



THE INTEGRATION OF THE PRE-QIN CONFUCIAN CONCEPT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PROFIT INTO PRIMARY EDUCATION THEORY



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Abstract: The current moral education component in primary schools faces significant challenges. Many elementary students' everyday behavior appears excessively self-centered and pragmatic, potentially negatively impacting their future growth and character development. This could further influence the societal atmosphere for decades to come. Therefore, summarizing and reflecting on theories and methods in primary education, altering teaching approaches and enhancing moral education quality are crucial issues. This transformation requires a foundational philosophical theory. Research suggests that drawing from the concept of "righteousness and profit" rooted in pre-Qin Confucianism is a valuable reference. The pre-Qin Confucian perspective on righteousness and profit stands at the core of pre-Qin Confucian thought and has profoundly influenced Chinese history for millennia. Its contemplation on "righteousness" and "profit" continues to have a far-reaching impact in contemporary times. To provide a philosophical basis for primary education theory, the study examines the essence of the pre-Qin Confucian concept of "righteousness and profit." Additionally, tracing its historical development provides insights. In terms of current educational theories, the review focuses on human-centric educational theories in primary education. Finally, a proposal is made to integrate the pre-Qin Confucian concept of "righteousness and profit" with human-centric theories in primary education, accompanied by corresponding teaching strategies. According to research findings, the concepts of righteousness and profit were completely mutually exclusive in their initial stages. However, during the evolution of several dynasties, the two concepts gradually gained mutually supportive elements. This research aims to improve the moral education level of current primary education and promote the inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese culture through the integration of the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit and the people-oriented primary education theory.

Keywords: Righteousness. Profit. Confucianism. Primary education. Traditional culture. Ancient philosophy. Philosopher. Teaching.

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Resumo: O componente atual de educação moral nas escolas primárias enfrenta desafios significativos. O comportamento cotidiano de muitos alunos do Ensino Fundamental parece excessivamente egocêntrico e pragmático, potencialmente impactando negativamente seu crescimento futuro e desenvolvimento de caráter. Isso pode influenciar ainda mais a atmosfera social, nas próximas décadas. Assim, resumir e refletir sobre teorias e métodos na educação primária, alterar abordagens de ensino e melhorar a qualidade da educação moral são questões cruciais. A transformação na educação requer uma teoria filosófica fundamental. Esta pesquisa sugere que extrair do conceito de “retidão e lucro”, enraizado no confucionismo pré-Qin, é uma referência valiosa. A perspectiva confucionista pré-Qin sobre retidão e lucro está no cerne do pensamento confucionista pré-Qin e influenciou profundamente na história chinesa, por milênios. Sua contemplação sobre “retidão” e “lucro” continua a ter um impacto de longo alcance, nos tempos contemporâneos. Para fornecer uma base filosófica à teoria da educação primária, examina-se a essência do conceito confucionista pré-Qin de “retidão e lucro”. Além disso, traçar seu desenvolvimento histórico fornece *insights* para essa transformação. Em termos de teorias educacionais atuais, a revisão concentra-se em teorias centradas no ser humano na educação primária. Finalmente, é feita uma proposta para integrar o conceito confucionista pré-Qin de “retidão e lucro” com teorias centradas no ser humano, na educação primária, acompanhadas por estratégias de ensino correspondentes. De acordo com as descobertas desta pesquisa, os conceitos de retidão e lucro eram mutuamente exclusivos, completamente, em seus estágios iniciais. No entanto, durante a evolução de várias dinastias, os dois conceitos gradualmente ganharam elementos de apoio mútuo. Esta investigação visa a sugerir melhorias para o nível de educação moral, no ensino primário atual, e promover a herança da cultura tradicional chinesa, por meio da integração da visão confucionista pré-Qin de retidão e lucro e da teoria da educação primária orientada para as pessoas.

Palavras-chave: Retidão. Lucro. Confucionismo. Educação primária. Cultura tradicional. Filosofia antiga. Filósofo. Ensino.

THE INTEGRATION OF THE PRE-QIN CONFUCIAN CONCEPT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PROFIT INTO PRIMARY EDUCATION THEORY

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Abstract: The current moral education component in primary schools faces significant challenges. Many elementary students' everyday behavior appears excessively self-centered and pragmatic, potentially negatively impacting their future growth and character development. This could further influence the societal atmosphere for decades to come. Therefore, summarizing and reflecting on theories and methods in primary education, altering teaching approaches and enhancing moral education quality are crucial issues. This transformation requires a foundational philosophical theory. Research suggests that drawing from the concept of "righteousness and profit" rooted in pre-Qin Confucianism is a valuable reference. The pre-Qin Confucian perspective on righteousness and profit stands at the core of pre-Qin Confucian thought and has profoundly influenced Chinese history for millennia. Its contemplation on "righteousness" and "profit" continues to have a far-reaching impact in contemporary times. To provide a philosophical basis for primary education theory, the study examines the essence of the pre-Qin Confucian concept of "righteousness and profit." Additionally, tracing its historical development provides insights. In terms of current educational theories, the review focuses on human-centric educational theories in primary education. Finally, a proposal is made to integrate the pre-Qin Confucian concept of "righteousness and profit" with human-centric theories in primary education, accompanied by corresponding teaching strategies. According to research findings, the concepts of righteousness and profit were completely mutually exclusive in their initial stages. However, during the evolution of several dynasties, the two concepts gradually gained mutually supportive elements. This research aims to improve the moral education level of current primary education and promote the inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese culture through the integration of the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit and the people-oriented primary education theory.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current primary school education model, a negative set of thoughts and behaviors is observed among the group of primary school students, primarily involving a significant amount of utilitarian and self-centered actions. If this group of primary school students maintains this pattern of thinking and behavior for an extended period, it may have adverse effects on their future growth and character development, potentially further

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damaging the societal atmosphere for decades to come. In the rapidly growing economic and social environment, there have been significant changes in social structure and cultural ideologies compared to the past. For primary school students, whose cognitive structure, worldview, and values are still in the developmental stage and are not yet mature, they are susceptible to the confusion and decline of value orientation and moral perspectives in such a broad environment. The current moral education component of primary school education has significant flaws and gaps, characterized by hollow content and a tendency to be superficial. Such a model offers minimal assistance in addressing the aforementioned issues. For the current education sector and future societal development, this is a crucial issue that requires intervention. The intervention for shaping students' ideological systems and moral education requires a foundational system of thoughts and values.

The Confucian theory centered around the concept of “righteousness and profit” has profoundly influenced traditional Chinese culture and thought (Wang; Remchukova, 2021, p. 161). Gallagher and their research team explored the possibility of influencing societal perspectives on aging and elderly care issues through Confucian theory. They argue that Confucian theory can help identify contemporary deficiencies, in the field of elderly care, and generate novel ideas and frameworks to assist China and the world in actively addressing population aging and elderly care (Gallagher; Dun; Nie, 2021). Such studies provide the possibility of addressing contemporary societal issues through traditional philosophical theories. Therefore, this study attempts to address the primary school students' overly utilitarian and self-centered thoughts and behaviors in the current education system through the Confucian concept of “righteousness and profit.” Since the pre-Qin period, the distinction between righteousness and profit has been one of the core elements in the development of Chinese philosophical and political thought. The distinction and the concept of righteousness and profit can be understood as a question of weighing the importance of “righteousness” and “profit.” To some extent, it involves the balance and choices between morality and interests. Hence, the Confucian concept of “righteousness and profit” is applied with a certain specificity to address the aforementioned educational issues. There are still some gaps in the current research on applying Confucian theory to primary school education. This research hopes to shape the correct concept of justice and benefit for primary school students and promote the inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture through the integration of the pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit and the people-oriented primary education theory.

This study mainly consists of four parts. The first part explains the connotation and development process of the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit. The second part discusses the theory of primary education. The third part describes the methods and related theories of combining the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit with primary education. The fourth part is the conclusion, summarizing the entire text.

1 THE CONNOTATION OF THE PRE-QIN CONFUCIAN VIEW OF INTERESTS AND ITS SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION IN THE NEW ERA

1.1 THE CONNOTATION OF “RIGHTEOUSNESS” AND “BENEFIT”

Since the pre-Qin era, the distinction between righteousness and profit has been one of the core contents of the development of Chinese ideology, philosophy and political concepts. From the perspective of the changes in ancient characters, the ancient version of the word “righteousness” is composed of the word “sheep” and the word “me”. The word “sheep” has the meaning of kindness and beauty, and the word “me” has the protection of the ancient characters. Therefore, at the etymological level, the meaning of the word “righteousness” is to guard the good and beautiful things. The ancient version of the word “benefit” is composed of the word “he” and the word “knife”, of which “he”, in ancient texts, means food, fruit and practical benefits, and “knife” means harvesting and obtaining. From the etymological level, the word “benefit” means harvesting grain with a knife, which means obtaining practical benefits (Yao *et al.*, 2021). The distinction between righteousness and interest and the concept of righteousness and interest can be simply understood as the question of which is more important than “righteousness” and “benefit”. However, in the thousands of years of cultural development in China, the connotation of the distinction between righteousness and interest and the concept of righteousness and interest also experienced a number of times of secondary changes.

Pre-Qin Confucianism was the proponent of the concept of righteousness and profit and laid the foundation for the development of this concept in the following thousands of years. In his view, “righteousness” is a moral standard. “The Doctrine of the Mean” describes the concept of “righteousness” as follows: “The benevolent are people, and the righteous are suitable” (Ard *et al.*, 2020, p. 148). The implication of this description is that a person with “righteousness” should conduct appropriate behavior, where appropriate behavior actually refers to behavior that conforms to the Confucian moral standards of the time. It can be seen that the pre-Qin Confucians discussed “righteousness” as a standard of value judgment. In Confucian Mencius’ view, the connotation of “righteousness” is similar to rules, and it is a principle that an upright person must abide by in any action taken. In his writings, he mentioned: “Righteousness is the right path of man”. It means that “righteousness” is the correct principle for everyone to behave in the world, and people should use this principle to determine their own behavior in life (Mitcham, 2020, p. 4). In the late period of pre-Qin Confucianism, Xunzi defined and discussed the connotation of “righteousness” from a philosophical point of view. In his writings, he mentioned that “[...] the righteousness is the inner joint between the human and the outer joint with all things”. This sentence represents Xunzi’s point of view on “righteousness”, that is, the core of “righteousness” is to correctly recognize the relationship between human beings themselves and all external beings (Chai,

2021, p. 305). In general, although pre-Qin Confucians have different expressions of the concept of “righteousness” at different stages, they all focus on the moral standards and social rules that Confucianism advocates.

In the pre-Qin Confucian view, “benefit” is a concept that conflicts with “righteousness”. Confucius’s proposition is that “the gentleman is compared to righteousness, and the petty person is compared to profit”, that is, the noble person acts according to “righteousness”, while the inferior person acts according to “benefit”. In the pre-Qin era, with the phenomenon of the weakening of slavery and the rise of private ownership, in this context, the connotation of the word “benefit” became more focused on the individuals’ actual interests. In the Song and Ming dynasties, the judgment of mainstream view on “benefit” changed, and the attitude was different from the traditional Confucian view. Neo-Confucianists, in the Song and Ming Dynasties, believed that the pursuit of “benefit” was human nature and was related to human innate desires. It should not be denied blindly but should be viewed rationally. In general, both pre-Qin Confucianists and later Neo-Confucians have certain limitations in their views on “benefit”. Conceptual attitudes are generally negative (Canaris, 2021).

In addition, the Mohist concept of righteousness and profit has made significant improvements and additions to the theory of pre-Qin Confucianism. The theory of Mohism no longer regards righteousness and profit as two contradictory concepts, but proposes a theory of unity of righteousness and benefit. Mohist scholar Wang Anshi put forward that “the righteous are the sum of the benefits. The righteousness is the benefit” (Harris; Schneider, 2020, p. 189). The meaning of this sentence is that the all people’s “benefit” combined is “righteousness”, which is also called “public interest”. In this view, the value of “righteousness” lies in the fact that compliance with these rules is beneficial to the country’s development and the people’s lives. If it cannot bring such value, then “righteousness” is meaningless. Compared with the pre-Qin Confucianism, the Mohist view of the unity of righteousness and interest expands the scope of “benefit” to “public interest”, that is, the interests of the majority or the state’s ones, rather than being limited to the individuals’ actual interests. However, the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit completely separates “righteousness” from “benefit”, and overemphasizes “righteousness” on the moral level, without considering the rationality of the existence of “benefit”.

In the overall framework of the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit, righteousness can be understood as moral principles, and associated noble ideas and systems. Profit, on the other hand, can be interpreted as tangible benefits, such as money, living conditions, social resources, and so forth. In the early theories, righteousness and profit were seen as contradictory, and an individual was supposed to choose one over the other. However, with the changing times, later theories suggest that, to some extent,

righteousness and profit can mutually support each other, and individuals should strive to find a balance between the two.

1.2 THE NEW ERA INTERPRETATION OF THE PRE-QIN CONFUCIAN VIEW OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PROFIT

In order to apply the pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit to the present, it is necessary to analyze and study the pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit in combination with the social development situation and the population's psychological characteristics of the population, extract the useful positive content for inheritance and innovation, and at the same time face up to its limitations and imperfections. Firstly, it discusses the positive aspects of the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit from the perspective of the new era. At the level of value orientation, the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit supports the idea of emphasizing righteousness over interest, and believes that the importance of "righteousness" is much higher than "benefit". When there is a conflict between the two, the requirements of "righteousness" should be obeyed first, and "benefit" should not be given up. In terms of the specific requirements for dealing with people, the pre-Qin Confucians put forward the requirement of "seeing benefits and thinking about righteousness", that is, when people obtain personal interests, they should consider whether the interests conform to the moral standards stipulated by "righteousness", and if they do not, they should abandon them (Chen, 2020). From the perspective of the new era, although the moral standards have changed compared with those in ancient times, the dialectical relationship among individual interests, group interests and moral constraints still exists. If people maintain and abide the morality of the new era, and treat personal interests carefully, this value orientation helps to improve the society's harmony and stability.

From the perspective of morality, although the pre-Qin Confucianists regard "emphasis on benefit over righteousness" as the moral basis of their view on righteousness and profit, they have not completely denied people's pursuit of "interest". The pre-Qin Confucian view holds that "wealth and honor can be sought, but only in the governance of the world". Although the Confucian view divides "righteousness" and "benefit" into opposite things, it emphasizes the moral supremacy of "righteousness" and also recognizes the rationality of "benefit". In the Xunzi period of pre-Qin Confucianism, the proposition of "both righteousness and profit" was put forward, which further recognized the rationality of people's pursuit of "benefit" (Rubiés, 2020). From the perspective of the new era, "righteousness" and "benefit" are both indispensable conditions for the personal life's and society's normal operation. "Benefits" are the people's material life's needs and, at the same time, can provide people with short-term pursuits and goals. This co-existing and mutually influencing relationship is also in line with the Marxist view of historical materialism. Therefore, in the new era, it is also

of positive significance to learn from and inherit the moral concept of “emphasizing benefit over righteousness and emphasizing both righteousness and profit” in the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit.

In order to fully judge the application value of the pre-Qin Confucian concept of justice and benefit in the new era, it is necessary to discuss its defects and limitations. Here, the limitations of the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit are divided into two parts: historical limitations and theoretical ones to discuss separately. From a historical perspective, the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit is greater than self-interest, and the idea of righteousness over benefit became the ruling tool of the ruling class at that time, providing a mature ideological system for social stability and exploitative behavior under the rule of the exploiting class at that time. In the long historical inheritance, the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit with this class nature inevitably has strong characteristics of the times and historical particularity. In essence, the pre-Qin Confucian view of justice and interests maintained the feudal society’s class system to a certain extent (Wang, 2020). In the context of the new era, the reference and inheritance of the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit need to be analyzed and eliminated, so that it can better help the development of the new era.

From the perspective of theoretical limitations, although the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit has well resolved the issue of choosing and judging, which is more important when there is a conflict between “righteousness” and “benefit”, and in the later period, it also deals with “both righteousness and profits simultaneously”. However, in general, pre-Qin Confucians put “righteousness” and “benefit” in opposing positions, ignoring the dialectical relationship and unity between the two. Due to the excessive exaggeration of the moral value represented by “righteousness”, the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit usually despised the recognition and respect of individual reasonable interests, and could not grasp the bronze dialectical unity between the two (Zhou, 2020). In the socialist market economy of the new era, the governance concept of “balancing efficiency and fairness” is highly respected. Therefore, in the new era of application of the pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit, it is necessary to supplement its theoretical limitations and make it adapt to the needs of the new era of socialism.

In general, in the new era, within the current social environment and perspectives, the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit still holds its applicability. While the present moral implications and core interests have notably evolved compared to the past, the dialectical relationship between righteousness and profit remains intact. Throughout different periods, the concept of righteousness and profit has taken varied stances on their relationship. Finding a balance between the two is crucial for the modern age. Both righteousness and profit play vital roles in personal and societal development. One should not prioritize one

over the other. In the pursuit of the right equilibrium, the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit retains its value in the present context.

2 PEOPLE-ORIENTED PRIMARY EDUCATION THEORY

People-oriented primary education is one of the important development directions of primary education in the new era. This concept has been emphasized in educational theory so far. So, understanding and discussing the application of Confucian righteousness and fit concepts in primary education are a necessary step. Only with a comprehensive understanding of current educational theories, we can consider the intervention of Confucian concepts of righteousness and profit in the current primary school moral education system. The theoretical basis, supporting the people-oriented education strategy, is mainly the theory of the people's free and comprehensive development in Marxism (Papadopoulos, 2021). In Marx's theory, human's core value pursuit is always free and comprehensive development, and its connotation includes the development of human subjectivity, human ability development, human social relationship development and human free personality one. Among them, subjectivity is the human beings' unique essential attribute. In Marxist theory, man is the nature's and society's subject. This subjectivity makes people interact with nature and other things, in a dominant position, and makes them their own masters. Guaranteeing the free and comprehensive development of human subjectivity is of great importance in Marxist theory. Human ability refers to the human beings' unique power to transform things in Marxist theory. This transformation can be aimed at the objective world, society and people themselves.

In educational activities, ensuring the free and comprehensive development of people's abilities is the main way to improve students' comprehensive quality (Dagarin-Fojkar *et al.*, 2022). Then, there is the free and full development of social relations. In Marxist theory, human beings have inseparable social attributes, and the human beings' ability to pass the test of history and create a brilliant civilization has a great relationship with human sociality. For individuals, people live in society and must have social relations with others. For primary education, the free and all-around development of students' social relations must ensure the continuous development and improvement of students' social relations. At the same time, students are educated on how to deal with complex social situations and socialize in a friendly and efficient manner. The last is the free development of the human personality. Under the Marxist viewpoint, the human society's development history is the development history of people's gradual pursuit of a free personality. When social relations are enriched and comprehensively developed, human personality will also be positively affected and develop towards freedom and comprehensiveness, becoming a person with a free personality, with diversity and uniqueness in human society. In primary education, on the one hand, the

importance of discipline and observance of social rules should be emphasized, but the free and pluralistic development of students' personalities should also be respected and promoted (Hidayah *et al.*, 2021, p. 8). In general, the Marxist definition of the pursuit of human core values is people-oriented, which fully reflects the human beings' development, diversity and stages. On the basis of Marxist theory, primary education should also follow the basic principle of being people-oriented, and pay full attention to the primary school students' free and comprehensive development.

In addition to the Marxist theory, the people-oriented primary education theory also has some references to Western humanistic education. Humanistic education theory is based on humanistic psychology. It emphasizes the positive characteristics of people's positivity, constructiveness and optimism, and tries to tap people's intrinsic value and potential to promote people's development and help individuals achieve self-achieved goals. Under the influence of scientism, Western educational circles only paid attention to knowledge imparting, while ignoring students' values and personality development, resulting in the suffering of students' spiritual world and obstacles to their all-around development. The emergence of the humanistic educational concept has alleviated this situation (Alfaro, 2021).

In terms of knowledge imparting, people-oriented primary education advocates teaching students in accordance with their aptitude, promotes individual development through teaching, cultivates students' ability to learn independently through a reasonable teaching model, and stimulates their enthusiasm and interest in independent learning. In addition, people-oriented primary education also pays attention to the education of primary school students' personality, morality, value orientation and sociality. This theory holds that students should be able to acquire the concept and ability of self-reliance in the educational environment. In terms of sociality, students need to learn how to deal with the conflict between their own personalities and interests and those others' ones to adapt to a complex and diverse society. In terms of morality and value orientation, it takes the requirements of the new socialist era, as the standard, and cultivates primary school students with excellent morality and values that are in line with the times. In these respects, the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit, as important moral values in traditional culture, has many lessons to be learned.

3 STRATEGIES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF INTEGRATING THE PRE-QIN CONFUCIAN VIEW OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PROFIT INTO THE THEORY OF PEOPLE-ORIENTED PRIMARY EDUCATION

3.1 THE MAIN PROBLEMS AND INFLUENCING FACTORS IN THE CURRENT SCHOOL EDUCATION

Under the background of rapid social and economic development, the current environment for primary school students has undergone major changes. The thoughts brought

by some bad phenomena will have an impact on the primary school students' immature concept of justice and benefit, thus causing problems in their orientation of the concept of justice and benefit. Primary school students are the pillars of the country's future, and they are also the reserve talents to ensure sustainable development. Therefore, the issue of primary school students' view of righteousness and profit is actually the challenge faced by the entire society and education system. One of the most prominent problems is the spread of egoism among students.

At present, more and more students support the view that "people are only right for their own sake" and, at the same time, fewer students support "labor and risk are important evaluation criteria for the value of life" than before. These trends show that, in the current student body, egoistic values are gradually being accepted by more students. Although the pursuit of "benefit" is human nature, excessive pursuit of personal interests will lead to the distortion of the primary school students' value judgment and the lack of a collectivist spirit, which is very detrimental to their growth and the cultivation of social awareness. In addition, the problem of utilitarian tendencies, in the student group, cannot be ignored. Part of the current social atmosphere places too much emphasis on money, and some elementary school students also regard making money as their life goal and value. This has led to the habit of judging others based on wealth, as the sole criterion among students, and has also led to the spread of the idea of doing whatever it takes to make money. In addition, this utilitarianism is also reflected in the students' learning attitude and communication principles. Some students only study the content that has a direct impact on their further studies and test scores, such as cultural courses and sports, but they are resistant to courses, such as moral education, labor and scientific practice, and choose to passively study or not study. In terms of communication principles, utilitarianism is manifested in that some primary school students choose their friends and social circles with clear criteria, including academic performance, family situation, parents' occupation, etc. (Paton *et al.*, 2021).

From the analysis of the influencing factors that cause the contemporary primary school students' view of justice and interests, most of these factors come from the external environment where the primary school students are located. First of all, from the perspective of social environment, the influencing factors of the issue of justice and benefit include market economy factors, multicultural factors and network environment ones. Among them, the market factor refers to the negative impact caused by the unsynchronized construction of society's material civilization and spiritual one as a whole, under the influence of market blindness and profit seeking. This negative influence leads to the existence of values, in the society, that use money and price as the value judgment standard, and some people, in the society, are willing to break their moral bottom line for money. Under the influence of this kind of thinking, utilitarian tendencies that use money as the standard of judgment are also prone to appear in the group of primary school students. The multicultural factor refers

to the phenomenon that the other countries' and ethnic groups' ideology and values have been introduced into China due to the continuous opening to the outside world, in recent decades, and have an impact on Chinese society. Some of these bad views on justice and interests come into contact with students and will have a negative impact on their moral values and value orientations. The network environment factor refers to the fact that, under the influence of the explosion of network information, too much information, containing bad views on justice and interests, is accepted by students, which has a negative impact on students' views on justice and interests. In addition to the social environment, the teaching factors, in the school environment, are also one of the major influencing factors of primary school students' view of justice and interests. At present, the moral education curriculum, in a large number of schools, has problems of superficiality and formalism, which leads to an extremely unbalanced development of subject teaching and moral education in schools. In the absence of moral education teaching in schools, it is easier for bad views of righteousness and profit from the outside world to come in.

3.2 STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING THE PRE-QIN CONFUCIAN CONCEPT OF JUSTICE AND BENEFIT INTO THE THEORY OF PEOPLE-ORIENTED PRIMARY EDUCATION

The Confucian concept of righteousness and profit shares common ground with socialist theory. The Confucian perspective suggests that the individuals' words and deeds, as well as their values, should prioritize "righteousness" over "profit," but, at the same time, a balance between the two should be sought. On the other hand, contemporary socialist theory asserts that individuals in society should prioritize collective interests and honor while also fully respecting and considering personal interests (Pi, 2020). The essence of these two viewpoints is, in fact, similar. This also underscores the importance of incorporating the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit into primary school moral education. During the crucial period, when primary school students are forming their own values and worldviews, exposure to advanced ideas, through this culturally rooted teaching, can take place. Incorporating the pre-Qin Confucian concept of justice and benefit into people-oriented primary education can provide a solid theoretical and historical foundation for the moral education part of primary education, and better shape the primary school students' correct value orientation and moral outlook.

In principle, the application of the pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit, in the theory of primary education, should adhere to the principle of people-oriented and combine with the contemporary national conditions to keep pace with the times. The pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit was originally formed in a social environment, based on the small-scale peasant economy. Its birth and development went through multiple dynasties, but the social structure, productivity level and policy of

governing the country of each dynasty were hugely different from those of contemporary times (Ren, 2020). At the same time, people in different eras have different ideas and consensuses, and their ways of thinking about things are also quite different. Therefore, in order to apply the pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit to contemporary primary education theory, it is necessary to focus on the characteristics of the current era and contemporary primary school students' ones. The characteristics of the pre-Qin Confucian concept of righteousness and profit are correspondingly transformed and updated to obtain better teaching effects. This transformation and renewal are also the embodiment of people-oriented teaching thought.

In terms of strategy, the first consideration is the selection of content. The ideas of "simultaneous emphasis on righteousness and profit" and the moral principles of "public interest over personal desires" from the pre-Qin Confucian perspective align well with the current socialist values and are worth drawing upon. Under the human-centric teaching philosophy, such adaptation can effectively enhance the primary school students' social communication skills and cultivate their moral and value orientations. However, the pre-Qin Confucian perspective, which excessively elevates "righteousness" while negating "profit" and setting them in opposition, reveals apparent historical and theoretical limitations that are no longer applicable in contemporary primary school teaching theories. The incorporation of teachings, related to the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit, can significantly enrich the current content of primary school moral education. The spirit of patriotism, national identity, speculative thinking and profound cultural traditions, embedded in the concept of righteousness and profit throughout historical changes, makes primary school moral education more than a superficial discussion. It becomes an opportunity for students to understand excellent value orientations and moral perspectives, based on deep historical and philosophical insights.

Regarding strategies related to teaching methods, emphasis should be placed on the diversification of instructional formats. Various approaches, beyond traditional classroom settings, should be employed to convey the concept of righteousness and profit to students. In the Confucian view, "teaching students according to their aptitude" is one of the important principles of teaching and educating people. The *Analects of Confucius* also states that "[...] the master is accommodating and seductive", which means that in Confucianism, in addition to imparting professional knowledge, teachers also need to bear the burden of students' other moral responsibility (Li, 2020, p. 322). In the people-oriented primary school teaching theory system, it also advocates emphasizing the students' dominant position and conducts teaching that varies from person to person, according to the students' individual characteristics. This requires teachers to have a correct view of righteousness and profit and a higher moral standard, and to develop more diverse teaching methods, so as to imperceptibly impart an excellent view of righteousness and profit to students.

CONCLUSION

In current primary school education, issues related to value orientations and moral perspectives have become increasingly prominent, such as tendencies toward immediate gratification and utilitarianism. Primary school students represent the nation's future pillars and are crucial human resources for sustainable national development. Therefore, timely intervention in undesirable phenomena is crucial. Research suggests that introducing the Confucian concept of "righteousness and profit", in primary school moral education, can be helpful in addressing these issues. The study explores the concept of righteousness and profit, as well as strategies for integrating it into primary education. The research reveals that, in the later stages of the development of the Confucian concept of righteousness and profit, these notions are no longer treated as opposing concepts, but rather understood as mutually influencing and supporting each other. In terms of exploring teaching strategies, the study suggests that the content of the righteousness and profit concept should be adapted, based on current specific conditions, and instructional formats should be diversified. Through the people-oriented primary education strategy, combined with the pre-Qin Confucian view of righteousness and profit, the correct view of righteousness and profit can be taught to primary school students and further ensure their comprehensive, healthy and free development.

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