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The Characteristics and Enlightenment of Core Values Education for Youth in Singapore

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Abstract

Young people are the future of the motherland, and educating them on core values is related to the future and development prospects of the country. Both the Chinese and Singaporean governments attach great importance to the education of core values for young people. This paper analyzes the characteristics of the core values of young people in Singapore, in order to enlighten the education of core values for young people in our country.

Subject Areas

Core Values Education for Youth in Singapore

Keywords

Singapore, Core Values, Characteristics, Inspiration

1. Introduction

At present, China is at a historical juncture of profound changes in the global pattern. The social structure is undergoing major adjustments, and people's thinking concepts are also undergoing profound changes in the subtle influence of Western multiculturalism and values. In this context, the core values of education of young people in our country are facing unprecedented challenges, and new contradictions and problems are emerging one after another. In view of the complex and changeable world situation, we must attach great importance to the cultivation of core values for young people, use scientific means to effectively resist the erosion of bad cultural trends, and persevere in this work. As one of the four Asian tigers, Singapore has not been established for a long time, but its economy has developed rapidly, its political situation is stable, and its society is stable. This is inextricably related to its successful socialist core values of educa-

tion. China and Singapore have different national conditions and social systems, but both countries share the same cultural origin, and both face the conflict and integration of Eastern and Western cultures in the context of the new era. There are many correlations and differences in the core values education of China and Singapore. [1] Through in-depth research on the core values education of young people in Singapore, we can learn from its successful experience and provide useful reference for the optimization and innovation of the core values education of young people in China, so as to more effectively cope with the current challenges, promote the healthy growth of young people, and lay a solid foundation for the long-term development of the country.

2. The Connotation of Core Values Education

Values refer to people and groups, organizations, societies, countries, and other fundamental issues of value. [2] As a member of society, individuals have different values. How to make core values recognized by all members of society, internalize them in their hearts, and become values that everyone adheres to is a major issue worthy of our consideration. How to define core values, there are various views in the academic community. From the literal meaning dimension, scholar Li Shunde put forward: "The concept of 'talking about core values' may have two meanings: one refers to the values of 'core subjects'; the other refers to the core content of a certain value system." [3] Zuo Yawen and Shi Haiyan believe that "there are three levels of core values in a society, which are general values, core value system and core values." [4] They point out that general values are diverse, and the core value system is extracted from general values, while core values are further condensed from the core value system and are the highest level of values. This passage explains the relationship between the three values. For a society, core values reflect the deepest values of a society.

Values are a part of social ideology, originating from society and reflecting objective existence. The formation of people's ideas depends on the surrounding social environment, conditions and their own practical activities. In this process of formation, the importance of education is revealed. Whether it is social education, school education or family education, it occupies an important position in the process of forming values. So what is core values education, that is, a country or political party, with the core values of the country and the party acting on people's thoughts, let their thoughts gradually move closer to the direction of the core values of the country and political party, so that people can identify and accept this core value, and internalize it, as a measure of their own behavior is right and wrong, so as to deal with various social relations.

3. The Necessity of Educating Young People on Core Values

As the future pillars of the country, young people carry vigorous vitality and infinite hope. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized: "The adolescent stage is the period of pulling out the ear of birth control in life, and it needs careful cul-

tivation and guidance the most". [5] In August 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping repeatedly emphasized at the National Propaganda and Ideological Work Conference: "We must seize the critical period of the formation and determination of young people's values, and guide young people to buckle the first button in life". On April 21, 2022, the Information Office of the State Council released the white paper "Chinese Youth in the New Era", which is the first white paper on the young generation in the history of New China, fully demonstrating the youthful responsibilities that Chinese youth should have in the new era. On the morning of May 10, 2022, at the 100th-anniversary conference of the founding of the Communist Youth League of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that young people are the most vibrant, aggressive, and least conservative group in society, and placed great hope on the young generation.

Adolescents have a high degree of acceptance of new things, strong perception, and gradually enhance their self-awareness, and their social roles are increasingly prominent. However, because their cognitive level and social experience are not yet fully mature, they are in a critical period of the formation of their outlook on life, world outlook and values. They are relatively weak in their ability to distinguish bad phenomena and trends of thought in society, and are vulnerable to the influence of bad values such as individualism, hedonism, and money worship, resulting in cognitive and behavioral confusion and confusion. This cognitive ambiguity may lead to their blind obedience and extreme psychology, causing their values to deviate from the mainstream values, which in turn affects the value orientation of the future society. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen the cultivation of young people's core values. This will not only help guide them to form correct ideological concepts and develop towards the direction of society's leading values, but also enable them to gradually accept and adhere to the guidance of socialist core values, and use this as a code of conduct to properly handle various social relations.

In November 2012, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China report put forward the essence of socialist core values from the three levels of the state, society and citizens with "three advocates". At the national level, we advocate prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony; at the social level, we advocate freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law; at the citizen level, we advocate patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendliness. This is the further condensation of socialist core values after our party proposed the socialist core value system, reflecting the "greatest common divisor" of values that the people of the whole country agree with at this stage. [6] On October 18, 2017, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that "the core socialist values are the concentrated embodiment of the spirit of contemporary China and condense the common pursuit of values by all the people." [7] This series of important ideological views focuses on the historical mission of realizing the great rejuvenation of the nation, and further clarifies the starting point and end point of the construction

of socialist core values.

In our country's education system, ideological and political education courses are provided from primary schools to universities, aiming to help students develop correct values. The Singaporean government also attaches great importance to the education of young people's values. As early as the 1990s, then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong emphasized the importance of youth education, believing that they are the future and hope of the country, and they must be fully explored and enhanced to cultivate their correct attitude towards life, so as to better serve the country in the future. Therefore, making full use of the laws of physical and mental development of young people to cultivate core values is not only the key to promoting their healthy moral growth, but also an important guarantee for the harmonious development of society.

4. Characteristics of Core Values Education for Young People in Singapore

The core values include respect, responsibility, tenacity, integrity, care and harmony, which are also the foundation of the social and national values shared by Singaporeans. [8] In recent years, with the joint efforts of the Singaporean government, society and schools, the education of core values for young people has made great progress, and its characteristics are as follows.

4.1. Legalization of Social Management

Compared with our country, one of the remarkable features of Singapore's core values education is its strict rule of law management. Although our country's core values education also emphasizes the principle of both morality and law, in the actual implementation process, the application of coercive means is relatively small, the degree of integration with the law needs to be deepened, and more relies on school moral education and persuasion education. In contrast, Singapore's education system places more emphasis on the parallel development of morality and the legal system, strengthening citizens' recognition of moral norms through the normative and coercive nature of the law.

In Singapore's education system, the rule of law education runs through the primary and secondary school stages, and gradually shows the trend of moral legalization. "The Singaporean government requires all primary and secondary schools in Singapore to establish institutions to prevent students from breaking the law and committing crimes." [9] The ideological and moral qualities such as littering, spitting, graffiti, and other moral aspects, civilized behavior norms, and humanistic ethics are fully incorporated into the legal system. Through legislation, formulate corresponding policies, and use legal means to force people to abide by them. And strictly enforce the corresponding penalties such as fines, caning, and imprisonment. At the same time, social policies such as commending and rewarding positive and noble behaviors such as bravery, helping others, and respecting the elderly and caring for the young are guided, so that Singapo-

reans can truly develop in the direction of "truth, goodness, and beauty." [10] This kind of education model of moral rule of law not only helps to improve the moral quality of citizens, but also effectively maintains the harmony and stability of society.

To sum up, Singapore's rule of law management characteristics in core value education are worth learning from. By strengthening the combination of morality and the legal system, we can more effectively promote the improvement of citizens' moral quality and promote social harmony and progress.

4.2. Emphasize the Educational Role of Community Associations

The community organization system in Singapore shows the characteristics of rational structure, scientific management and institutional perfection. Specifically, its community organizations can be divided into two categories: the constituency level and the residential area level. Community organizations at the constituency level play a key role in bridging between the government and residents, mainly responsible for the dissemination of government policies and the feedback of residents' information needs, ensuring the smooth flow of policy information, and also providing a platform for residents to communicate with the government. Community organizations at the residential level focus on managing and building community residents' clubs, and organize various activities for education and publicity, aiming to enhance national stability and social unity, and enhance community cohesion.

The Singaporean government attaches great importance to the development of community service, actively implements community service programs, and organizes diverse activities including good-neighborly activities, assistance for the disabled, and volunteer services in welfare institutions. These activities not only enrich the daily lives of community residents, but also effectively cultivate the social dedication and sense of responsibility of young people. In Singapore, the community records the service of individuals participating in public welfare activities in detail, and uses it as an important reference to measure the comprehensive quality of individuals, further emphasizing the important role of community service in personal growth and social development. In addition, social groups in Singapore, such as charitable organizations and religious groups, also play an active role in promoting core values. Take the Nanyang Technological University Social Welfare Volunteer Service Club as an example, which is an influential volunteer organization in Singapore. Students organize themselves and actively participate in various social welfare activities, giving back to the society with practical actions and enhancing social welfare. Through these volunteer activities, students deeply realize their responsibility to society and the country, and further enhance their sense of social responsibility and mission.

To sum up, community organizations in Singapore have played an important role in the education of core values. Through scientific management and sound

systems, they have effectively promoted community cohesion and personal comprehensive literacy. At the same time, the active participation of social groups and volunteer organizations has also provided strong support for the promotion of core values.

4.3. Close Integration of Theory and Practice

In Singapore, the close integration of theory and practice in the education of young people's core values has become a major feature of its education system. From the "curriculum assistance" activities in primary and secondary schools to the government-led civilization and courtesy movement, to the activities of civil society and religious organizations, Singapore fully promotes the establishment of core values, and implicitly realizes the educational effect. The Singaporean government launched a series of "Life Education" activities at several key time points, such as 1974, 1980 and 1999, and carefully compiled ideological and political education textbooks for young people such as "Life and Growth", "Good Citizen" and "Ethical Education Anthology". These easy-to-understand moral and civilized education books are closely integrated with Singapore's national conditions, and skillfully integrate fables from Chinese classical culture. Framed by the daily lives of four young people of different races, they are interspersed with a large number of Chinese classical myths and legends, classic stories and fairy tales. This not only enriches the cultural knowledge of young people, but also helps them understand social rules.

Singapore's Ministry of Education clearly stipulates that young students must participate in certain extracurricular service practice activities, such as cleaning, cleaning toilets, social visits, etc., with the aim of allowing students to participate in and improve their practical skills. In addition, primary and secondary schools also hold regular flag-raising ceremonies, asking students to recite the covenant: "We are Singaporean citizens, vowing to unite regardless of race, language, religion, to build a just and equal democratic society, and to achieve the happiness, prosperity and progress of the country, and to work together." [11] As a core value, this covenant is remembered and internalized by students every day, becoming a patriotic belief and belief. The government also regularly organizes activities such as "Good Neighbor Week", "Courtesy Week" and "National Awareness Week", which aim to cultivate young people's awareness of social service and strengthen the spirit of friendly and mutual assistance among citizens. These colorful activities avoid empty preaching and effectively combine theory and practice. Not only does it improve the overall quality of students, but also significantly enhances the effectiveness of youth core value education.

To sum up, Singapore has integrated core values education into all aspects of young people's daily lives through diverse educational practices, achieving an organic combination of theory and practice, and providing strong support for cultivating young people with noble moral sentiments and a sense of social responsibility.

4.4. Emphasizing the Role of Family Education

The Singaporean government has always advocated and promoted family values, adhering to the core concept of being "family-oriented". In June 1994, the Singaporean government officially promulgated the "Singapore Family Values" document, which deeply explained the important position and role of the family in social development. On June 19 of the same year, the Singaporean government established the "National Family Day" to demonstrate respect and respect for family values. On this day, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong announced the establishment of a million-dollar foundation to fund civil society to widely disseminate and practice Singapore's five family values. That is, "love and care, mutual respect, filial piety and respect, loyalty and commitment, harmonious communication". In his Chinese New Year message in 2008, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong particularly emphasized the inheritance of filial piety and the strengthening of family bonds. He cited social surveys in Canada and Finland in the 18th and 19th centuries, which clearly pointed out that families with grandparents play a crucial role in nurturing the next generation and passing on the core values of society to them. He pointed out that even in the 21st century, the benefits of young parents from the experience, guidance and assistance they receive from their mother-in-law or mother-in-law are still obvious, and he himself is an example of getting help from his elders. [12] In the process of cultivating young people's core values, family education plays a pivotal role. Therefore, the Singaporean government actively advocates family values, encourages families to become an important battlefield for young people's core values education, and guides young people to establish correct values through family education, laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of the country.

5. Inspiration for the Core Values Education of Young People in China

Singapore's core values of education emphasizes the combination of theory and practice, the combination of soft education and the rule of law, and the educational role of community and community organizations. These successful experiences are worthy of our reference and learning and have great implications for our country's youth core values education.

5.1. At the National Level

5.1.1. Emphasize Both Morality and Law, and Strengthen the Construction of the Legal System

In terms of core values education, Singapore pays attention to the use of legal means to deepen the moral identity of the people. This approach provides valuable reference experience for our country, and inspires us to further strengthen the construction of the legal system of core values education, and ensure that core values education "has a clear system to follow, is implemented according to a reliable system, and is guaranteed by a hard system." [13] First, in light of the

actual situation of China's current moral construction and legal construction, we should combine the cultivation of core values with the construction of the legal system, and establish the concept of legal protection. This requires us to change the previous approach of single persuasion and demonstration education, and combine it with the legal compulsory education method to achieve a two-pronged approach to jointly improve the effectiveness of young people's core values education. Second, for the specific behavior of young people, we need to formulate detailed and clear norms to ensure that each specific behavior has laws to follow and evidence to follow. For illegal acts, severe and appropriate disciplinary measures should be taken to maintain the authority and effectiveness of the law. Third, the media and the Internet have extensive influence on modern society. We should give full play to the positive leading role of their mainstream values to educate the public and create a good and harmonious social atmosphere. By actively disseminating core values, we should guide the public to form correct value judgments and moral concepts. Fourth, in addition to improving the content of the legal system, we also need to pay attention to the improvement of the effectiveness of law enforcement. Ensuring the effectiveness and fairness of the law enforcement process is the key to playing the role of the legal system and realizing the effect of ideological and political education. Therefore, we should strengthen the training and management of law enforcement personnel, improve their professional quality and law enforcement level, and ensure that laws are strictly and impartially enforced.

To sum up, by strengthening the legal system of core values education, formulating detailed codes of conduct, giving play to the leading role of the media and the Internet, and improving the effectiveness of law enforcement, we can effectively promote the in-depth development of core values education and lay a solid foundation for cultivating citizens with noble moral sentiments and a sense of social responsibility.

5.1.2. Enhance the Educational Role of Communities and Organizations

Communities and groups play a pivotal role in core values education in Singapore. They are not only important carriers for disseminating and practicing core values, but also a key link in shaping young people's moral concepts and sense of social responsibility. In contrast, China's community service development is relatively late, and schools have long played a leading role in core values education. However, with the continuous progress of society and the renewal of educational concepts, we gradually realize that the effectiveness of education cannot be achieved by a single force, but requires the coordination and cooperation of various forces such as society, schools, and families. Especially for Young people, they need more opportunities to contact society and understand social rules, so as to deepen their understanding and recognition of core values in practice. As a bridge between the government and the public, the community bears the important responsibility of connecting all strata of society.

Therefore, the community should work closely with various associations and

organizations to play an active role. By organizing a variety of community activities, volunteer services and social welfare activities, not only can we enhance the cohesion within the community, promote mutual help between neighbors, but also provide a platform for young people to practice core values and exercise a sense of social responsibility. In this regard, Singapore's experience has undoubtedly provided us with valuable inspiration. The Singaporean government attaches great importance to the role of communities and groups in core value education and encourages communities and groups to carry out various educational activities through policy support and financial investment. These activities are not only diverse and rich in content, but also practical and interactive, enabling young people to feel the power of core values in their participation.

5.2. School Level

5.2.1. Focus on the Combination of Theory and Practice

The core value education of young people must emphasize the high degree of unity between "knowledge" and "action". Reformism is the most important feature and advantage of our philosophical view of knowledge and action. But redoing does not mean ignoring knowledge. As the guide of action, its significance will become more and more important. [14] The core value education of young people must deeply emphasize the high degree of unity of "knowledge" and "action". This unity not only reflects the essence of our philosophical view of knowledge and action, but also the key to cultivating teenagers with all-round literacy. Theory is the foundation of practice, providing direction and goals for practice; practice is the touchstone for testing theory. Through practice, we can further deepen our understanding of theory, make it more practical, and thus better guide practice. This interaction and mutual promotion of theory and practice form a virtuous circle.

In school education, we should stratify theoretical learning according to the stage of physical and mental development of adolescents. For junior high school students, their cognitive ability and interest points are still in a relatively basic stage, so we should adopt vivid and interesting, intuitive teaching methods to stimulate their interest in learning and help them establish a basic understanding of core values. Entering high school, students' physical and mental thinking ability and sense of social responsibility have been significantly improved. At this time, we should adopt inquiry-based, inductive and comparative teaching methods to guide them to think deeply about the connotation and meaning of core values and cultivate their critical thinking and innovation ability. In addition to classroom learning, we should also actively carry out various forms of practical activities, so that students can experience the power of true knowledge in practice and feel the joy of life and learning. These practical activities can include community service, volunteer service, social investigation, etc. Through these activities, students can gain a deeper understanding of society and experience life, so as to establish correct values in their daily lives. In addition, students should also actively participate in practical activities in winter and summer vacations, as well as social activities such as volunteer service and community public welfare. These activities can not only exercise students' personal will and cultivate their sense of social responsibility, but also enable them to realize their self-worth and experience the joy of dedication in serving the society.

5.2.2. Adhere to the Combination of Explicit Education and Implicit Education

Compared with the Singaporean education method, our country is more inclined to adopt explicit education in core values education, that is, positive theory propaganda education. However, Singapore pays more attention to implicit education, which has not received enough attention in our country. In fact, explicit education and implicit education are two indispensable and important methods in core values education. They each have unique advantages and complement each other to jointly promote the realization of educational effects. Explicit education focuses on theoretical explanation, and the content of core values is clearly imparted to students through direct means such as school classroom teaching. This education method is characterized by clarity, systematization and coherence, which can help students establish a basic cognition and understanding of core values. However, explicit education also has certain limitations, such as overemphasizing theoretical indoctrination, which may lead to students' lack of flexible application and profound experience in practice.

In contrast, implicit education pays more attention to the concealment and permeability of education. It allows students to unknowingly accept the ideas of educators through indirect means such as the details of daily life, cultural environment, and social atmosphere. This kind of education method has the characteristics of subtle, moisturizing and silent, enabling students to accept the influence and infection of core values in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. The advantage of implicit education is that it can reach the depths of students' emotions and hearts, stimulate their inner motivation, and thus better promote the internalization of core values. As Crossman, an expert in psychological warfare in the United States, said: "High-quality propaganda looks as if it has never been carried out. Let the object of propaganda go in the direction you want, but they think they are choosing the direction." [15]

In the process of modern ideological and political education, explicit education and implicit education should complement and complement each other. We should not only pay attention to explicit education, strengthen positive propaganda, and clearly convey the content and meaning of core values through classroom teaching, theme activities, etc.; we should also pay attention to implicit education, emphasize methods and strategies, and allow students to experience, comprehend and practice core values in practice through campus cultural construction, social practice, etc. Only by organically combining explicit education and implicit education can we achieve twice the result with half the effort. In this way, we can not only help students establish a deep understanding and

recognition of core values, but also stimulate their inner motivation, urge them to actively participate in social practice, transform core values into practical actions, and contribute to the development and progress of society.

5.3. Family Level

The cultivation of values is a systematic and complex project, and its effectiveness is deeply influenced by various environmental factors. Although schools play a crucial role in this, it is difficult for us to completely eliminate all the adverse effects brought about by external factors by the power of schools alone. In fact, the initial influence on the shaping of young people's values often comes from the family. The family, as the starting point of life, is the first classroom for children to receive education; and parents are their first educators. Therefore, only by achieving the effective integration of family and school education can we maximize its educational effect.

Compared with Singapore, the education of young people's core values in China mainly relies on the channel of schools, and the family's nurturing function in it has not been fully explored and exerted. According to the data of the "2014 White Paper on the Status of Family Education in Urban and Rural China", there is a significant gap between the cognition and practice of family education methods. As many as 37.82% of parents said they knew nothing about education methods, while 26.19% of parents were too busy to care about their children's education. What is more noteworthy is that more than half of parents are eager to receive professional guidance and help when their children have problems. 81.4% of parents believe that family education has a lot of knowledge and needs to be learned and trained. This shows parents' thirst for family education knowledge and their helplessness in facing educational problems. At the same time, the white paper also reveals the diversity of parents' learning and education methods, but there are also many problems. Among them, 30.53% of parents learn through books, 21.85% explore by themselves, 18.01% communicate with friends, 13.16% acquire knowledge from the media, and 12.71% obtain knowledge from parent-teacher conferences. In addition, most parents believe that the effective way to criticize their children is to present facts, reason and discuss with their children, but the proportion of parents who occasionally beat and scold their children accounts for 79.32%, which is obviously contrary to the scientific education method we advocate. The white paper points out that although more and more parents are beginning to pay attention to their children's physical and mental health and personality development, their investment in values education is still insufficient compared to knowledge education. Only 37.93% believe that children need to be taught to be reasonable.

In response to the above issues, we strongly urge parents to pay attention to the key role of the family in the education of core values, and strive to improve their own educational ability. First, parents should establish the concept of lifelong learning, and constantly absorb new educational concepts and knowledge through books, online classes, lectures and other channels. Second, they should pay close attention to the current political and social hotspots of the country, and improve their judgment and analytical skills, so as to provide their children with the correct value orientation. Finally, parents should also strengthen communication with their children, understand their growth trends, maintain close contact with school teachers, and jointly escort their children's healthy growth and the correct formation of values. Through such efforts, we can not only improve the effect of family education, but also promote effective cooperation between home and school, and create a more harmonious and favorable environment for the cultivation of young people's core values. This is of great practical significance for cultivating young people with noble moral sentiments and a sense of social responsibility, and promoting the long-term development and progress of society.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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