientific research and social services. Scientific research should not only combine teaching laws and methods, but also undertake applied scientific research tasks to promote and serve the development of regional social productivity. To meet the diversified talents demand of regional economy and society, diversified school running modes adapt to the development of the new situation. It is quite meaningful to actively pay attention to the needs of local economic and social development, and highlight the professional ethics of scientific research in local universities.

#### ***4.4. Significant Differences Exist in the Allocation of Educational Resources for Colleges and Universities***

In general, investment in local universities from local governments is significantly lower than investment in key universities from the state. The education input of local universities mainly comes from local finance, and the transfer payment from the central government is less. The support from local regions and communities is also less. There is a widespread problem of insufficient teaching resources. In many local universities, the construction of teaching infrastructure is weak, and the ability to raise funds for scientific research or social services is limited. The existing infrastructure cannot meet the needs of teaching and scientific research development.

After the enrollment expansion, the demand for running funds has increased significantly in local universities, and the serious shortage of running resources has become more prominent. The enrollment scale has doubled in a short period, and the gap of teaching resources per student has been further

widened between local universities and key universities. The serious shortage of teaching resources makes it difficult to guarantee the basic education quality and normal education order. At the same time, it also puts forward higher requirements for teachers in local universities. The humanistic quality and the humanistic spirit embodied in the educational process have a particularly far-reaching impact on students in local universities.

## **5. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations**

### **5.1. Conclusions**

The construction of teacher ethics is related to the Party's leadership over schools, the comprehensive implementation of the Party's educational policies, and the inheritance of the socialism cause with Chinese characteristics. The teachers' professional characteristics determine that they must be a morally noble group. The main body of teachers demonstrates the political and professional advantages that should be possessed in the construction of teacher ethics.

The teachers' good professional literacy and professional knowledge provide a solid foundation for the construction of teacher ethics. In the new era, the construction of teacher ethics has basically achieved standardization and legalization in universities and colleges, forming a relatively complete institutional system. Institutional norms effectively empower the construction of teacher ethics through a long-term mechanism.

But currently, the transformation of teachers' roles lags behind the differentiated educational needs. The construction of teacher group neglects moral cultivation and humanistic qualities. The imbalance exists between applied teaching and research function. And there are significant differences in the allocation of educational resources for colleges and universities.

Therefore, strengthening the ethics of teachers in colleges and universities should adhere to the basic principles of socialist core values in the new era. It should comprehensively strengthen the ideological and political work of the teaching staff, highlight the establishment of rules and ethics, and strengthen the educational rule of law and discipline for teachers. Teachers' professional ethics and literacy should be vigorously improved. It should highlight classroom moral education and enhance teacher's moral literacy in education and teaching. It is necessary to incorporate and conduct the requirements for building professional ethics throughout the entire process of teacher management. It should be strict to supervise teacher ethics and establish a diversified supervision system. The academic atmosphere should be rectified and a good atmosphere for teacher ethics construction should be created.

### **5.2. Policy Recommendations**

#### **5.2.1. Adhere to the basic principles of socialist core values**

The socialist core values occupy a leading position in the socialist ideological and theoretical system. The core values of socialism with Chinese characteristics should not only highly concentrate on displaying the essence of the traditional core values of the Chinese nation, but also scientifically explain and highly summarize the essence of socialist values. The core values of socialism with Chinese characteristics should not only actively undertake the outstanding value elements in the consensus of human values, but also learn from the experience and lessons of the world socialist practical movement. Taking the broadest recognition of the Chinese people's values as the realistic basis, the core values of socialism with Chinese characteristics are the manifestation of the development of the core values of the Chinese nation to modern times, and the inevitable link in the development of modernization.

#### **5.2.2. Optimize the evaluation system of teacher ethics and motivate teachers to improve their self-cultivation**

Teachers' morality is to standardize the professional ethics of individuals engaged in educational work and put forward requirements for their educational practice. Teachers' morality consists of personal morality and professional morality, and they restrict and influence each other. It can be said that personal morality is the basis of professional ethics, and professional ethics is the specific expression of individual morality in educational activities. In the process of talent cultivation, it should put the construction of teacher ethics and academic ethics in the first place in colleges and universities,

adhere to the guidance of the socialist core value theory, constantly optimize the evaluation system of teacher ethics, encourage teachers to do a good job in the cultivation of teacher ethics, strengthen the supervision of academic behavior, and lay the foundation for cultivating high-quality talents.

### ***5.2.3. Strengthen the supervision of teacher ethics and effectively prevent teachers' misconduct***

The whole party is armed with scientific thought and theory. Especially in the process of economic development, it is even more important for educators to pay more attention to theoretical learning. An effective learning mechanism is established, supplemented by a step-by-step approach, and carried out in ideological and political education. It is an important prerequisite to strengthen the construction of teacher ethics, improve the theoretical accomplishment and enhance the consciousness of implementing the Party's line. Only when teachers strengthen their theoretical learning can they educate students with scientific theories. In the education of teacher ethics, it should take the education as the core, improve the rules and regulations of political learning, and stimulate the enthusiasm of teachers and students in colleges and universities. In terms of learning form, it should study scientific theories at fixed time, organize temporary learning seminars, exchange learning experience, and give play to the exemplary role of Party members and cadres.

### ***5.2.4. Rectify the academic atmosphere and create a good atmosphere for the construction on teacher ethics***

Modern education pays more attention to quality and ability than knowledge. College teachers should grasp the means of modern educational technology, use forward-looking vision, and quickly adapt to the trend of educational development. At the same time, the whole society should form a good atmosphere that attaches importance to education, adhere to the correct guidance of public opinion, and promote traditional humanistic care. The social status of teachers is improved, and young teachers are urged to turn the improvement of professional ethics into conscious action.

First of all, teachers' Party construction work should be strengthened in colleges and universities, and guide teachers are guided to actively close to the Party organization, and achieve political progress. Academic freedom is advocated, academic atmosphere is purified, and correct academic awareness is connected with professional ethics. Secondly, young teachers should be respected and appreciated in colleges and universities. The world outlook of young teachers is very different from that of their predecessors, mainly due to the great changes in the world. Their personality should be stimulated, their traditional-breaking teaching methods should be acknowledged, and their needs for self-realization should be satisfied. Thirdly, young teachers' mental health and physical quality should be cared about in colleges and universities. With the improvement of social economy, it is suggested that more attention should be paid to the living environment of young teachers and relieve psychological pressure in time in colleges and universities.

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