

## Original Paper

# Ecological Civilization Education Promotes the Modernization of Ecological Civilization

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### **Abstract**

*Ecological civilization education is an educational action that cultivates people to form ecological civilization concepts and behaviors. It has the characteristics of human nature, inclusiveness, spirituality, practicality, and process, and can promote the modernization of human beings, natural environment, and human civilization. It is the educational foundation for realizing the modernization of ecological civilization. The implementation of ecological civilization education can be carried out from the aspects of awakening and strengthening the sense of main responsibility of ecological civilization education, constructing and carrying out immersive practical experiences of ecological civilization education, exploring and forming the characteristics of the development of the entire chain of ecological civilization education, etc., thereby assisting the modernization construction of ecological civilization and the formation of new forms of human civilization.*

### **Keywords**

*ecological civilization education, ecological civilization, modernization*

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The ecological concept in the 1992 Rio Declaration regards harmonious coexistence between human and nature as the highest ideology, reflecting a qualitative breakthrough in the concept of human ecological civilization. At the same time, the promulgation and implementation of the Rio Declaration provides a reasonable basis for ecological civilization education at the legal and policy level. Ecological civilization

education is a key measure for the modernization of ecological civilization construction. Ecological civilization modernization construction is an important link in the comprehensive construction of a modern country, which is related to the sustainable and comprehensive development of various countries' undertakings and the future destiny of all mankind. Therefore, comprehensively promoting ecological civilization education is the trend.

## **1. The Connotation and Characteristics of Ecological Civilization Education**

Ecological civilization education is "an educational practice that directly faces the ecological crisis faced by humanity" (Chen & Shao, 2024). It is an educational action aimed at public ecological norms, public ecological concepts, public ecological behaviors, and other aspects for the whole nation, cultivating successors and builders with ecological civilization literacy and practicing ecological civilization values. It is mainly manifested in the promotion and popularization of people's knowledge of ecological civilization, the cultivation and development of people's understanding of ecological civilization, and the encouragement and regulation of people's ecological behavior, with the core value goal of harmonious development between humans and nature, humans and humans, and humans and society. Ecological civilization education can not only promote the modernization of education, but also assist in the modernization construction of ecological civilization, with such characteristics as human nature, inclusiveness, practicality, process, and spirituality.

### *1.1 The Human Nature of Ecological Civilization Education*

Human beings are the premise of all history and activities, and education is a unique consciousness and behavior of human beings. Therefore, ecological civilization education must have a human nature. From the essence of ecological civilization education, consciousness is its essential attribute, and consciousness is unique to humans; from the occurrence of ecological civilization education, it can be seen that ecological civilization education originates from a profound reflection on the increasingly serious ecological crisis since the mid-20th century, and is a reflection on the crisis of human survival and development; from the perspective of participants in ecological civilization education, both educators and learners are human beings; from the results of ecological civilization education, the ultimate goal of education is to enhance the well-being of human survival and development. These aspects deeply reflect the human nature of ecological civilization education.

### *1.2 The Inclusiveness of Ecological Civilization Education*

Ecological civilization education is one of the important components of education, and the inclusive nature of education is also reflected in ecological civilization education. Hanhua, also known as "cultural intake", generally includes three forms: acceptance, adaptation, and resistance. The existing culture in society is diverse, with a mixture of advanced and backward elements; the subject of education has individuality, and positive and negative influences interact with each other. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out certain ecological civilization education, guide people to absorb and form correct, advanced, and positive ecological civilization values, update and transform outdated and erroneous ecological

civilization ideas and concepts in people's minds, and realize the cultural value of ecological civilization education. At the same time, the inclusive nature of ecological civilization education is also reflected in the exchange, dialogue, and mutual learning between different ethnic groups, countries, and cultures, enabling different civilizations to achieve common ground while reserving differences and common development in multilateral interactions, thereby promoting the accelerated realization of a harmonious society and a community with a shared future for mankind, as well as the free and comprehensive development of individuals themselves.

### *1.3 The Spirit of Ecological Civilization Education*

On the one hand, the educational content of ecological civilization is the content of ecological civilization knowledge, concepts, cognition, attitudes and other consciousness levels. On the other hand, ecological civilization education is the transformation and change of people's original ecological concepts and behaviors, mainly playing a role in inspiring, guiding, encouraging, shaping and other spiritual aspects of education. Inspire people's awareness of ecological civilization, guide their ecological civilization concept, encourage their ecological civilization behavior, shape their ecological civilization values, and thus demonstrate their own ecological civilization temperament from the inside out, becoming a modern ecological citizen who respects, understands, and cares for the natural environment. Therefore, the content, role, and results of ecological civilization education clearly reflect its spiritual characteristics. However, it should be pointed out that spiritual education ultimately aims to cultivate and change the ecological civilization behavior of learners.

### *1.4 The Practicality of Ecological Civilization Education*

Ecological civilization education is not only a theory, but also an activity with practical characteristics (Liu & Zhang, 2017). On the one hand, ecological civilization education responds to the need for green transformation of national economic development, incorporating green and sustainable development of economic production as one of the educational contents, reflecting the practical production of ecological civilization education. On the other hand, ecological civilization education is centered around school education, supplemented by social education and family education. Regardless of the form of education, it is necessary to organize and carry out certain educational and teaching practice activities to help learners perceive ecological civilization knowledge, form ecological civilization literacy, and exercise ecological protection and construction capabilities in specific practice activities. In addition, the truth of the theoretical understanding of ecological civilization education must be tested and developed in practice. Therefore, the practicality of ecological civilization education is not only reflected in the practicality of content and form, but also in the practicality of source, motivation, and purpose.

### *1.5 The Process of Ecological Civilization Education*

Ecological civilization education is a long-term educational process. Firstly, there is an imbalance in the development of values between individuals and society. The coupling of ecological civilization values between individuals and society leads to the formation of ecological civilization awareness and behavior, which requires a certain long-term development process. Secondly, ecological civilization education is

related to the future and destiny of all countries and ethnic groups, as well as the shared development of human civilization, which is inevitably a dynamic process of change. At the same time, the specific implementation of ecological civilization education must be creatively transformed and innovatively developed based on specific practical problems, reflecting the dynamic and procedural nature of ecological civilization education. Thirdly, there are still problems in the current process of ecological civilization education, such as poor subject consciousness, single educational methods, and obvious formalism; hence, solving these problems also requires a long-term effort.

## **2. Theoretical Value of Ecological Civilization Education**

Ecological civilization education is the fundamental strategic support for the modernization construction of ecological civilization countries. Ecological civilization education cultivates modern talents in ecological civilization, promotes the theory of ecological civilization development, promotes the harmonious development of the natural environment, accelerates the process of forming a community of life, and ultimately promotes the comprehensive realization of the modernization construction of ecological civilization countries.

### *2.1 Standing Firmly at the Center of Human Education Promoting the Realization of Modernization of Individuals Themselves*

People are the main body of ecological civilization modernization construction, and ecological civilization education must take people as its starting point and foothold, cultivating talents for the modernization construction of ecological civilization countries. In terms of fundamental value, ecological civilization education aims to promote the free and comprehensive development of human beings, and refers to the significance of education in cultivating ecological civilization talents with ecological civilization concepts and behaviors; in terms of direct purpose, “ecological livelihood is the livelihood that solves the impact of ecological crisis on human survival and development” (Fang, 2014). Ecological civilization education is conducive to achieving ecological livelihood, improving the ecological environment, meeting people’s expectations for a beautiful ecological environment, enhancing people’s satisfaction and happiness in life, and improving people’s well-being; in terms of educational object, the object of ecological civilization education is everyone, it is the imparting of ecological civilization knowledge and the improvement of ecological civilization behavior to everyone, helping people realize the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, thus deeply understanding the current ecological problems and the relationship between humans, and inspiring learners to respect nature, conform to nature, and protect nature with a sense of social responsibility.

Ecological civilization education is a humanistic education that is conducive to adhering to the value standpoint of putting people first, implementing the development concept of putting people first, cultivating comprehensive talents with modern civilization qualities, enhancing the well-being of people’s livelihoods in survival, life, and development, and meeting the basic requirements of the subject consciousness and talent cultivation of the modernization construction of ecological civilization countries.

## *2.2 Towards the Goal of Ecological Harmony Education Promoting the Modernization of the Natural Environment*

Ecological civilization education faces the harmonious and balanced development among the natural environment, and ecological environment protection and construction are the main content and necessary carrier of the modernization construction of ecological civilization countries. Ecological civilization education can help learners recognize the current ecological crisis issues, enhance their crisis awareness and sense of social responsibility, and enable them to understand the great morality, abide by public morality, and strictly adhere to personal morality in ecological civilization. The great morality of ecological civilization is to cultivate the awareness and understanding of the interrelationship between the values of ecological civilization and sustainable development in economy, society, culture, ecology, and other aspects among the educated, so that they realize the spiritual leading role of ecological civilization values in ecological environment construction and development, and stimulate their overall awareness of loving nature, protecting the environment, and promoting green development. The public morality of ecological civilization cultivates learners' profound understanding of the spirit of public ecological civilization, strict adherence to public ecological civilization norms, conscious practice of public ecological civilization obligations, and specific participation in public ecological environment construction, thereby promoting the overall development of natural ecology. The private morality of ecological civilization cultivates learners to form an internal ecological civilization bottom line and ecological civilization standards, so that everyone can be cautious and law-abiding in ecological environment protection and construction.

Ecological civilization education is a naturalistic education that promotes the harmonious development of the natural ecological environment, balances the relationship between humans and the natural environment, and deepens people's understanding of the importance of ecological harmony, and thereby encourages them to consciously participate in the construction of ecological civilization. It is also beneficial for saving resources, loving the environment, protecting nature, promoting the modernization of the natural environment, and providing a basic natural environment foundation and natural resource capital for the modernization of ecological civilization countries.

## *2.3 Recognizing the Educational Value of a Community of Shared Life Accelerating the Modernization Process of Human Civilization*

The community of life between humans and nature is an inherent demand for the modernization of ecological civilization countries, which can accelerate the development of human civilization. The significance of ecological civilization education lies in enabling people to start from their own situation, reflect on the problems existing in the current community in crisis, understand the essence of the community of life and the historical inevitability of its formation, thereby awakening individual consciousness and the overall action of the current community, initiating a revolutionary movement for ecological civilization construction, and accelerating the modernization of human historical civilization.

Ecological civilization education is an education that combines naturalism and humanitarianism together, which is conducive to the harmonious unity of human, nature, and society. It makes people realize that the natural environment is the “inorganic body” of human beings, and thus makes them realize the importance of protecting the environment, conserving resources, and respecting nature. They consciously join the ecological civilization construction of the community of human and natural life, and accelerate the modernization process of ecological civilization national construction.

### **3. The Practical Path of Ecological Civilization Education**

Ecological civilization education provides theoretical guidance, talent cultivation foundation, and spiritual motivation for the modernization construction of ecological civilization countries, and provides systematic guidance for the modernization construction of ecological civilization countries. Ecological civilization education needs to fully leverage the role of individuals as the main body, coordinate and plan the responsibility, practical aspects, and integrated development of ecological civilization education, in order to promote the modernization of ecological civilization countries, enhance people’s well-being, and accelerate the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind.

#### *3.1 Awakening and Strengthening the Sense of Subjective Responsibility in Ecological Civilization Education*

Ecological civilization education has the public welfare attribute of education, requiring a large amount of human and material resources to be invested, but its benefits are difficult to reflect in the short term. Therefore, ecological civilization education requires sustained, joint, and selfless efforts from all participating parties. However, humans are all animals of interests, and the value balance of each participating subject in the process of ecological civilization education will be different. Personal interests and common interests compete with each other, increasing the cost and difficulty of ecological civilization education. Therefore, it is necessary to awaken and stimulate the sense of responsibility and action consciousness of all participating parties. Only through the collaborative efforts of all participating parties can ecological civilization education be fully utilized.

One of the core tasks of education is to “improve the school family social education mechanism” (Yuan, 2023). Schools are the main battlefield of ecological civilization education, families are the strengthening agents of ecological civilization education, and society is the practice site of ecological civilization education. Each participant must clarify their respective roles and positioning in the process of ecological civilization education. Schools have the advantage of systematic and intensive education, and it is necessary to strengthen the development and utilization of ecological civilization education courses and activities, enhance the ecological civilization knowledge and moral quality of the teaching staff, improve the infrastructure and practical bases of ecological civilization education, and play the role of school education as a bridge between family and social education. Family education has the characteristics of being life oriented, emotional, and diverse. It requires parents to lead by example and teach by words and deeds, so that learners can form green living concepts and lifestyles unconsciously, deeply understand

the community relationship between humans and nature, and cultivate learners' sense of responsibility to actively participate in ecological civilization construction. Society is the real place for ecological civilization education, with obvious characteristics of practicality and authenticity. Through the promotion, organization, and implementation of ecological civilization construction activities, it can attract learners to join the construction of ecological civilization, so that learners can perceive ecological civilization knowledge and consciously unify theory and action in specific practical activities, and improve their practical ability in ecological civilization construction.

In addition, ecological civilization education requires support from government policies, funding, and legal regulations. Firstly, the government needs to play a unified leading and initiating role, encourage all social entities to participate in and supervise ecological civilization education in an orderly manner, provide sufficient financial support for ecological civilization education, improve the ecological civilization education system, and ensure the systematic, continuous, and feasible nature of educational work. Secondly, the government needs to formulate and improve laws and regulations on ecological civilization education, so that ecological civilization education has a legal basis and must be followed, providing protection for ecological civilization education. Thirdly, the government needs to introduce certain incentive policies to effectively balance individual interests and overall interests, stimulate people's participation motivation, and create a good ecological civilization education atmosphere in the whole society. Meanwhile, with the rapid development of science and technology, the internet also plays a crucial role in ecological civilization education. All major network platforms, various APPs, relevant official account, etc. need to clarify their respective publicity roles and responsibilities in ecological civilization education, and abide by network laws and regulations and ethics. For the role of online media in ecological civilization education, it is necessary for the national network regulatory department to strengthen its supervision and management, in order to avoid the influence of illegal ideas and non-scientific theories on the healthy development and practical effects of ecological civilization education.

### *3.2 Constructing and Conducting Immersive Practical Experiences for Ecological Civilization Education*

"Starting from natural education to perceive the ecological world", nature is the "living textbook" for ecological civilization education (Wang, 2024), providing real educational resources and venues for ecological civilization education. Launching immersive "local" ecological civilization practices can shift learners from "bystanders" to "attendees", enabling them to appreciate the practical value of ecological improvement, enhance their sense of achievement in ecological civilization construction, and strengthen their internal drive to participate in ecological civilization construction. This can lead to the formation of green living, health, consumption, and other concepts in real experiences, and help promote the modernization of ecological civilization countries.

Ecological civilization education can provide immersive experiences such as educational practice bases, themed education venues, and volunteer service activities, allowing learners to immerse themselves in the natural ecological environment. Firstly, establishing educational practice bases to promote advanced ideas on ecological civilization construction and experience the achievements of ecological civilization

development. Natural ecology, rural revitalization, industrial enterprises, typical cases, ideological propaganda and other bases can be created. For example, natural ecology: Everglades wetland restoration process in the United States, typical cases or industrial enterprises: Liuzhou's historical transformation from "acid rain capital" to "livable city", rural revitalization: "Shajiang Memory" Ecological Environment Education Museum. Secondly, constructing themed educational venues to popularize knowledge of ecological civilization and experience advanced technologies of ecological civilization. For example, using ecological civilization knowledge as the educational theme, promoting the popularization of related sciences such as oceans, forests, rivers, and biology. Taking ecological civilization technology as the educational theme, we will launch activities such as remote real-time observation, 4D virtual experience, simulation model display, and analysis laboratory, using technology to enable people to get close to natural ecology and feel the charm of ecology. Thirdly, carrying out volunteer service activities, enhancing the awareness of the main responsibility for ecological civilization construction, and giving full play to the exemplary leading role of ecological civilization construction. The mobilization of volunteer service forces requires relevant government departments, civil society organizations, environmental activists, etc. to play a leading role in building large-scale volunteer teams, conducting scientific quality training, organizing themed volunteer activities, etc., leading the new trend of ecological civilization construction in the whole society, and forming a good atmosphere for ecological civilization construction.

Creating different types of educational practice bases, constructing themed education venues with distinctive features, and carrying out diverse volunteer services can not only popularize knowledge related to ecological civilization to the whole society and play a demonstrative role in ecological civilization education practice, but also help learners identify with the theoretical development achievements of ecological civilization in the new era, form scientific concepts and behaviors of ecological civilization in various practical activities, and assist in the implementation of ecological civilization education and the modernization of ecological civilization countries.

### *3.3 Exploring and Forming the Characteristics of the Whole Chain Development of Ecological Civilization Education*

The current ecological civilization education faces certain issues such as value debates, interest games, stage isolation, and regional imbalances. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the formation of a characteristic theoretical system for ecological civilization education, the participation of multiple subjects, integrated promotion, and the overall development pattern of consultation, co construction, and sharing.

Firstly, establishing a theoretical system of ecological civilization education characteristics. Theory is the forerunner of practice, and ecological civilization education must be based on certain theoretical guidance to enhance the feasibility, scientificity, sustainability, and effectiveness of practical development. The construction of a distinctive theoretical system should be guided by the mainstream ideas of various countries and ethnic groups, based on practical ecological issues, drawing on the wisdom of ecological



civilization education from national historical traditions and advanced practical experience at home and abroad, mobilizing the comprehensive strength of educational researchers, schools, academic groups, ecological and environmental protection organizations, etc., and interpreting and developing the distinctive theoretical systems of various countries and ethnic groups from a modern perspective. For example, the Environmental Education Act enacted in 1970 and the National Environmental Education Act signed in 1990 in the United States.

Secondly, pushing ahead the participation of multiple stakeholders in ecological civilization education. Schools are the main body of ecological civilization education, and “building ecological schools is becoming a new direction for the current development of schools” (Chen & Liu, 2024). Ecological campus takes ecological environment conservation, green facility construction, green transportation promotion, and resource recycling as carriers to create a good atmosphere for ecological education implementation, unconsciously forming and enhancing students’ ecological awareness and behavior. However, it is difficult to achieve the goal of ecological civilization education solely through school education. It is necessary to mobilize the participation of multiple entities such as government management departments, education management departments, schools, relevant academic groups, civil environmental protection groups and organizations, environmental enthusiasts, volunteer service organizations, and foreign related groups and individuals to provide diversified, systematic, and comprehensive development forces for the promotion of ecological civilization education. The nature conservation movement in the Netherlands before World War II was an organic unity of civilian forces and government support.

Thirdly, promoting the integration of ecological civilization education. The current ecological civilization education has the discontinuity between stage education and the independent separation between disciplines, which is not conducive to the systematic formation and development of learners’ ecological civilization concepts and behaviors, and even causes contradictions and conflicts between learners’ own ecological civilization concepts and behaviors, hindering the smooth implementation of ecological civilization education. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the correlation and continuity of ecological civilization education between different stages, enhance the integration of knowledge between various disciplines, and thus strengthen the systematic development of ecological civilization concepts and behaviors among learners. In terms of textbook arrangement, it is necessary to achieve unity and intersectionality of knowledge. In terms of curriculum design, it is necessary to achieve integration and coherence between courses. In 2000, the UK established an interdisciplinary theme course called “Sustainable Development Education”, which combines ecological civilization education with teaching in other disciplines. In terms of educational subjects, it is necessary to achieve the coupling between self-knowledge, ideas, and behavior, as well as the lifelong nature of education and self-education. At the same time, we should “promote ecological civilization education in the teaching system of primary, secondary, and tertiary education”, and pay attention to the combination of unity and differentiation (Luo, 2024). In practical activities, it is necessary to achieve the unity of theory and knowledge and the

consistency of educational impact. Only by achieving integration and integration of ecological civilization education in all aspects can we help learners form systematic, unified, and deterministic ecological civilization concepts and behaviors.

Fourthly, forming a pattern of integrated and mutually beneficial development of ecological civilization education. On the one hand, strengthening communication and dialogue among various ethnic groups within the country. Ethnic minority areas in various countries gather a large number of rare and unique natural landscapes and ecological resources, which are important components of ecological civilization construction. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the ecological revitalization of ethnic regions, draw on the advanced ecological culture of various ethnic groups, and provide assistance for the promotion of ecological civilization education. On the other hand, we attach great importance to international education dialogue. Each country and ethnic group has its unique ecological civilization landscape and natural resources, which need to be included as one of the contents of ecological civilization education and popularization. At the same time, countries have their own unique thinking paths and development plans for addressing ecological issues and conducting ecological civilization education. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen consultation and cooperation between countries, learn from advanced educational experiences of other countries, and provide assistance for domestic ecological civilization education. The consultation, co construction, and sharing of ecological civilization education among different countries and ethnic groups can not only enhance the scientific and effective nature of their respective ecological civilization education, but also deeply instill the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, and help promote the friendly and harmonious development of all human civilizations.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Nature is the “inorganic body” of human beings, and humans and nature should be a harmonious and unified community of life. The significance of ecological civilization education lies in enabling learners to recognize the independence and regularity of the natural world and form ecological civilization value concepts and behavior patterns, thereby respecting nature, protecting the environment, conserving resources, loving ecology and so on. It can also promote effective solutions to current ecological crises, and accelerate the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind and a community of life between humans and nature. Strengthening ecological civilization education is a fundamental guarantee and driving force to assist in the modernization of ecological civilization countries, achieve harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and create a better world together.

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