Innovating Content and Methods of Ideological and Political Education in the Context of the New Era

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Abstract

This study identifies four significant challenges in China's current ideological and political education: outdated educational content that lacks relevance to modern developments, limited teaching methods that offer insufficient interactivity, a flawed evaluation system, and an unequal distribution of educational resources. These challenges have reduced the effectiveness of ideological education in shaping students' values and overall growth. This study aims to propose strategies that optimize and address these issues. It advocates for updating educational content to reflect contemporary trends, innovating teaching methods to foster greater engagement and interaction, improving the evaluation system with a stronger emphasis on skill development, and optimizing the allocation of educational resources to ensure a more balanced distribution. Analytically, the study reviews relevant literature and examines current educational practices across different institutions. The findings demonstrate that implementing these strategies can significantly enhance the quality and effectiveness of ideological and political education. Additionally, the study recommends that stakeholders in this field take immediate steps to adopt these changes while continually assessing the impact of these reforms. By doing so, the overall quality of education can be improved, supporting students' comprehensive development and growth. In the long term, these efforts are expected to create a more inclusive and effective educational system that aligns better with the needs of today's society.

Keywords: *Ideological and Political Education, Content Update, Teaching Method, Evaluation System*

A. Introduction

During the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, Xi Jinping stressed the imperative of strengthening ideological and political education in the context of new societal conditions. He emphasized the need for innovation in teaching methods, advocating for a transition from passive, traditional teaching to a more active, service-oriented approach. This shift, he argued, is crucial for improving both the pertinence and effectiveness of ideological and political education, ensuring that it resonates with the current generation of students and aligns with the broader goals of national development (Xi, 2016). The importance of practical ideological and political work in universities cannot be overstated, as it plays a vital role in shaping the intellectual and moral fabric of young people who will be the future builders of the nation.

In the new era of rapid technological and social advancements, ideological and political education must evolve to meet these challenges. The primary focus should be on strengthening the theoretical foundation of college students, guiding their value systems, and nurturing them to meet the demands of the national rejuvenation efforts. This involves fostering individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also equipped with the moral compass and sense of responsibility

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required to contribute to the nation's progress (Wang & Zhao, 2020). As the core mechanism that shapes the younger generation's worldview, values, and social responsibilities, the quality and impact of ideological and political education are directly linked to the broader national talent strategy and societal stability (Liu, 2018).

The rapid pace of social change and the cognitive challenges posed by the information explosion have presented new demands on the educational system. Students are increasingly exposed to many ideas and information, which can often be conflicting or confusing. This, in turn, makes the role of ideological and political education even more critical in providing students with a clear and robust framework of values. However, the current system faces profound challenges in meeting these needs. Issues such as outdated educational content that fails to reflect contemporary developments, single and monotonous teaching methods that limit student engagement, and an evaluation system that lags in addressing the holistic development of students have been highlighted as significant barriers (Chen & Sun, 2021). These issues hinder the effectiveness of ideological and political education, making it difficult for the education system to cultivate well-rounded individuals fully.

To address these challenges, this study proposes several targeted optimization strategies. First, the content of ideological and political education should be updated to align with the realities of modern society and the latest developments in political theory. This would help students better understand the relevance of their education to their everyday lives and the broader context of national and global events. Second, teaching methods should be diversified to include more interactive and student-centered approaches. Students will be more likely to internalize the values and principles taught by making the learning process more engaging. Third, the evaluation system needs to be reformed to focus on academic achievement and developing students' abilities, including critical thinking, moral reasoning, and social responsibility (Yang, 2022). Finally, resources should be allocated more equitably across institutions to ensure that all students, regardless of location or background, have access to high-quality ideological and political education.

Implementing these strategies can significantly enhance the overall effectiveness of ideological and political education. This, in turn, would provide strong support for the cultivation of socialist builders and successors who can contribute to the country's long-term development and stability. These individuals would be well-rounded, with strong moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic qualities and a solid work ethic (Huang & Zhang, 2019). In the long term, these efforts are expected to lead to a more inclusive and effective educational system that better meets the needs of students and the broader society.

B. Methods

1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design to identify the challenges in ideological and political education in China and propose relevant strategies to address these issues. The descriptive-analytical design is selected to analyze the problems of outdated educational content, limited interactive teaching methods, flawed evaluation systems, and unequal distribution of resources. By analyzing secondary data and applying qualitative interpretation, the research aims to provide concrete solutions that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018).

2. Research Procedure

The research procedure begins with data collection through an extensive literature review on ideological and political education across different institutions in China. This includes

reviewing official documents, government policies, academic reports, and journals relevant to the challenges faced in ideological education (Bryman, 2016). After collecting the data, the next step involves identifying the critical issues in ideological and political education through in-depth content analysis. Following this, optimization strategies are developed based on findings from the literature analysis and existing educational practices. The final step is formulating actionable recommendations for stakeholders to implement (Stake, 2010).

3. Data Collection Techniques

This study's primary data collection techniques are literature review and document analysis. Secondary data is sourced from journal articles, books, official reports from educational institutions, and government policies on ideological and political education. The study also includes semi-structured interviews with education experts to gain additional insights into the challenges and proposed solutions. These in-depth interviews are conducted to explore further the innovations needed in ideological education (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data is analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This involves categorizing the main problems identified in the literature and interview results and recognizing emerging trends related to ideological and political education innovations. Thematic analysis is used to identify patterns, themes, and relationships among the variables that influence the quality of ideological education. The data is also analyzed in the context of existing educational policies and their implications for educational practices (Miles et al., 2014). The findings from this analysis will be used to formulate optimization strategies to enhance the relevance, interactivity, evaluation system, and resource distribution in China's ideological and political education.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Characteristics of Ideological and Political Education in The New Era

Times and Foresight

Ideological and political education under the background of the new era shoulders the mission of shaping the pillars of the future society, which is characterized by the profound combination of The Times and foresight. It emphasizes that educational content and methods should keep pace with The Times. That is, ideological and political education should closely follow the pulse of social development, timely reflect social hot issues and focus issues, integrate national policies, mainstream social values, and the spirit of The Times into teaching so that students can deeply understand and master the changes and requirements of The Times in the learning process. Ideological and political education also needs a keen insight and can foresee the future trend of social development and possible challenges to guide students to establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life, and values in the process of receiving education to lay a solid foundation for future social participation and life planning. Forward-looking thinking is an indispensable factor in ideological and political education in the new era. With the further development of globalization and the rapid development of science and technology, the requirements for talent accomplishment in the new era are getting higher and higher (Yin & Sun, 2022). Information literacy, international vision, and innovation ability have become important indicators for evaluating the quality of talents. Ideological and political education should actively respond to this requirement and pay attention to the cultivation, analysis, and application of students' information screening ability so that people can clear their minds and make wise decisions in the vast amount of data. At the same time, by expanding their international perspective, students can realize the differences and commonalities between different cultures,

improve their intercultural communication ability, and help participate in global governance and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Diversity and inclusiveness

Ideological and political education also has significant diversity and inclusiveness. In the face of globalization and cultural diversity, ideological and political education is no longer limited to one value system or cultural tradition. However, it shows an open, inclusive attitude and actively accepts and integrates various values. These include, but are not limited to, the in-depth interpretation and promotion of socialist core values, the inheritance and innovation of Chinese refined traditional culture, and the reference and absorption of world excellent cultural achievements. This diversity enriches the content of ideological and political education and broadens students' horizons and thinking boundaries, allowing students to learn to respect differences, understand diversity, and tolerate differences in integrating diverse cultures. Ideological and political education also emphasizes the need to respect differences as the premise, seek consensus as the goal, and promote the exchange and mutual learning of different ideologies and cultures to strengthen understanding and unity among students. This requires educators in the teaching process not only to guide students to deeply understand and identify with their own ethnic and cultural traditions and values but also to encourage them to contact, learn, and respect the cultural achievements of other ethnic groups with an open mind. In exchange and mutual learning, students can enhance their cultural self-confidence and identity and develop cross-cultural communication skills, laying a solid foundation for future international cooperation and development. The pluralism and inclusivity of ideological and political education is not only the expression of its inherent attributes but also one of the key elements that play an essential role in the context of the new era.

Interactivity and practicality

The third outstanding feature of ideological and political education is its strong interaction and practicality, which profoundly reflects the concept that "students are the main body" in the educational process and emphasizes the critical significance of effective interaction between teachers and students, active participation, and positive thinking of students. The educator in the ideological and political classroom is no longer just the imparts of knowledge but the partners who lead the students to explore, think, and explore. By organizing group discussions and role-playing, educators can stimulate students' interest in learning, promote active and deepened thinking, and achieve knowledge internalization and ability improvement. Ideological and political education also attaches importance to the close combination of theoretical learning and practical activities, highlighting social practice and voluntary service as the carrier and strengthening the cultivation of students' social responsibility, practical ability, and comprehensive quality. These practical activities not only enable students to apply the knowledge they have learned to solve practical problems, deepen their understanding and grasp of theoretical knowledge, but also experience the pulsation and needs of society in their personal experience, forming a noble emotion of serving the society and dedicating themselves to the country. The interactive and practical nature of ideological and political education not only promotes the individual development and improvement of students but also creates a large number of high-quality talents with innovative spirits and strong practical abilities for society (Wang, 2024).

Technology Integration and Innovation

In ideological and political education, the integration and innovation of science and technology are becoming the key factors driving its transformation to the direction of modernization. With the rapid progress of modern information technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, the potential of these technologies to be applied in ideological and political education is becoming greater and greater. These technologies not only

bring more abundant teaching means and resources to ideological and political education but also profoundly change the traditional teaching and learning modes, making ideological and political education closer to the actual needs of students and more attractive and practical. Big data technology can provide educators with accurate teaching feedback and personalized learning suggestions by collecting and analyzing multi-dimensional data such as students' learning behaviors, interests, and values, optimizing teaching content and methods, and enhancing teaching effects. Artificial intelligence can imitate the specific functions of human teachers, intelligent question-answering personalized guidance, etc., to give students more convenient and efficient learning assistance. Virtual reality technology can break through the limitations of time and space, create a real learning scene, enable students to deepen their cognition and feelings of theoretical knowledge through an immersive experience, and stimulate their learning interest and desire to explore. Exploring how to use scientific and technological means to innovate the form of ideological and political education is not only the need to develop The Times but also an essential means to improve the quality and level of ideological and political education. Educators should take the initiative to embrace new technology and constantly tap the potential of new technology applied to ideological and political education, use technology to empower education and promote ideological and political education towards a more intelligent, personalized, and efficient direction.

2. Current Existing Problems in Ideological and Political Education

Old Content, The Lack of a Sense of The Times

The first problem encountered in ideological and political education is that the content is old, and the sense of The Times is not apparent. This problem is that some ideological and political education content does not keep pace with The Times, and the timely updates and adjustments separate it from the social reality of rapid development. Traditional teaching content usually focuses on the classic theory, historical events, and characters. However, shaping student values and moral quality has played a role that cannot be ignored. However, when facing a sharp change of social change and diversified values, its limitations are also gradually exposed. The outdated content restricts the breadth and depth of ideological and political education and adversely affects students' learning interests and identities. As trendsetters of The Times, students are eager to understand and participate in the discussion of hot social issues and have more expectations for the ideological and political education content that is close to life and reflects the spirit of The Times (Wang & Zhen, 2024). Suppose the educational content cannot meet this need. In that case, students are prone to boredom and even resist the psychology of ideological and political education, which affects the learning effect and value identification.

The Single Method, The Lack of Interactivity

In ideological and political education, the single way, lack of interaction, is a problem that needs to be solved urgently. The traditional teaching mode of "spoon-feeding" seriously restricts the effectiveness of ideological and political education due to its single-directional indoctrination and insufficient feedback. This teaching method ignores the role of students as the main body of the learning process, reduces the educational process to one-way knowledge transfer, and ignores the significance of students' active thinking and active participation. The lack of teacher-student and student-student interaction will weaken students' motivation and interest in learning and significantly restrict the teaching effect. Teacher-student interaction plays a crucial role in the process of teaching and learning. Educators can grasp students' learning status and confusion in time through effective interaction between teachers and students, adjust teaching strategies, and provide personalized learning support. Student interaction can promote students' collision of ideas and exchange of views and develop critical thinking and teamwork abilities. In current ideological and political classes, these interactive links are often ignored or superficial, resulting in a dull classroom atmosphere, low student participation, and a problematic teaching effect.

The Evaluation System is Not Perfect, Emphasizing Knowledge Over Ability

The ideological and political education evaluation system is not perfect, especially its tendency to pay too much attention to knowledge memorization and neglect ability training, which has become one of the bottleneck problems of students' all-around development. The traditional evaluation system usually takes examination results as the main evaluation index to evaluate students' learning effects. Although this evaluation method can intuitively reflect the student's mastery of theoretical knowledge, it is not easy to comprehensively evaluate the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality and ability. In this evaluation system, students are often guided to pursue knowledge memorization and test-taking skills but neglect the development of their essential abilities, such as innovative thinking, practical ability, and social responsibility (Lan, 2024). This will not only lead to a simple knowledge structure and narrow vision of students but also affect their future career development and social adaptability. This evaluation system that emphasizes knowledge and ignores ability will discourage students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning, make students feel bored and resistant to ideological and political education, and affect the overall learning effect and value recognition.

Uneven Distribution of Resources and Significant Regional Differences

Regarding ideological and political education, the problems of unbalanced resource distribution and significant regional differences should not be ignored, and the differences between urban and rural areas and the eastern and western regions are apparent. This imbalance is reflected in the imbalance of hardware resources, such as teaching facilities and teachers, and the imbalance of software resources, such as educational concepts, teaching methods, and teaching content. Due to the different levels of economic development and educational investment in urban and rural areas, rural ideological and political education resources are relatively short, teaching facilities are lagging, and teachers are weak, which makes it challenging to meet the growing learning needs of students. In addition, due to the developed economy and abundant educational resources, the eastern region generally has high requirements for the quality of ideological and political education, and students can enjoy more high-quality educational resources and services during their studies. The uneven distribution of resources profoundly affects the overall quality of ideological and political education, intensifies the inequity of education, and makes the ideological and political education work of students in different regions and backgrounds face different opportunities and challenges. On the other hand, it restricts the development potential and innovative vitality of ideological and political education, making it difficult for those resource-poor regions to realize the modernization of education with The Times.

3. Optimizing Strategy

Update the Content of Education

Given the problems of outdated ideological and political education and lack of sense of The Times, optimization countermeasures are put forward. First, the content of ideological and political education should be closely updated around the development needs of the new era to ensure that ideological and political education is closely connected with the social reality and the spirit of The Times. This requires educators to maintain a keen insight and timely grasp of new ideas and new theories in social change and integrate them into the teaching content to enrich the connotation and extension of ideological and political education. Second, educators are encouraged to use social hot spots and current affairs news as teaching cases. Through the anatomy of these specific and vivid events, students can be triggered to reflect deeply on the social phenomena, values, and moral ethics behind the events. This method can strengthen the timeliness and pertinacity of ideological and political education and stimulate students' interest and participation in learning to deepen the understanding and recognition of ideological and political theory while caring about society and understanding The Times. By updating the

educational content and integrating the elements of The Times, ideological and political education will be closer to the student's actual life and ideological needs and effectively improve their educational effect and social influence (Liu, 2024).

Innovate The Teaching Methods and Enhance The Interactivity

In order to solve the problems of single means and lack of interaction, it is urgent to innovate teaching methods to enhance classroom interaction, and the two new teaching modes of mixed learning and flipped classroom can be vigorously promoted. Hybrid learning combines online self-study with offline discussion, breaks through the limitations of time and space in the traditional classroom, and gives students a more flexible learning path. The flipped classroom model has completely changed the traditional teaching method, allowing students to independently master the basic concepts through videos and reading materials before class. In contrast, the main focus of the classroom is the in-depth discussion of problems, example analysis, and other in-depth interaction links to promote students' participation and learning effectively. In teaching, they should fully use modern information technology tools, such as online courses and virtual laboratories to enrich teaching resources. Online courses can provide students with many learning resources and personalized learning experiences; virtual laboratories can simulate the actual scene practice for students in the virtual environment to deepen the mastery of theoretical knowledge and use. These technical means can stimulate students' learning interest and creativity, promote immediate communication and feedback between teachers and students, and enhance the interaction and effectiveness of teaching. By vigorously promoting the new teaching mode and using modern information technology, it can effectively break through the limitations of traditional ideological and political education, enhance classroom interaction and attraction, and promote the all-round development and growth of students.

Improve The Evaluation System and Pay Attention to Ability Training

This paper proposes optimization countermeasures because the ideological and political education evaluation system is imperfect, emphasizing knowledge and light ability. First, a diversified evaluation system should be built to comprehensively and objectively evaluate students' learning effectiveness. The system should include knowledge mastery, ability improvement, moral cultivation, and many other aspects into the scope of the evaluation and fully reflect the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality and ability with diversified evaluation indicators and methods. Students' primary abilities, such as innovative thinking, practical ability, and social responsibility, can be tested by diversified assessment tasks such as project assignments, social practice, and social cooperation. It can also introduce peer evaluation, self-evaluation, and other diversified evaluation methods to understand students' learning situations and growth trajectories comprehensively. Second, strengthening the process evaluation attaches great importance to the students during the study of performance and development, and process evaluation attaches great importance to the student learning process of monitoring and guidance. Its purpose is to, through timely feedback and adjustment, promote the progress and development of students in learning. Ideological education educators should focus on student participation, discuss the quality and cooperation ability, and provide timely feedback and guidance. At the same time, it can also help record the learning process and growth trajectory by establishing learning files and implementing learning reflection to understand myself better and improve myself. Establishing a diversified evaluation system, strengthening the process evaluation, and other measures can be a more comprehensive and objective evaluation of students' learning effect and comprehensive quality and promote all-around development and growth. It is beneficial to students to improve the overall quality and level of ideological and political education and to create more high-quality talents with more innovative spirit and practical ability.

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Optimize Resource Allocation and Promote Balanced Development

Due to the unbalanced distribution of ideological and political education resources and the noticeable regional differences, it is necessary to increase the investment to improve ideological and political education conditions in remote and rural areas. The government should increase financial support for education in these regions to ensure that basic teaching facilities, such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, etc., are improved and updated to provide a quality learning environment. While strengthening the construction of teachers, measures such as targeted training and talent introduction are taken to comprehensively improve the level of teachers in ideological and political education in these regions (Wang, 2023). We should also pay attention to students' studying and life needs and give necessary support and help to ensure that we can devote ourselves to studying.

In today's rapid development of information technology, the network platform has become an essential resource-sharing channel. A national platform for sharing ideological and political education resources should be built, and excellent teaching resources and research results should be uploaded to the platform so teachers and students across the country can use them freely or at a lower cost. In this way, it can not only narrow the gap in educational resources between regions but also promote educational exchanges and cooperation between different regions and jointly improve the quality and level of ideological and political education. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to use the network platform for distance teaching and online tutoring and breakthrough regional restrictions to give students more convenient and effective learning support. By increasing investment and promoting resource sharing, the optimal allocation of ideological and political education resources and the balanced development between regions can be realized. It helps to improve national ideological and political education and lays a solid foundation for cultivating noble moral character and innovative ability in the new era.

D. Conclusion

The current problems in ideological and political education cannot be ignored, but implementing a series of optimization countermeasures is expected to overcome these difficulties and improve ideological and political education's overall quality and effect. Implementing countermeasures such as updating educational content, innovating teaching methods, improving the evaluation system, and optimizing resource allocation will help enhance contemporary, interactive, scientific, and balanced ideological and political education and better meet the needs of students' all-around development and growth. In the future, we should continue to pay attention to the reform and development of ideological and political education, constantly explore new educational concepts and methods, and contribute to cultivating more talents with noble morality and innovative ability in the new era.

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