

# The Paths of Ecological Civilization Construction under the Concept of Sustainable Environmental Education

Lei Chen

School of the University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

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**Abstract:** Ecological civilization is a new stage of human civilization development after industrial civilization, and it is an inevitable choice to cope with the global ecological crisis and achieve harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. With the deepening of China's ecological civilization construction, sustainable development education has gradually become an important means of cultivating public ecological awareness. This article first elaborates on the connotation of ecological civilization and its relationship with education, analyzes the current situation of ecological education in schools and society, and points out the existing problems. We must adhere to the integration of ecological civilization and sustainable development education, the integration of ecological civilization and educational governance, and develop education with the people as the center, building a path for the development of ecological civilization.

**Keywords:** Ecological Civilization; Construction Paths; Sustainable Environmental Education.

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## 1. Introduction

With the increasingly severe global ecological crisis, environmental pollution, resource depletion and other issues have become important factors restricting the sustainable development of society and economy. Ecological civilization construction, as a new stage of human civilization development, is an important path to achieve green and sustainable development. China attaches great importance to the construction of ecological civilization and regards it as an important part of comprehensively building a modern country, proposing the goal of building a green, low-carbon, and sustainable society. In this context, sustainable environmental education has gradually become a key way to cultivate public ecological awareness and enhance social ecological literacy. Through in-depth exploration of the current implementation status and optimization path of ecological civilization education, this article hopes to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for promoting the construction of ecological civilization, and contribute to the construction of a beautiful China where humans and nature coexist harmoniously.

## 2. Ecological Civilization and Ecological Civilization Education

### 2.1. Ecological Civilization

The essential requirement of civilization is a form of continuous development from a low stage to a high stage. So, from the perspective of development, when examining human civilization, ecological civilization is undoubtedly a new form of civilization at a higher stage after primitive civilization, agricultural civilization, and industrial civilization. As the name suggests, there is a natural connection between ecological civilization and ecology. In fact, ecological civilization is proposed and continuously developed on the basis of the increasingly deteriorating ecological environment and worsening ecological crisis. Industrial civilization, while promoting rapid social development, has also caused enormous environmental damage. On the one hand, it has created a crisis for humans, with indifference, alienation, and

loneliness between people; On the other hand, it has caused a crisis in nature, where humans and nature are in a state of opposition. Many ecological problems, such as excessive resource consumption, natural disasters, climate change, virus abuse, and endangered species, have seriously threatened human survival. This is the ecological crisis. The increasingly severe ecological crisis has triggered profound reflection on industrial civilization and exploration of new civilizations that can adapt to social development. Practice has proven that industrial civilization is no longer able to shoulder the mission of continuing the development of human civilization, and this mission naturally falls on ecological civilization. The natural ecological activities of human beings include both the relationship between humans and nature, as well as the relationship between humans. These two relationships are not separate from each other, but are unified with each other. That is why ecological civilization regards nature as a living object rather than a conquered 'other'. Therefore, only when humans give moral care to nature can ecological civilization truly be realized.

### 2.2. Ecological Civilization Education

Civilization and education are closely linked as a whole, and ecological civilization education is an important way to promote the construction of ecological civilization. It is a necessary path to implement China's comprehensive "five in one" layout of economy, politics, culture, society, and ecology. Ecological civilization is a new type of civilization, so ecological civilization education is undoubtedly a new type of education. Compared with traditional education, ecological civilization education pays more attention to the connotation and characteristics of interdisciplinary integration education, manifested in different educational content, forms, methods, etc. So, in the new era and new environment, ecological civilization education requires a broad perspective of ecological holism, taking into account the relationship and influence between knowledge of ecological science, natural science, humanities and social sciences, and ecological civilization education. The construction of ecological civilization is a major global issue related to human development. Therefore, we need to constantly explore,

discover and solve the current major problems, establish relevant professional disciplines, and build a scientific and reasonable ecological civilization education system and long-term mechanism.

### **3. Implementation Status of Ecological Civilization Education under the Concept of Sustainable Environmental Education**

#### **3.1. Ecological Education in Schools is Carried Out in an Orderly Manner**

School ecological education is an ecological education that relies on the campus as the main body and targets students on campus. With the preheating of environmental education, the promotion of ecological civilization construction, and the development of ecological disciplines in recent years, school ecological education has begun to form a system. The current basic education ecological curriculum combines theory and practice, guided by the basic concept of ecological civilization, with the main content of caring for the environment and conserving resources, aiming to guide students to establish ecological civilization awareness, form sustainable development concepts, knowledge, and abilities. Higher education ecology provides talent reserves for the construction of ecological civilization from the aspects of ecological science and technology, sustainable development paths, and support. After becoming a first level discipline, the discipline of ecology in universities has developed rapidly, while the discipline of forestry has continued to deepen its development based on its deep accumulation in the early stage. Landscape architecture, forestry engineering, agricultural and forestry economic management, and other disciplines closely related to ecology are all flourishing. The ecological general education for non-ecological majors adopts the form of subject infiltration and elective courses. College students with different levels of ecological awareness have a strong willingness to receive ecological education and hope that universities can set up independent ecological courses. More than 80% of college students believe that ecological education is beneficial to the natural environment, economic development, and social harmony, and can effectively promote the comprehensive and sustainable development of society. Most of the ecological education in primary and secondary schools is conducted in courses such as nature, biology, and geography. In addition to receiving curriculum education, most primary and secondary school students have also participated in practical activities with ecology as the theme organized by the school or outside the school, and have received support from their families and society. In addition, the internet, television, newspapers, and other sources of ecological knowledge are also channels for primary and secondary school students to improve their understanding of ecological knowledge. Due to the varying timing, objective conditions, and educational resources of ecological education in different regions, there are regional differences in the understanding of ecological knowledge among primary and secondary school students. The overall ecological education in our country is highly valued and its effectiveness needs further improvement.

### **3.2. The Influence of Ecological Status on Social Ecological Education**

Social ecological education is an indispensable and important component of ecological education, complementing school ecological education. Deeply carry out the action plan for environmental publicity and education for all, widely mobilize the participation of the whole people in environmental protection, and guide the whole society to care about the environment, cherish the environment, and protect the environment with practical actions. Although the ecological literacy of the public is constantly improving, the current situation is still not optimistic. Social ecological education is facing the objective situation of severe ecological environment and the subjective impact of the need to improve public ecological literacy. On the one hand, the ecological environment has been influenced by traditional development concepts. Although the economy is developing rapidly, it has also paid the price of sacrificing the environment. The high-density pollution emissions that accompany capital intensive industries have led to the dilemma of "pollution first, treatment later" in economic development. Economic development and affluent living have also changed people's consumption attitudes, and unreasonable consumption attitudes have exacerbated resource waste and environmental damage. At the same time, the institutional guarantee for ecological civilization construction has not been fully established, the legal system for green production and consumption needs to be improved, and the management of state-owned natural resource assets and natural ecological supervision institutions need to be perfected. In such an objective environment, there is still significant room for improvement in the ecological literacy of the public, and social ecological education needs to further play its role. We should recognize the gap and strengthen the improvement of people's ecological literacy. In addition to strengthening publicity and education, we should also promote the transformation of consciousness into action.

### **4. Paths of Ecological Civilization Construction under the Concept of Sustainable Environmental Education**

#### **4.1. Integration of Ecological Civilization and Sustainable Development Education**

Ecological civilization and sustainable development education are new forms in China, and they cannot be separated. Ecological civilization is a new form of human civilization development and an important way to achieve sustainable development. The promotion of any international organizational concept must conform to the trend of the times and the trend of reform, and be combined with China's participation in UNESCO, the overall development of the country, and the requirements of education development. Nowadays, the concept of ecological civilization is a further interpretation of the concept of sustainable development, and China has a deeper understanding of talent cultivation and achieving the goal of becoming an educational powerhouse. The concept of sustainable development education is not just about environmental education. The sustainable development goals empower new practices in ecological civilization education, providing value guidance and experience reference for ecological civilization education. Ecological civilization

education enriches the specific practice of sustainable development and spreads Chinese experience and wisdom. Ecological civilization education and sustainable development education interact and coexist in a two-way manner. Integrating ecological civilization and sustainable development education into the basic education stage, fully leveraging the fundamental, leading, and global role of education, and enabling students to establish correct ecological ethics and values, can not only help promote high-quality development of basic education, but also have a profound impact on the long-term interests and sustainable development of humanity and nature.

## 4.2. Integration of Ecological Civilization and Educational Governance

Education governance is an important component of the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity. Comprehensively improving the modernization level of China's education governance system and governance capacity is a strategic precursor to achieving the goal of building an education powerhouse in China. Combining the concepts of ecological civilization and sustainable development education with educational governance practices can achieve the connotation and diversified development of ecological civilization and sustainable development education in the basic education stage, and help further improve and enhance China's education governance system and governance capacity. In the education of ecological civilization and sustainable development, the community is an important carrier, a bridge and link between schools and students. While undertaking important functions such as knowledge dissemination, cultural inheritance, behavior guidance, and skill cultivation, it also provides good resources and conditions for the education of ecological civilization and sustainable development in schools. In the governance of ecological civilization and sustainable development education, government departments are the leaders of education, schools and research institutes are the implementers of education, and social institutions at all levels are the participants of education. By applying the framework of educational governance and the concept of ecological civilization and sustainable development education, in response to the call of the country to build a new era social governance community, and through the model of multi-party collaborative governance, we aim to construct a community of shared interests and responsibilities, and jointly create a good atmosphere for the whole society to carry out ecological civilization and sustainable development education. Using the power of education to cultivate the foundation of people's happiness and strengthen the foundation of national prosperity is not only a key measure to achieve the aspiration for a harmonious coexistence and a better life between humans and nature, but also an important path to accelerate the modernization of education and comprehensively promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

## 4.3. Developing Education with the People at the Center

To build a strong education country, we must adhere to the people-centered development of education, and the high-quality development of education is centered on the comprehensive development of individuals. Ecological civilization and sustainable development education is based

on the perspective of comprehensive human development, with the fundamental goal of promoting comprehensive human development. Digital empowerment is not only an important lever for ecological civilization construction during the 14th Five Year Plan period, but also an important way for the future realization of ecological civilization and sustainable development education. The education of ecological civilization and sustainable development in the new era needs to be based on the background of digitization, networking, and intelligence, with students as the center, to build a smart teaching space, achieve the intelligence of teaching and learning, and promote the interconnection and sharing of learning time, space, and learning scenarios. By integrating online and offline blended learning, learners become the central protagonists of learning activities; Through the interconnectivity and organic integration of school space, family space, cyberspace, and social space, ubiquitous learning becomes the new normal of future learning; Through deep digital education, establish digital archives for every student and serve the lifelong growth of every learner. Utilizing information technology to promote the construction of a digital education system for ecological civilization and sustainable development can not only help achieve high-quality education development, but also provide intellectual support for building a beautiful China where humans and nature coexist harmoniously.

## 5. Conclusion

The construction of ecological civilization is the key to achieving harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and also an important foundation for promoting sustainable economic and social development. Guided by the concept of sustainable environmental education, ecological civilization education has achieved positive results through the collaborative efforts of schools, society, and government. However, continuous exploration and optimization are still needed. In the future, we should further strengthen the deep integration of ecological civilization and sustainable development education, promote the popularization and deepening of ecological civilization education through educational governance innovation and digital technology empowerment, and cultivate new era citizens with ecological awareness and sustainable development capabilities. Only through the joint efforts of the whole society can we achieve a long-term mechanism for ecological civilization, help deepen the concept of ecological civilization, and lay a solid foundation for building a beautiful China.

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