

Original Research Article

Ideal and belief education of college students in the new media era and its practical paths*Xiaona Chen**Liaoning University of International Business and Economics, Dalian 116052 Liaoning, China*

Abstract: The in-depth evolution of new media technologies has reconstructed the information dissemination ecology and college students' cognitive schemas, placing college ideal and belief education in a new field where opportunities and challenges are deeply intertwined. Based on an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of the educational environment in the new media era—Such as the full openness of the educational environment, the awakening of the subject consciousness of educational objects, the fragmentation and diversification of educational content, and the interactive and immersive nature of educational methods—This paper systematically elaborates on the new requirements of strengthening dominance, enhancing attractiveness, highlighting interactivity, emphasizing precision, and stressing synergy. It innovatively proposes and elaborates on a “four-in-one” practical path system consisting of “solidifying the foundation through content construction, improving quality and efficiency through carrier innovation, empowering development through team building, and safeguarding operation through mechanism improvement”. Through empirical data support, typical case analysis, and reflection on technical ethics, the operability and timeliness of the paths are strengthened. The research aims to construct a forward-looking, systematic, and effective educational model to help college students consolidate their faith foundation in the flood of information and commit themselves to national rejuvenation.

Keywords: New media; College students; Ideal and belief education; Practical paths

1. Introduction

Ideal and belief are the “calcium” of the spirit and the ideological foundation and value beacon for college students' growth and success. As the main front for fostering virtue through education, colleges and universities shoulder the era mission of guiding college students to establish lofty ideals and firm noble beliefs. New media technologies represented by the Internet, mobile communication, big data, and artificial intelligence have not only reshaped the information dissemination ecology but also profoundly influenced the learning styles, thinking habits, and values of contemporary college students. With distinct characteristics such as openness, interactivity, instantaneity, fragmentation, and personalization, new media have opened up new spaces and provided new tools for college students' ideal and belief education, while also bringing severe challenges such as information overload, value diversification, mainstream dilution, and distraction. How to effectively respond to the profound changes brought by the new media environment, innovate the concepts, content, methods, and carriers of college students' ideal and belief education, and enhance the pertinence, attractiveness, and effectiveness of education has become a major issue urgently needing to be solved in current college ideological and political education. According to the *53rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China*, the number of internet users in China has reached 1.092 billion, among which the student group accounts for the highest proportion at 21.8%; the number of short video users has exceeded 1.012 billion, with a usage rate as high as 94.8%. College students' average daily internet usage time generally exceeds 6 hours, and new media have become their main channel for obtaining information, social interaction, and understanding the world. This deeply mediated living state has led to profound changes in the formation mechanism of ideals and beliefs: value judgments are

more likely to be influenced by the “traffic logic”, emotional resonance is more dependent on “visual narrative”, and ideological confrontations often unfold in “virtual communities”. Therefore, educational innovation is not only about the upgrading of methods and technologies but also involves the reconstruction of educational philosophy—How to adhere to value dominance in a decentralized communication structure, cultivate profound beliefs in a cultural atmosphere of instant gratification, and forge ideological consensus in a diverse and noisy public opinion field is the historical mission entrusted to ideological and political workers in the new era. This research strives to achieve breakthroughs in combining theoretical analysis and practical exploration.

2. New circumstances and challenges of college students’ ideal and belief education in the new media era

Educational environment: From relatively closed to fully open. Traditional education relies on a relatively controllable and closed environment such as classrooms, textbooks, and teachers. New media have broken the boundaries of time and space, constructing an open field where information is ubiquitous and timeless. Massive amounts of information (including mixed or even erroneous and harmful content) pour into students’ horizons through social media, short videos, online forums, and other channels. The mainstream educational voice is at risk of being drowned out and diluted, and educators’ control and dominance over the information environment have been weakened. The “information cocoon” and “echo chamber effect” may lead to students’ narrow vision, cognitive solidification, or even radicalization.

Educational objects: from passive acceptance to active construction. “Generation Z” college students are true “digital natives” with active thinking, distinct personalities, and strong sense of autonomy. New media have endowed them with strong abilities to obtain, screen, evaluate, and release information. They are no longer satisfied with one-way indoctrination but tend to take the initiative in searching, interactive communication, questioning and critical thinking, and personalized expression. Their values are constantly shaped and reconstructed in the collision of diverse information and complex online interactions, making the traditional “I speak and you listen” model difficult to meet their in-depth cognitive needs and desire for value identification.

Educational content: from systematic authority to diversified fragmentation. Traditional ideal and belief education content is systematic, authoritative, and highly theoretical. In the new media environment, information dissemination presents characteristics of fragmentation, entertainment, and visualization. Serious and profound ideal and belief content is at risk of being deconstructed and interpreted in an entertaining way. A large amount of shallow reading and fast-consuming information easily leads to students’ superficial cognition, making it difficult to form a systematic, profound, and stable value system. At the same time, erroneous trends of thought such as historical nihilism, extreme individualism, and consumerism, packaged and whitewashed by new media, are more deceptive and impact college students’ ideals and beliefs.

3. New requirements for college students’ ideal and belief education in the new media era

Facing new circumstances and challenges, college students’ ideal and belief education must keep pace with the times and achieve innovative development:

Strengthening dominance to consolidate the position of mainstream values . We must unswervingly adhere to the guiding position of Marxism in the ideological field, clearly arm students’ minds with the Party’s innovative theories, and promote core socialist values. We should take the initiative to enter the main battlefield of new media, dare to speak out and be good at speaking out, control the technological wave with mainstream values, and ensure the correct political direction and value orientation of ideal and belief education.

Enhancing attractiveness to increase the appeal of content discourse. Educational content should be close to the times, life, and students. We should be good at transforming grand theories into specific stories, integrating

abstract principles into vivid cases, and expressing them in languages and forms that young students can understand, are willing to listen to, and can remember. We should focus on exploring and using rich resources in fine traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture to enhance the cultural heritage and emotional resonance of education.

Highlighting interactivity to stimulate students' subjective participation. Abandon the one-way indoctrination thinking and respect students' subject status. Make full use of the interactive characteristics of new media to build a platform for equal dialogue and ideological collision between teachers and students. Encourage students to participate in content creation, topic discussion, and social practice display, and deepen cognition and enhance identification in interactive experience and critical exploration.

Emphasizing precision to achieve personalized guidance. Use big data and other technical means to analyze students' behavioral preferences, hot concerns, and ideological trends on new media platforms, and grasp their ideological confusion and growth needs. Provide more targeted and differentiated educational content and guidance strategies to achieve the transformation from "extensive irrigation" to "precision drip irrigation".

4. Innovation of practical paths for college students' ideal and belief education in the new media era

To effectively respond to challenges and implement new requirements, it is necessary to systematically construct a "four-in-one" practical path system:

4.1. Consolidating foundations: Taking content construction as the fundamental to create a "nutrient source" with profound ideas and novel forms

Deeply cultivating the "rich mine" of theories to strengthen value guidance: Continuously deepen the systematic interpretation of the basic principles of Marxism, the Party's innovative theories (especially the important ideas on youth work), national conditions and history, and current policies. Use new media means to produce a series of high-quality courses (such as micro-party lectures, MOOCs), authoritative interpretation articles, visual charts, animation short videos, etc., transforming the profundity of theories into the effectiveness of communication.

4.2. Improving quality and efficiency: Taking carrier innovation as the key to build a "main channel" with multi-dimensional linkage and immersive experience

Strengthening the mainstream new media matrix: Carefully operate official WeChat public accounts, Weibo, Bilibili, Douyin, and Learning Power accounts of colleges and universities, building them into the main positions for spreading mainstream values and carrying out ideal and belief education. Focus on content originality, form diversity, and update timeliness to enhance the activity and influence of the platforms.

Developing educational products adapted to new media forms: Actively use technologies such as H5, VR/AR, interactive games, and mini-programs to develop immersive and interactive ideal and belief education resources. For example, develop VR experience of "rewalking the Long March Road", interactive games of "ideal and belief knowledge pass", and online "cloud tour of red exhibition halls", so that students can deepen their cognition and emotional experience in participation and interaction.

Creating characteristic online cultural brands: Encourage and support teachers and students to create positive online cultural works (such as micro-videos, cartoons, songs, and online articles). Hold online themed activities such as "Online Culture Festival", "Micro Ideological and Political Competition", and "Youth Confession to the Motherland" to create a positive, elegant campus online cultural atmosphere, making ideal and belief education like spring breeze and rain, moistening things silently.

4.3. Empowering and enhancing efficiency: Taking team building as the support to forge a “main force” with firm politics and strong capabilities

Improving teachers' new media literacy: Incorporate new media application capabilities into the training system for core teams such as ideological and political course teachers, counselors, and party and government cadres. Cultivate their ability to carry out teaching, management, and services using new media technologies, master the laws of online discourse expression, and improve their skills in topic setting, public opinion guidance, and online communication. Encourage teachers to become influential “online education masters”.^[1]

Cultivating student backbone online forces: Select and train a group of politically reliable, ideologically advanced, network-savvy student party members, league cadres, online commentators, and campus “influencers” who have influence among students. Give play to their peer advantages, actively voice online, spread positive energy, guide public opinion trends, and become the “loudspeakers” and “new forces” of ideal and belief education.

4.4. Providing guarantee: Taking mechanism improvement as the safeguard to build a “protective network” with standardized order and long-term operation

Improving content review and public opinion monitoring mechanisms: Establish a strict information release review system for new media platforms to ensure content security.^[2] Use technical means to strengthen online public opinion monitoring, timely discover and judge emerging and tendentious issues related to college students' ideals and beliefs, and respond quickly and dispose effectively.

Improving evaluation incentive and feedback adjustment mechanisms: Incorporate the construction effectiveness, content quality, interaction, and educational effect of new media platforms into the assessment and evaluation system of relevant units and personnel. Establish scientific evaluation indicators, and commend and reward excellent online cultural works and advanced online education workers. Establish smooth channels for students' opinions feedback, and timely adjust and optimize educational content and forms based on feedback.

5. Conclusion

Ideal and belief education of college students in the new media era faces unprecedented challenges as well as huge innovative potential. Colleges and universities must deeply grasp the pulse of the times and the laws of new media, adhere to the original aspiration of education, and bravely undertake the era mission. Only by adhering to consolidating the foundation through content construction, improving quality and efficiency through carrier innovation, empowering support through team building, and safeguarding operation through mechanism improvement, and systematically constructing a “four-in-one” practical path system, can we effectively respond to challenges, turn “variables” into “increments”, continuously enhance the timeliness, appeal, and effectiveness of ideal and belief education, guide young students to steady their ideological steering wheel in the complex flood of online information, consolidate the foundation of faith, and consciously integrate personal ideals into the great cause of the country and the nation, growing into era newcomers who can shoulder the responsibility of national rejuvenation. This is a systematic project that requires continuous exploration and deepening, and also a core proposition of the reform and innovation of college ideological and political education in the new era.

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