A Brief Discussion on Some Issues and Countermeasures of University Teachers' Professional Ethics Cultivation in the "Internet+" Era

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Abstract: In 2015, Premier Li Keqiang proposed the "Internet+" action plan in the government work report at the Third Session of the 12th National People's Congress. Over the past decade, China has undergone rapid development, and new technologies such as mobile internet, cloud computing, big data, and the Internet of Things, as envisioned in the report, have become widely popular. These new technologies have had a profound impact on higher education and university teachers, and have also set new requirements for the professional ethics cultivation of university teachers. To achieve the fundamental task of "cultivating morality and nurturing talents," university teachers must first possess sufficient professional ethics cultivation. This paper will discuss some existing problems in the professional ethics cultivation of university teachers and attempt to propose solutions.

Keywords: Internet+; University teachers; Professional ethics cultivation

1. Introduction

1.1. What is "Internet+"

The formal proposal of "Internet+" was made in 2015, when Premier Li Keqiang mentioned it in the government work report at the Third Session of the 12th National People's Congress. The main concept of "Internet+" is to deeply integrate internet technology with traditional industries, utilizing information technologies such as mobile internet, big data, and cloud computing to promote innovation and development in traditional industries.

1.2. The significance and importance of university teachers' professional ethics cultivation

In the book Professional Ethics Cultivation of University Teachers, there is a clear definition of university teachers' professional ethics cultivation: it refers to the activities that teachers undertake to adapt to the requirements of education and teaching, including self-discipline, self-improvement, and self-enhancement in moral aspects according to the principles and norms of teacher ethics, as well as the moral qualities and the level of teacher ethics achieved through such efforts [1].

University teachers are the actual implementers of higher education functions. For universities to accomplish the fundamental goal of "cultivating morality and nurturing talents," the cultivation of professional ethics by university

teachers is of utmost importance. "Cultivating morality" comes before "nurturing talents." It is the premise and foundation. Imagine if university teachers themselves have issues with their professional ethics cultivation, how can they help students "cultivate morality"? The professional ethics cultivation of university teachers not only affects the rise and fall of higher education but also relates to the quality of the nation and the future of education [2].

2. Some problems in university teachers' professional ethics cultivation in the "internet+" era

2.1. Issues of lacking moral bottom line and low morality

Although the targets of higher education are generally adults, most university students have not left campus, lack social experience, and their psychological development is not fully mature. Additionally, the relationship between university teachers and students is not entirely equal; teachers hold certain powers, ranging from course assessments to influencing students' graduation or academic careers. Some university teachers have crossed moral boundaries, failing to handle teacher-student relationships properly. Some treat students as free labor, exploiting them at will; some appropriate students' academic achievements; and some even sexually harass or assault students.

For example, in 2020, Zhang Hongmei from Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications improperly assigned students to handle private company affairs unrelated to teaching and research, threatened students with delayed graduation, and engaged in personal attacks and humiliation. In 2023, the Hubei Higher People's Court ruled that Hubei University of Technology and Ye jointly infringed by plagiarizing Meng's academic achievements. In 2024, Wang, a doctoral student at the School of Liberal Arts, Renmin University of China, posted a video on social media, reporting her supervisor Wang for sexual harassment. All these unethical teachers have received due punishment.

In today's era of self-media, everyone is both a recipient and a publisher of news. Such negative news often spreads quickly and widely through social media, easily attracting significant public attention. The negative impact is immense and cannot be remedied simply by dismissing the unethical teachers. "Cultivating morality and nurturing talents" is the basic mission of higher education, and this educational philosophy and purpose highlight its distinct contemporary characteristics [3,4]. For students, such incidents severely undermine their trust in the teaching profession. Without trust, achieving the fundamental goal of "cultivating morality and nurturing talents" becomes even more challenging. For universities, such incidents seriously damage their reputation and future development. For society as a whole, such incidents hinder China's goal of becoming an educational powerhouse by 2035 [5].

2.2. Issues with teaching methods and attitudes

With the development of "Internet+" and the popularization of various new technologies, teaching methods in universities have undergone many changes in recent years. The widespread use of multimedia classrooms has, to some extent, replaced traditional blackboard writing with PPT presentations, and audio or video materials can be used as teaching resources. This change can enhance the diversity of teaching methods and increase students' learning interest, but it also brings some problems [6].

For instance, some teachers play videos from the beginning to the end of the class, turning offline classes into a collective viewing of online courses. This results in very poor teaching effectiveness and low learning outcomes for students. Some teachers simply read from PPTs, are unfamiliar with the course content, and have no design for the teaching process, essentially teaching by rote, making the teaching effect worse than students' self-study. Some teachers may struggle to master the latest technological tools and lag behind students in information literacy. They resist new teaching methods, are unwilling to keep up with the times, and fail to improve their information literacy. Their teaching methods remain unchanged for years, and some even use outdated course content that is severely obsolete. This leads to dull classroom atmospheres and a lack of student interest in learning [7].

These issues arise from failing to adapt to the development of the "Internet+" era. "Internet+" has brought new teaching concepts and methods to universities. University teachers should continuously learn, keep pace with the times,

update their teaching philosophies, and enhance their information literacy. They should not be complacent, refuse to embrace change, or stubbornly use outdated teaching designs. The new technologies brought by "Internet+" should be used to improve teaching effectiveness, not for taking shortcuts or being lazy [8].

2.3. Issues of academic utilitarianism and academic misconduct

Besides teaching, universities also have the function of scientific research. Ideally, university teachers should balance teaching and research, using research to enhance their knowledge and better serve teaching, thereby improving both teaching and research capabilities. However, in reality, university teachers have limited energy and face practical pressures such as rising prices, supporting parents, and raising children, leading to significant financial stress. Additionally, universities often base teachers' remuneration primarily on titles and research achievements. Consequently, some teachers neglect teaching, perfunctorily handle classes, or even slack off, devoting most of their energy to research. Some even resort to academic misconduct and corruption [9].

For example, in 2024, Professor Huang from the Animal Nutrition Department at Huazhong Agricultural University was jointly reported by 11 master's and doctoral students in his research group for academic misconduct, including falsifying experimental data and fabricating results. An investigation by the university's academic ethics committee confirmed the allegations. In 2006, Professor Chen from Shanghai Jiao Tong University used sandpaper to erase the logo on Motorola chips, falsely claiming them as independently developed "Hanxin" chips. This had a tremendous negative impact on China's chip industry, wasting significant research funds and time, and severely undermining confidence in domestic research and development [10].

Such academic misconduct not only ruins the careers of those involved but also has disastrous consequences for China's research landscape. The "Hanxin" incident stalled China's chip industry development for 13 years, contributing to the current "chip bottleneck" issue. University teachers should take scientific research seriously and adhere strictly to the ethical bottom line in research work [11].

3. Countermeasures to improve university teachers' professional ethics cultivation

3.1. Strengthen ideological and political learning and establish socialist core values

To enhance university teachers' professional ethics cultivation, it is essential to start with strengthening ideological and political learning. Universities should help teachers grasp the central government's spirit regarding university teachers' professional ethics cultivation, guiding them to arm their minds with correct values and enrich their spirits. Every university teacher should carefully study Lectures on General Secretary Xi Jinping's Important Discourses on Education and Ten Guidelines for Professional Conduct of University Teachers in the New Era. Through centralized learning, online learning, and other methods, education on professional ethics cultivation for university teachers should be strengthened to deepen their understanding of professional ethics. Moreover, professional ethics cultivation should not remain mere words; it must be implemented throughout the entire process of teacher management [12,13].

First, appropriate textbooks should be selected based on the latest central government guidelines for university teachers to study. These textbooks should be systematic, authoritative, reflect the trends of teaching reform, and embody the characteristics of the times, enabling teachers to enhance their understanding of the connotations, characteristics, principles, and development of professional ethics cultivation systems, and to better comprehend central education policies and regulations. Second, new technologies in the "Internet+" era should be fully utilized to optimize education on professional ethics cultivation for university teachers. Various platforms such as official accounts, mini-programs, online meetings, and video websites can be used to deliver content through article pushes, expert lectures, lesson polishing, micro-lectures, and other forms, making full use of teachers' fragmented time for online learning.

Furthermore, technologies such as big data and cloud computing should be reasonably employed to record and analyze teachers' learning processes and outcomes. By creating profiles of teachers, more targeted teaching resources and

learning materials can be provided, aiming to improve teachers' professional ethics cultivation so that they can better use professional norms to regulate their educational and teaching activities [14].

3.2. Guide university teachers to practice professional ethics and achieve the unity of knowledge and action

After improving university teachers' theoretical understanding of professional ethics cultivation through the above methods, it is also necessary to help them constrain and regulate their professional behavior in actual work, deepen their understanding of theoretical knowledge through practice, and internalize those requirements into their own professional ethical beliefs, achieving the unity of knowledge and action, and continuously improving their professional ethics level and personal moral realm.

Teaching is the fundamental task of university teachers, and "cultivating morality and nurturing talents" is the primary goal of teaching. To achieve this goal, university teachers need to set an example in their work to promote students' moral development. In the context of the "Internet+" era, considering students' learning situations and talent cultivation objectives, teachers should lead by example to cultivate students' abilities in active learning, independent thinking, and innovation. Through words and deeds, they should nurture outstanding socialist builders and successors.

At the same time, it is important to enhance university teachers' self-reflection, making them subjects of self-education and self-improvement, thereby strengthening their professional ethics. This involves internalizing professional ethics and externalizing them in actions, transforming mandatory compliance into self-discipline. By helping university teachers reflect on areas for improvement in their learning, life, and teaching, they can deepen their understanding of teacher professional ethics cultivation and enhance it through practice.

3.3. Improve the supervision system for university teachers' professional ethics cultivation

In addition to relying on theoretical learning and work practice to improve university teachers' professional ethics cultivation, it is also necessary to establish a supervision mechanism for university teachers' professional ethics. A dedicated department for professional ethics supervision should be set up, and practical supervision plans should be formulated. The scope of supervision should cover all aspects of teachers' teaching, research, etc., ensuring that their behavior aligns with professional ethics. The entire system should be dynamically adjusted according to the development of the times to ensure the effectiveness of supervision [15].

Besides supervision, a feedback mechanism from students should be established. Students are the main body of higher education, and their feelings can directly reflect the professional ethics of university teachers. Through student feedback, school management departments can promptly obtain the true situation of teachers' professional ethics, comprehensively grasp specific issues in teachers' performance of duties, manage teachers' behavior, and prevent violations of professional ethics.

Teachers who perform excellently should be encouraged and set as examples for others to learn from, while those who violate professional ethics should be punished, serving as a warning to others to reduce the occurrence of similar incidents. This is of great significance for the personal development of university teachers and the development of universities themselves.

4. Conclusion

The "Internet+" era has brought new technologies and developments to higher education, as well as new requirements for university teachers. University teachers face the infiltration of Western ideologies, the temptation of academic utilitarianism, and the clash of teacher ethics concepts in a multicultural context. In terms of ideology, university teachers should establish socialist core values, use great thoughts to unite hearts and souls, clarify the source from the ideological perspective, continuously improve political judgment, political comprehension, and political execution, deeply understand the decisive significance of "two establishments," enhance "four consciousnesses," firmly "four confidences," and achieve "two safeguards." In terms of professional qualities, they should establish the concept of lifelong learning, update their

professional knowledge, and improve their information literacy.

University teachers should be role models, teaching by words and deeds, helping students establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, imparting correct and systematic professional knowledge, truly implementing "cultivating morality and nurturing talents," and cultivating outstanding socialist builders and successors.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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