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## RESEARCH ON THE PATH OF DEVELOPING RULE OF LAW THINKING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Lei Li

Guangdong Polytechnic College, Zhaoqing, Guangdong Province, China

### ABSTRACT

Through a profound analysis of the connotation, characteristics and relationship between rule of law education and rule of law thinking, the study explores the main dilemmas in the development of rule of law thinking among college students in the context of rule of law education, comprehensively and systematically analyze the current situation of rule of law education among college students, the existing problems and underlying reasons for the existing problems. Finally, the realistic path for college students to develop a rule of law thinking is proposed.

**KEYWORDS:** Rule of law education; rule of law thinking; college students

### 1. INTRODUCTION

On November 8, 2012, the report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) put forward for the first time that leading cadres at all levels need to improve the use of the rule of law in deepening reform, promoting development, resolving conflicts and maintaining stability. The concept of “rule of law thinking” was introduced for the first time, giving a new milestone to the development of the rule of law in China.

The rule of man way of thinking and the rule of law way of thinking are two opposing ways of thinking, the purpose of which is to protect the fundamental rights of Chinese citizens from being infringed upon (Zhang 2016). Therefore, it is not limited to complying with the written laws and regulations that have been promulgated by the state, but to thinking more deeply about the relationship between the rule of law and democracy, the relationship between power and rights, the relationship between obligations and rights, the relationship between equality and freedom, the relationship between procedure and substance, etc., that exist behind the political and legal systems.

### 2. Reasons for the lack of rule of law thinking among college students

#### 2.1 Insufficient attention to rule of law education and failure to develop into quality education

What is quality education? This has been a long-standing discussion. Many scholars are divided on what quality education is and what the quality structure consists of. Some scholars believe that the quality structure of college students does not include legal quality, and some scholars divide quality education into eight aspects, such as ideological and political quality, moral quality, scientific and

cultural quality, physical and mental quality. Some scholars, on the other hand, believe that ideological, political and moral quality, scientific and cultural quality, professional business quality and physical and mental quality are the four aspects that make up quality education. In China, we have been paying more attention to the ideological, political and moral education of college students. However, legal education is still very lacking. At present, the rule of law, compliance management and the construction of a socialist rule of law state have become a certain trend of the development of the times, so we should try to cultivate the legal literacy of college students, and prevent the marginalization of legal education of our college students.

At present, the rule of law education in many colleges and universities is only to offer some lectures, which is very unfavorable to the cultivation of legal thinking. The students of non-law majors only learn it through classes like “Thought, Moral Cultivation and Legal Foundation”. The formation of thinking is a long-term process, and a short period of study is not good enough to form a perfect thinking about the rule of law. Only through long-term education can we achieve good results (Di & Fu 2015).

## **2.2 Unreasonable arrangement of rule of law education curriculum**

The current situation of law teaching emphasizes theory over practice. Some universities seldom carry out legal practice in order to avoid safety accidents in the practice sessions. Some are due to the lack of funds and think that it is a waste of time and energy. There are no practical teaching hours. Of course, some universities are not aware of this. Other universities think that the practical courses are not very useful whether they are held or not. The accumulation of various reasons finally causes the embarrassing situation that the current legal practice teaching is weak.

In today’s era of diversified development, the rule of law education in universities should also adopt more forms and modes and should not be stuck in the single teaching mode in the past. We should expand our thinking and develop more and richer curriculum models. We can take the course of “Ideological and Moral Cultivation and Legal Foundation” as the basic course and the course should be developed accordingly. Colleges should involve students in the democratic management of the school, understand their individual needs, and develop a curriculum that is relevant to them so as to understand the individual needs of students and provide targeted rule of law education.

On the one hand, in some universities, many teachers who teach rule of law courses do not have professional training or further education. This makes it difficult for the course to achieve the expected goal. On the other hand, when teaching legal concepts and legal theories, teachers in colleges and universities often confine themselves to some basic knowledge, but do not interpret them at the deeper level of legal beliefs, legal concepts and values.

### **3 Paths of developing rule of law thinking among college students**

#### **3.1 To value legal education and improve educational institutions**

At present, legal education has become an important aspect of the modernization of the Chinese nation, an indispensable part of the national education system. It is an essential part of the national education system and an indispensable foundation for the implementation of the rule of law in the country. Therefore, innovation of education concept is a major problem that needs to be solved. We must incorporate rule of law literacy into the education of Chinese citizens, especially those of today's generation. Of course, along with the change of educational philosophy and the emphasis on legal education, the improvement of educational institutions must also be carried out together.

#### **3.2 To optimize the legal education curriculum**

To cultivate college students' perfect thinking about the rule of law, the legal curriculum should be arranged and effectively set up. First, clarify the objectives. In other words, the objectives of university law courses should be clearly defined. The goal of the curriculum should be clarified by taking the theoretical basis and the concept of rule of law as the center of the circle, in order to achieve the fundamental purpose of improving the rule of law literacy and thinking of college students. Secondly, to determine the content. That is, the content of the legal education curriculum should be scientifically determined. The content of the course is different from that of law students. In other words, we should encourage law schools to offer courses according to different levels and specialties. We encourage law schools to offer law-related elective courses according to different grades and majors. For example, senior students can take "Labor Law" and teacher can take "Teacher Education Law".

A professional faculty is the key to improving students' legal literacy and cultivating their thinking about the rule of law. First, we should establish a teacher evaluation system to promote the improvement of their teaching standards. Second, we should provide training and further education opportunities to improve themselves and their professionalism. Third, a system for teachers should be established to evaluate each other's learning. We will listen to each other's lessons every semester to learn from each other's strengths and complement each other's weaknesses, which will help to improve the teaching level. This is conducive to the improvement of teaching standards. Finally, we will visit students. At the end of a semester, we can questionnaires or interviews with students at the end of a semester, so that the teaching format and content can be adjusted. The above methods will help us to build a team of law teachers who are professional, well-structured and popular among students, so as to provide a strong guarantee for cultivating students with rule of law thinking.

#### **3.3 To strengthen the practicality of legal education**

Most universities currently use classroom lectures as a form of instruction, making it difficult for students to internalize. The law textbook is supposed to be a living, breathing course that requires strong practicality to be perfectly interpreted. When it is interpreted in a rigid way, it already lacks its proper charm. Therefore, universities should perfectly combine theory and practice to attract students to the classroom, stimulate their active interest in learning, consciously internalize legal knowledge

and form rule of law thinking. For example, case teaching, mock court, legal knowledge competition, etc. can present some specialized and academic theories in a popularized way.

In the process of rule by law, colleges and universities need to make use of the advantages of legal education and research in practice, and innovate the forms and carriers of rule of law culture publicity. The university should give full play to the role of radio, TV, internet, school newspaper and other positions, closely focus on the central work of the university and social hot spots and difficult issues, and vigorously promote the construction of campus rule of law culture. We will make great efforts to promote the construction of campus rule of law culture, form a good situation that everyone learns law in colleges and universities, and realize rule of law education for teachers and students. The university will make great efforts to promote the construction of campus rule of law culture, form a good situation for everyone to learn the law, realize the interactive effect of rule of law education for teachers and students, and create a rule of law atmosphere of learning, observing, abiding and using the law. The university will be able to create a rule of law atmosphere of learning, observing and using the law, guiding and enhancing students' rule of law concept, and inculcating in a subtle way the rule of law culture.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, under the background of the current rule of law education, the education of rule of law thinking is on its way, and it is a systematic project that needs to be persistent. Rule of law into colleges and universities, rules of governance and other requirements are all urging us to improve the level of rule by law. In the meantime, we should form a good campus environment for the rule of law, so that college students can form of the rule of law thinking, which provide a strong guarantee of the rule of law for the overall construction of a well-off society.

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