

Ideological and Political Education for College Students in the New Media Era Current Status, Challenges, and Innovative Approaches

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of rapid advancements in new media technology and accelerated globalization, ideological and political education for university students faces practical challenges such as outdated concepts, monotonous models, and limited delivery platforms. As “digital natives,” contemporary college students exhibit profound shifts in their cognitive approaches, value orientations, and information-gathering habits. Traditional indoctrination-based education struggles to meet their developmental needs, making systematic innovation in ideological and political education imperative. This article examines the essence, functions, and contemporary characteristics of ideological and political education in higher education during the new media era. It conducts an in-depth analysis of existing issues, including insufficient conceptual innovation, lagging integration of teaching models, and inadequate expansion of educational platforms. Based on this analysis, the study proposes the following strategies to align with the trends of the times: enhance faculty development to improve educators' new media literacy and comprehensive teaching capabilities. This research holds significant theoretical and practical value for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of ideological and political education in higher education. It not only guides young students in establishing correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values while strengthening national identity and social responsibility, but also provides robust support for cultivating well-rounded socialist builders and successors who excel in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education.

Keywords: The New Media Era; Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions; Educational Innovation

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Introduction

As a crucial component of the national strategy for cultivating high-caliber talent, ideological and political education in higher education institutions plays a unique and vital role in shaping students' worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. Against the backdrop of advancing socialist modernization and deepening globalization, this field faces both developmental opportunities and numerous challenges. Contemporary ideological and political education in higher education exhibits a notable expansion in scope, with its content extending beyond traditional moral ethics, legal awareness cultivation, and national spirit inheritance to encompass fostering innovation consciousness, strengthening social responsibility, and broadening global perspectives.

1. Overview of Ideological and Political Education for College Students

1.1 The Essence of Ideological and Political Education for College Students

Ideological and political education at the higher education level aims to guide students through systematic theoretical instruction and practical training to establish scientific worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. This fosters socialist builders and successors who possess social responsibility, innovative awareness, and practical capabilities. This educational system encompasses a multidimensional content framework, primarily involving ideological and moral cultivation, shaping legal awareness, imparting political theory, promoting national spirit, and fostering contemporary values. Its core essence lies in organically integrating theoretical instruction with practical activities to guide students in grasping fundamental laws of social development, establishing correct value judgments, and developing sound character and a sense of responsibility.

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1.2 Contemporary Characteristics of Ideological and Political Education for University Students

Against the backdrop of accelerated social transformation and globalization, ideological and political education in higher education exhibits distinct contemporary features. Revolutionary advancements in information technology, particularly the widespread application of internet technology, have not only broadened students' access to knowledge but also reshaped the communication channels and pedagogical forms of ideological and political education, driving a shift toward self-directed and interactive learning models. The cultural integration and collision of values brought by globalization place higher demands on shaping young students' worldviews and values. Ideological and political education in higher education must transcend the limitations of traditional political theory indoctrination.

1.3 The Functions of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education

As the core function of ideological and political education in higher education, value guidance effectively directs students toward constructing scientific worldviews, outlooks on life, and value systems. This is achieved through the systematic transmission of Marxist fundamentals, the theoretical framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the essence of China's outstanding traditional culture, and contemporary social development themes. Consequently, it deepens students' recognition, acceptance, and conscious practice of the core socialist values. This value-guidance mechanism not only helps students grasp the intrinsic connection between individual development and the destiny of the nation and its people, but also effectively cultivates their patriotic spirit and sense of social responsibility. This, in turn, inspires young scholars to actively engage in the great practice of realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

2. Current State of Ideological and Political Education for University Students in the New Media Era

2.1 Profound Impact of Communication Paradigm Transformation in the New Media Era on University Ideological and Political Education

With the rapid advancement of digital technology, human communication has fully entered a new era dominated by new media. Professor Min Dahong, Director of the Digital Media Research Office at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, notes that online media has not only reshaped the fundamental logic of information production and dissemination but also profoundly altered the modes of social interaction and value transmission. Against this backdrop, the traditional communication channels and discourse systems relied upon by ideological and political education in higher education face unprecedented challenges and demands for reconstruction. Professor Ji Haiju further emphasizes in *Research on Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions in the New Media Era* that individual-centered new media platforms are shifting from the periphery to the mainstream. Their characteristics—massive information volume, fragmented content, instantaneous dissemination, and interactive virtuality—have both expanded the coverage of ideological and political education and intensified the complexity of value guidance.

2.2 Theoretical Innovation and Practical Exploration in the Methodological System of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education

Confronted with the structural transformations brought by the new media environment, domestic scholars have conducted in-depth explorations at the methodological level of ideological and political education. In his work **Research on the Construction of Methodological Models for Ideological and Political Education of College Students*, Professor Yu Yongcheng proposes a highly integrated methodological system. He advocates breaking away from traditional one-way indoctrination models to establish an educational mechanism characterized by bidirectional interaction between subjects and objects, and the unity of knowledge and action. This system emphasizes three core principles: First, unifying theoretical education with practical education by concretizing abstract values through social practice, volunteer services, and campus cultural development. Second, coordinating the inheritance of

tradition with innovative development by upholding Marxism's guiding role while actively incorporating new media technologies to enhance educational effectiveness.

2.3 Identifying Opportunities and Addressing Challenges in University Ideological and Political Education Empowered by New Media

With new media deeply embedded in the higher education ecosystem, university ideological and political education now faces unprecedented development opportunities alongside multiple practical challenges. From the perspective of opportunities, new media technologies have significantly expanded the temporal and spatial boundaries of ideological and political education. They enable personalized content delivery, immersive experiences, and real-time interactive feedback, thereby enhancing the precision and appeal of education. Furthermore, as “digital natives,” young students inherently possess strong new media literacy, providing a foundational basis for their active participation in the production and dissemination of ideological and political content. Challenges remain significant: First, the increasingly complex information ecosystem facilitates the spread of erroneous ideologies and historical nihilism, posing potential threats to mainstream ideology. Second, some educators still exhibit a tendency to treat technology as a mere tool, failing to genuinely update their concepts or transform their capabilities. Third, issues such as fragmented attention spans and fragmented value judgments among students in the new media environment increase the difficulty of ideological guidance.

3.Primary Issues in Ideological and Political Education for University Students in the New Media Era

3.1 Lagging Conceptual Innovation and Ineffective Implementation

In the current higher education reform process, the renewal and transformation of ideological and political education concepts hold decisive significance. They not only constitute a key component of university ideological and political education reform but also serve as the ideological vanguard driving the innovative development of education. However, against the backdrop of rapid new media technology development, higher education ideological and political education faces prominent issues such as sluggish conceptual renewal, weakened functionality, and insufficient vitality. These problems severely constrain the innovative development of ideological and political education. At the institutional level, while most universities offer ideological and political education courses, significant disparities in prioritization have led to polarized student attitudes toward these courses, highlighting the urgency of strengthening ideological and political awareness at the institutional level.

3.2 Lagging Model Integration and Ineffective Collaboration

With the rapid advancement of information and network technologies, traditional media is undergoing unprecedented transformation and challenges, gradually expanding into the new media domain. In contemporary university ideological and political education practices, while new media demonstrates significant advantages through its rapid development and extensive reach, traditional media continues to hold a dominant position. In current university educational practices, instructors primarily employ traditional face-to-face lectures supplemented by multimedia devices like projectors for teaching demonstrations. However, innovative integration of teaching models remains relatively scarce. Notably, the application of new media in teaching practices has not received sufficient attention. The integration level between traditional and new media teaching models is low, with a lack of effective coordination mechanisms between the two. This situation directly impacts the practical effectiveness of ideological and political education efforts.

3.3 Lagging Expansion of Delivery Platforms and Weak Synergy

The effective utilization of delivery platforms for ideological and political education in higher education institutions directly determines the absorption of educational content. This not only concerns the enhancement of students' ideological and moral cultivation and scientific and cultural literacy but also profoundly influences the

shaping of their value systems. Current ideological and political education remains predominantly classroom-based, failing to fully leverage the potential advantages of new media technologies. Take major national conferences as an example: mainstream news media widely employ real-time live coverage, with related topics frequently dominating Weibo's trending charts. Simultaneously, various micro-video platforms provide rich interpretive content on these conferences. These developments create favorable conditions for universities to utilize new media in ideological and political education. By guiding students to access conference information through multiple channels, universities can subtly achieve their ideological and political education objectives.

4. Innovative Pathways for Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions in the New Media Era

4.1 Aligning with the Trend to Ensure Advanced Ideological Concepts

At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education Institutions, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized: “Ideological and political work in universities must adhere to the fundamental principles of adapting to circumstances, advancing with the times, and innovating with the trends.” This important statement not only provides fundamental guidance for ideological and political education in the new era but also sets clear requirements for educators: they must deeply grasp the characteristics of the times, accurately assess development trends, and timely advance the reform and innovation of ideological and political education. This ensures that such work both reflects the spirit of the times and achieves practical effectiveness. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed: “The essence of ideological and political work lies in nurturing students. It must always center on students, genuinely address their needs, serve their growth, and continuously enhance their ideological and political literacy, moral cultivation, and cultural quality. This cultivates well-rounded socialist builders and successors who excel in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education.”

4.2 Adhering to Principles to Promote Blended Models

With the rapid advancement of new media technologies, the education sector has witnessed unprecedented expansion, where technological elements have become indispensable pillars of modern education. The core direction of current educational innovation lies in establishing blended learning models that organically integrate online education with traditional education. From a practical perspective, domestic higher education institutions have widely deployed various educational cloud platforms, including typical applications such as micro-courses, MOOCs, and mass learning systems. Taking MOOC platforms as an example, their distinctive feature lies in providing real-time interactive online discussion forums, effectively promoting teaching interactions between teachers and students as well as among students themselves. This new educational model grants learners greater autonomy in course selection and demonstrates significant flexibility in time management, thereby gaining broader acceptance among students. Thus, the synergistic development of online and traditional education is inherently inevitable.

4.3 Aiming for Goals, Advancing All-Round Development of the Faculty

The key to improving the quality of ideological and political education in higher education institutions lies in building a high-caliber faculty team, which serves as the fundamental guarantee for conducting such education. With the rapid advancement of new media technologies and their continuous penetration into the educational sphere, traditional ideological and political educators exhibit notable limitations in age structure and media adaptability. There is an urgent need to introduce and cultivate educators who possess both professional expertise and proficiency in new media applications to address the challenges posed by the evolving educational landscape, thereby effectively enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education in higher education institutions in the new era. To elevate the comprehensive quality of the ideological and political education workforce, a comprehensive training system must be established. This includes a dual-track mechanism of pre-service and in-service training, creating opportunities for continuous learning and professional development through cross-campus classroom observations, academic exchanges, and specialized seminars. Ideological and political educators must possess profound

professional expertise and robust political literacy to effectively engage in teacher-student interactions, guide students in enhancing their political awareness, and achieve educational objectives. Furthermore, enhancing the media literacy of the educational workforce is crucial.

5. Conclusion

The new media era presents profound challenges to ideological and political education in higher education institutions while offering unprecedented development opportunities. Faced with transformations in information dissemination methods, the interweaving of diverse value systems, and profound shifts in young students' cognitive characteristics, ideological and political education must break free from traditional path dependencies. This requires conceptual renewal as the vanguard, model integration as the foundation, carrier expansion as the support, and workforce enhancement as the safeguard. Only by adapting to circumstances, advancing with the times, and innovating with trends can ideological and political education transition from “one-way indoctrination” to “two-way interaction” and from “classroom-dominated” to “holistic collaboration,” thereby enhancing its contemporary relevance, appeal, and effectiveness. Moving forward, universities should deepen the synergy between “ideological and political education integrated into all courses” and “dedicated ideological and political courses.” They must build a smart ideological and political education system that leverages technology, delivers high-quality content, and operates through coordinated mechanisms. By upholding principles while innovating, universities will fulfill the fundamental mission of fostering virtue and cultivating talent, laying a solid ideological foundation for nurturing a new generation capable of shouldering the great task of national rejuvenation.

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