The Values of Theoretical Quality on Development of Contemporary University Students

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Abstract. Values of theoretical quality on development of contemporary university students refers to a satisfactory relation between the attribute of theory and realistic demands of contemporary university students, namely the effect and significance of theoretical quality to contemporary university students. Based on a full exposition of basic meaning of theoretical quality and its values, this paper analyses the misunderstandings of the values on development of contemporary university students, discusses how meaningful theoretical quality is to contemporary university students, and puts forwards how to realize such values.

Introduction

In-depth economic and social development imposes higher requirements for theoretical quality of contemporary university students. Various western ethos following economic globalization comes to present serious challenges for development values of university students. The most direct backwash is indifference of university students to theoretical quality, which stems fundamentally from strong impact of wrong thoughts, like non-ideologicalization and neglect of personality and humanity quality cultivation, on subjective world of university students. This leads to their low or one-sided positioning of the values of theoretical quality. To correctly position and effectively realize the values of theoretical quality is the precondition and basis for comprehensive development of contemporary university students.

Definition of the Values of Theoretical Quality

According to Karl Marx (1818–1883), “value” is measured and priced by people to evaluate how a material of external world satisfies their demands.[1] This view profoundly reveals that the “value” doesn’t reflect the attributes of materials of external world or demands of people only, but demonstrates a satisfactory relation between them. In other words, the attributes of materials of external world should meet the people’s demands in reality. Therefore, the values of theoretical quality reflect a satisfactory relation between the attributes of theory and demands of educated students, or the values of theoretical quality is embodied by its effect on and significance to development of contemporary university students.
Misunderstandings of the Values of Theoretical Quality

More Realistic, Less Ideal
Being confronted with fierce social competitions and strong material temptation, university students are more and more utilitarian. When making choices, they incline to worldly, short-term and utilitarian values, and pay much attention to immediate, specific and realistic benefits, but despise those purposeful, worthy, ideal and long-term values.

Attentive to Individual Demands, Neglectful of Social Requirements
Amid advanced modern market economy, an individual’s independence, initiative and creativity are fully respected and grow. Contemporary university students are a generation with a strong personality and ego. They are attentive to self-worth realization, but neglectful of social value or social functions undertaken by theoretical quality.

Preferring Reality to Ideological Theories
Theoretical quality is highly characterized by theoretical and ideological property, while university students make no sense of its ideological depth and theoretical seriousness. University students hope to complete their studies easily by only expanding scope of knowledge, recognizing more social status and having a job with high returns and social recognition. The purpose of their studies is not to grasp theories to use them into practice. So, they are unaware of building ambitious ideal faith to enhance their mental strength.

Remaining Spontaneous, Unaware of Proactive Self-development
Most of university students are passive and reluctant to learn although they think it necessary to raise their own theoretical quality. In consequence, few take initiative to learn seriously, even to improve their own theoretical quality, let along apply a theory to practice. Their understanding of theoretical quality and self-development is spontaneous to meet basic natural demands. Against the backdrop of fierce competitions, their vision, target, motivation and spiritual status are apparently insufficient.[2]

Embodiment of the Values of Theoretical Quality

Helpful to Attain Value Recognition of Contemporary University Students
According to Karl Marx, demand serves as the ultimate impetus for and internal driving force behind people’s all behaviors. Such internal driving force can stimulate people to take actions only via an amplifying medium, which is value recognition.[3] The primary task of institutions of higher learning is to educate people, which means to cultivate high-end talents who have solid and profound theoretical quality and resolute and persistent core value ideas for national construction and rejuvenation. To complete the basic task, it requires grasping and leading the value orientation of contemporary university students on all count. Theoretical quality focuses on teaching university students with theories which are advanced and keeps pace with the times to raise their theoretical quality and level, enable them to correctly understand basic rules of social development of human beings, the future and fate of state and nation, as well as their own social responsibilities and historical missions. Theoretical quality also commits itself to fostering proactive and sound living attitude of university students, so as to consciously fight against the influence of wrong thoughts and ideas, to enhance their capability to understand and transform the world, and to guide them to fulfil self-development.
Helpful to Realize the State, National Social and Historical Unity

From the prospective of the operation law of theoretical knowledge, theoretical quality of university students can be raised by daily education and teaching as the basis and main channel, supplemented by social practice, behavior pattern and interpersonal relationship. For example, Chinese higher education is a basic feature of the main channel, which means to comprehensively and systematically carry out the education of the Marxist theories to improve the awareness of university students about the communism ideal. The process, in essence, is to make national and social values spread and acknowledged. From a national and historic view, combining practice and evolvement through thousands of years with the basic principles of Marxism and the latest theoretical achievements of the localization of Marxism in China, patriotism and collectivism education should be conducted to shape common ideal and faith of university students. Education in history, national conditions and morality, in democracy and rule of law, as well as in situations and policies should be enhanced, to enable university students to have a sense of honor and shame, awareness of vicissitude and establish correct standpoint. The national spirits of long standing and the enterprising spirits of the time should be upheld to inspire university students to consolidate their consciousness of China's basic policy of opening up and reform in new period and the socialist undertaking with the Chinese characteristics, fulfilling the dialectical unity of theoretical quality in categories such as state, nation, society and history.[4]

Helpful to Adjust Knowledge Structure of Contemporary University Students

Theoretical quality helps university students to master basic scientific knowledge in philosophy, history, economy, politics, law and ethic. Especially for those majoring in science and engineering, it will help raise their humanity quality, widen knowledge area and optimize knowledge structure. These basic knowledge, basis theories and the humanity spirits implied will benefit university students for lifetime. Professional knowledge, language skills, application techniques (e.g., computer application) help students to master a specific skill, while theoretical quality elevates their comprehensive capabilities. Scientific fusion between professional knowledge, language skills and application techniques and theoretical quality shapes the talent cultivation pattern of higher education, featuring “profound basis, extensive fields,” “versatile specialists” and “being socialist-minded and professional competent.”[5]

Regarding the relationship between theoretical quality and professional skills, the values of the former also lie in: Firstly, it will give impetus to professional skills learning. The learning motivation of university students mainly stem from the pursuit of their dreams and their sense of social responsibilities. According to the Chinese famous classics “The Great Learning,” universities are in essence to guide people to pursue lofty ideal, which is also the central mission of theoretical knowledge. Ideal is the driving force behind reality transformation, which means that only with lofty ideals, can university students have lasting passion and motivation for learning. Secondly, theoretical quality serves as “navigator” for professional learning. The essential difference between human beings and animals is that people can conduct purposeful and conscious work. Learning is a purposeful process of intellectual activity.

Helpful to Offer Careers Guidance for Contemporary University Students

Relying on knowledge education, theoretical quality enables university students to learn how to study, survive and develop themselves during learning and receiving theories. Theories tell
students “what it is” on one hand, and inspire them to voluntarily look into “why” through discussion, practice and research-based learning on the other hand, to stimulate them to acquire knowledge on their own initiative, raising their capabilities to actively put forward, analyze and resolve problems. Over the process of applying theories to the situations of university students, theoretical knowledge helps them to develop correct self-recognition and scientific recognition of others. During applying theories to social practice, theoretical knowledge guide students to have a correct sense of society, grasp social development rules, combine their own needs with social requirements, and self-development with social development to position themselves perfectly. This way can strengthen university students’ capability to suit the society and stimulate them to transform the society, effectively promoting the ability of self-survival and self-development. Theoretical knowledge can also provide methodological guidance to cultivation of innovative capability of university students. Philosophy exist in all specific disciplines; in other words, law of thinking, law of cognition and material dialectical thought studied in philosophy apply to every discipline, constituting innovative scientific methodology. Provided that professional knowledge, language skills and application techniques help university students to “settle down” and “become successful,” theoretical knowledge can teach them to “gain a firm foothold” and “mature.” Each performs its own functions and integrates with each other, providing an ideal pattern of “what kinds of talents the higher education should cultivate.”

Helpful to Realize Win-win of Both Individual and Social Values of Contemporary University Students

The nature of the values of theoretical quality lies in the sum total of correspondence relationship between demands of value subject (socialized demands of people in ideology, politics and morality) and value’s social attributes (to satisfy the demands abovementioned), equaling to the comprehensive unity of essential attributes and definitive property. In detail, the nature of the values of theoretical quality can be reduced to social and individual values, both of which supplement each other and are a dialectic unity.[6] Among the rest, social value is the main part of the values of theoretical quality and plays a leading role according to its nature. Otherwise, it will become meaningless if talking about the values of theoretical quality. To some extent, social value contains individual value internally, that means that individual value can be achieved only with performing social value. Meanwhile, in accordance with the fundamental purpose of the values of theoretical quality, individual value serves as its important part and the basis for social value. If individual value is neglected, social value will be an empty slogan and concept. Both create conditions under which each completes value realization.

Approaches to Raising the Theoretical Quality of University Students

Applying Theoretical Knowledge to Practice

University students live in reality and face various realistic phenomena and problems. Only analyzing and explaining existing realistic problems confronting university students can take effect. Therefore, the generalization of theories should be made on the premise of understanding students and society, and combining basic theories and views with real situations of students and society, and that hot and underlying issues about which university students are concerned in reality are considered as a point of breakthrough. On such basis,
basic theories and core values can be popularized among students. The publicity of theoretical knowledge should be integrated with the reality to analyze and explain the practice rather than catering for it or alienate classic theories. It is better to connect realistic problems, which students are concerned about, with basic theories, views and core values. Such teaching is purposeful and students can have a sense of identity.

Theoretical Quality is Targeted at Fostering Students’ Moral Judgment and Selective Power.

The process of value attainment is more important than what kind of value can be obtained. The purpose of education is not to instill a specific value into students’ minds, but help them to grasp how to gain the value.[7] Amid changing international situations and social transformation period, when various ideological theories, cultural thoughts and lifestyles keep intervening each other and moral conflicts at all levels remain fierce day by day, complex multi-values make many university students be at a loss how to select. Multi-source of information society gives rise to many moral values in the inner world of students who are conflicted about which value is selected. This imposes requirements for students to have basic moral judgment and selection capability. Higher education must discard traditional moral education methods at class, and pay much attention to the cultivation of students’ value analysis, moral judgment and selection capability as the focal point of ideological and political education. By this way, efforts should be made to guide students to conduct moral adjustment and analyze possible different results of different moral selection, and help students to testify and improve their own moral selection continuously, finally shaping correct individual and sound moral codes.

The Ultimate Goal of Theoretical Quality is to Propel Students’ Action.

Theoretical quality should be tested during repeated actions. Only the value which is suitable for and provide instruction to real life is valuable. Theoretical quality emphasizes the internal and external unity and the harmony between knowledge and action, and admits the importance of bringing value into practice. The improvement of theoretical quality involves in internalization and externalization, both of which can’t be separated. Therefore, over the process of improving theoretical quality, the harmony between knowledge and action shall be adhered to consistently. Students should be guided to make value judgment and selection to make sense of value. More importantly, students should be encouraged to participate in social practice, so as to test and improve the value awareness through practice, deepen the degree of awareness of theoretical knowledge, finally having their own values. In reality, aside from grasping the classics, tradition and ideological nature of theoretical knowledge, the realization of its reality, practice and action may be an effective realistic selection to raise the theoretical quality of contemporary university students on all count.

The values of theoretical quality blends individual and social values, and serve as a key link during the self-development process of contemporary university students. Higher education as well as nation, society and individuals should work on it as a lifetime subject.

References


