

Original Paper

Research on Pathways for Ideological and Political Courses in Higher Education to Facilitate Youth in Guiding the Dissemination of Chinese Culture

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Abstract

On the new journey of comprehensively building a modern socialist country and marching towards the second centenary goal, the in-depth implementation of the strategy of strengthening China's cultural power places new and higher demands on the younger generation. As the most dynamic and creative group, young people are a key force in the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture and the main force in promoting Chinese culture to the world. As a key curriculum for cultivating morality and educating people, ideological and political theory courses in universities (hereinafter referred to as "ideological and political courses") play an irreplaceable role in shaping youth's cultural concepts, fostering cultural identity, and enhancing their cultural communication capabilities. This study aims to systematically examine the contemporary context and internal logic of ideological and political courses in universities in promoting youth leadership in the dissemination of Chinese culture. It also deeply analyzes the multiple challenges faced by these courses, including the lack of adaptability of the teaching system, insufficient capacity among young participants, and a weak external support system. Based on this, it proposes targeted and practical strategies from the perspectives of strengthening both internal and external drivers and building a multi-faceted collaborative support system. The study aims to provide theoretical references and practical insights for the reform and innovation of ideological and political courses in universities in the new era and for cultivating new generations capable of shouldering the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.

Keywords

Ideological and political theory courses, youth, Chinese culture dissemination

1. Introduction

Entering the third decade of the 21st century, China's endeavor to build itself into a country with a strong socialist culture has progressed from a strategic vision to a crucial stage of comprehensive implementation. The Report to the 20th CPC National Congress explicitly states the need to "boost our sense of cultural confidence and strength" and "create new glories for socialist culture" (Xi, J. P., 2022). In this grand historical process, young people, as the most proactive and vibrant force in society, are not only beneficiaries of cultural inheritance and innovation but also key agents in shouldering the great mission of national rejuvenation and promoting Chinese culture globally (Bin Yang & Yang Yang, 2023). Integrating the grand narrative of the cultural strength strategy with the individual mission of youth development, thereby forging a convergence with the times, constitutes a primary focus of current ideological and political education for university students. As the key curricula for fostering virtue through education, Ideological and Political Theory Courses must proactively respond to this imperative of the times. Their core function and value pursuit lie in guiding young people to transform from passive recipients of Chinese culture into active disseminators and proactive leaders (Wei Li & Yali Shen, 2020).

2. The Imperative of Youth Guiding the Dissemination of Chinese Culture**2.1 Responding to National Strategic Needs — Strengthening the Youth Force in Building a Culturally Strong Nation**

In the new round of global cultural exchange, integration, and contestation, a nation's cultural influence largely hinges on the cultural confidence and dissemination capacity of its younger generation (Ying Guo & Zidong Yu, 2018). Endowed with innovative vitality, acute sensitivity to new media technologies, and enthusiasm for cross-cultural communication, young people represent the most promising emerging force for the global outreach of Chinese culture. They are not only consumers of diverse cultures but also producers and disseminators of cultural content (Jianxin Ding & Lili Zhu, 2021). Mobilizing and empowering the broad youth cohort to become conscious advocates and promoters of Chinese culture can significantly broaden the scope and depth of Chinese cultural dissemination. By telling China's story compellingly to the world through their perspectives, discourse, and approaches, they inject sustained youthful energy into strengthening the social and popular foundations for building a culturally strong nation.

2.2 Addressing the Shortcomings of Traditional Education—Overcoming Practical Challenges in Cultivating Cultural Leadership

Traditional cultural education often adopts a "cramming" approach, prioritizing knowledge transmission while neglecting student agency and practical engagement. In cultural education, our conventional practices have, to some extent, exhibited a drawback of emphasizing theoretical knowledge over practical

capabilities (Huanhuan Liu, 2023). The traditional classroom-based cultural teaching model is characterized by the transfer and mastery of systematic cultural knowledge, yet it proves less effective in cultivating students' cultural innovation capacity and their ability to disseminate and guide culture. Researchers have noted that without employing modern technologies, traditional IP courses suffer from low student participation (Junping Zhong, 2024). Youth guiding the dissemination of Chinese culture entails internalizing cultural awareness into practical initiative. Through engagement in practical projects, social service initiatives, and international activities, they achieve "learning by doing" and "comprehending through dissemination." This approach directly addresses the lack of practical cultivation for cultural leadership in traditional educational models. To some extent, it facilitates a shift in cultural education from a "knowledge-oriented" to a "competency-oriented" paradigm (Shiwei Liu, 2019).

2.3 Strengthening the Mission and Responsibility of the Youth - Cultivating New Era Individuals Capable of Shouldering the Great Rejuvenation of the Nation

Guiding Chinese culture onto the global stage represents a critical capability for its dissemination, and cultivating this ability necessitates fostering and testing youth's sense of mission and responsibility. By guiding young people to fully appreciate the extensive and profound heritage of China's outstanding traditional culture, reflect on its value in contemporary societal development and its significance to the world, and resolve challenges in practical dissemination efforts, we engage them in a profound education and moral tempering in patriotism, collectivism, and socialism (Wangxiu Liu & Yuqi Dai, 2020). This process strengthens their resilience, enhances their national pride, confidence, and sense of fulfillment, and deepens their integration of personal growth and value realization into the nation's future. Thus, they become a new generation of the era—ideals, ability, sense of responsibility, endurance of hardships, and readiness to strive—capable of shouldering the historic mission of national rejuvenation.

3. The Unique Value of Ideological and Political Courses in Guiding Youth Culture

3.1 Shaping Perspectives

Ideological theory serves as a robust and explicit guide for value orientation and directional guidance. It empowers youth to establish correct cultural and historical viewpoints, enabling them to discern truth from falsehood amid complex ideological trends. They must gain a precise understanding of the core tenets and significance of China's outstanding traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture (Guoxi Gao, 2024; Qiong Wu, 2024). Within the framework of curriculum-based ideological and political education, cultural confidence should be rooted in the foundation of youth's thought, thereby fortifying their cultural conviction to guide cultural dissemination.

3.2 Competency Development

The innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in the new era advocates emphasizing both theoretical instruction and practical training. By adopting high-interaction teaching models—such as task-based, role-playing, and simulation-based approaches—these courses provide youth with simulated

environments to practice cultural dissemination. This cultivates their narrative competence, cross-cultural communication competence, new media proficiency, and creative planning competence, all essential qualities for becoming effective cultural leaders (Haiming Liu, Jiazhu Ding, Hongwen Xu, et al., 2022).

3.3 Fostering Cultural Identity

Ideological and Political Theory Courses serve as the primary channel for implementing the "Three Integrations" initiative—integrating China's outstanding traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture into education. In recent years, extensive research and practice have focused on incorporating outstanding traditional culture and even regional heroic legacies into these courses through the "Three Integrations" framework. Methods such as studying classics, organizing thematic activities, and leveraging media platforms immerse youth in cultural engagement, deepening their understanding and identification with Chinese culture and consolidating the foundation of cultural identity (Yanchao Wang & Zibin Zhong, 2024).

3.4 Exemplar Modeling

Teachers of Ideological and Political Theory Courses inherently serve as exemplars and advocates of Chinese culture. An instructor possessing profound scholarship, engaging pedagogy, and influential exemplar impact delivers the most vivid lesson in role modeling for youth. Furthermore, these courses can integrate into classroom settings figures emblematic of excellence across sectors—such as cultural luminaries and master artisans—enabling youth to draw motivation and tangible objectives for emulation through direct engagement with such paragons.

4. Dilemmas and Challenges in Higher Education Ideological and Political Courses Facilitating Youth to Guide the Dissemination of Chinese Culture

4.1 Low Adaptability Between the Teaching System of Ideological and Political Theory Courses and Youth's Cultural Needs

4.1.1 Insufficient Alignment between Teaching Content and Youth's Cultural Interests

Some Ideological and Political Theory Courses still approach Chinese culture through "labeling and conceptual abstraction"—relying on grand narratives and conventional approaches that lag in relevance and rigidity in discourse. This fails to connect with the popular culture, digital culture, and daily life that resonate with youth. The disconnect between course content and young people's cultural affinities and interests renders lessons dry, stifling their intrinsic motivation to deeply explore and autonomously disseminate culture (Lin Xu, 2021).

4.1.2 Disconnect between Teaching Methods and Youth's Modes of Cultural Engagement

Contemporary university students, as "digital natives," habitually share and express themselves via mobile internet platforms. Their learning engagement increasingly reflects fragmented, participatory, and immersive interactive dynamics shaped by new media (Yilin Kong, 2024). However, a significant disconnect persists between monologist, one-way instruction—where "teachers impart knowledge and

students passively receive"—within hierarchical learning environments, and the participatory, diverse, intelligent, and contextualized cognitive paradigms fostered by new media. Research on technology-integrated classroom cases indicates that while such innovations can enhance student participation to some extent, broader implementation remains imperative (Jing Zhang & Xin Xing, 2022). Most media technology applications still merely supplement knowledge delivery through digital displays, falling short of creating student-centered, deeply interactive learning scenarios.

4.1.3 Misalignment between Assessment Mechanisms and Youth's Cultural Value Orientation

The current assessment system for Ideological and Political Theory Courses predominantly relies on traditional methods such as closed-book examinations and term papers, emphasizing students' memorization and restatement of theoretical knowledge. In contrast, youth culture places greater value on creative praxis, peer recognition, and online impact (Jing Zhao, 2024). Consequently, innovative and influential outcomes—including student-initiated cultural salons, creative short videos for cultural dissemination, and student-operated cultural social media accounts—rarely receive commensurate recognition or incentives within the existing evaluation framework.

4.1.4 Mismatch between Teaching Resources and Youth's Cultural Access Channels

Although universities possess abundant cultural archives and expert resources, these assets are often "confined within libraries and ivory towers," failing to be transformed into youth-engaging digital and converged media formats. Concurrently, youth increasingly source cultural information from channels like social media and short-video platforms. Unless Ideological and Political Theory Courses proactively occupy these new media spaces, their influence in cultural dissemination will significantly diminish (Jing Zhao, 2024).

4.2 *The Cultural Identity and Practical Ability Dilemma of the Youth*

4.2.1 Cultural Identity Dilemma

Within the internet landscape, Western cultural infiltration and erroneous ideological trends—such as historical nihilism—persistently emerge, posing potential threats to youth's cultural identity. Some youth exhibit tendencies of "cultural self-marginalization" or "cultural complacency," lacking a comprehensive understanding or meaningful connection to the extensive heritage of Chinese culture. This superficial identification inherently weakens their motivation for cultural dissemination.

4.2.2 Dilemma of Cultural Praxis Capabilities

"Knowing" does not equate to "doing." While many youth possess enthusiasm for disseminating Chinese culture, they often lack the capacity to transform cultural cognition into effective communicative action. Key gaps include: How to narrate China's stories compellingly using internationally accessible language and youth-oriented perspectives; How to design and execute impactful online-offline cultural initiatives; How to leverage modern media technologies for high-quality cultural content creation (Guangxing Liu, 2017). These deficits in practical competencies constitute the critical bottleneck hindering youth's evolution from "cultural enthusiasts" to "cultural trailblazers."

4.2.3 Absence of Professional Guidance and Support for Cultural Praxis

Higher education institutions currently lack professional guidance and resource backing for youth-led spontaneous cultural dissemination initiatives. Student club activities and personal interest projects thus operate in a state of "unstructured autonomy," lacking essential support in areas such as production standards, project design, resource coordination, and outcome promotion (Hongmei Fang, 2021). While Ideological and Political Theory Courses provide theoretical instruction in classrooms, a thin barrier persists between extracurricular cultural dissemination activities and students, reflecting insufficient professional mentorship and feedback mechanisms.

4.3 The teaching staff lacks adequate support from external environments

4.3.1 Teachers' Cultural Interpretive Competence and Generational Divides

For Ideological and Political Theory Course instructors to effectively facilitate youth in guiding cultural dissemination, they themselves must be highly competent cultural interpreters. However, some teachers possess overspecialized knowledge structures or exhibit insufficient depth in comprehending Chinese culture, while others struggle to adapt content through youth discourse systems, resulting in suboptimal pedagogical outcomes (Zijun Li, 2024). Generational differences between teachers and students may also impede accurate understanding of youth's cultural psychology and reception habits, creating a disjuncture between what teachers deliver and what students seek.

4.3.2 Resource Integration Barriers in University-Local Collaboration

Concurrently, the inheritance and promotion of Chinese culture require coordinated resource mobilization across society. However, high collaboration thresholds persist among universities, local governments, cultural departments, and enterprises. Survey data analysis reveals four key issues in university-local government-business (UGB) collaborative innovation: Inadequate risk-benefit sharing mechanisms; Resource-sharing barriers (data, instruments/equipment); Absence of sustained communication channels; insufficient standardization of governmental coordination protocols. Particularly concerning culturally sensitive resources with strong ideological dimensions, collaborations proceed with excessive caution. Value alignment and ideological vetting barriers often render partnerships conservative or prone to premature termination. This ineffective coordination substantially limits external resource supplementation for practical teaching in Ideological and Political Theory Courses.

4.3.3 The Internet Environment Presents Challenges for International Competition

Cyberspace is the main battlefield for young people to lead cultural dissemination, but it is also filled with complex public opinion ecosystems and intense cultural competition. How to guide young people to maintain their composure and discern right from wrong through the intricate web of information, and how to assist them in using peaceful, rational, and confident ways to explain Chinese culture in online dialogues with young people from around the world, avoiding 'low-level red' and 'high-level black,' are severe challenges faced in the real internet environment and international competition.

5. Strategies for Addressing the Challenges in How Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Higher Education Facilitate Youth in Guiding the Dissemination of Chinese Culture

5.1 Strengthening Dual Internal-External Drivers to Address the Dilemmas of Youth's Cultural Identity and Praxis Capabilities

5.1.1 Constructing a "History-Informing-Present" Narrative Framework to Reinforce Youth's Cultural Identity

To address the dilemma of superficial cultural identification among youth, Ideological and Political Theory Courses should adopt a "history illuminating the present" pedagogical model, whose core principle is "leveraging history as a lens to understand and engage with the present." These courses must strategically construct a coherent narrative thread integrating past, present, and future.

In terms of content, integrate the philosophical insights, ethical principles, and aesthetic values from cultural classics with contemporary social issues and youth's ideological dilemmas, using living culture to address real-world questions. In terms of methodology, vigorously promote the deep integration of emerging technologies with pedagogical content (Ke Liu, 2024). For instance: Employ VR/AR technologies to create immersive learning scenarios, allowing students to "transport" to battlefields of the revolutionary war era or "step into" ancient architectural and daily life settings. Through these firsthand experiences, enhance emotional resonance and value identification. Develop virtual simulation platforms to facilitate dual-agent interactions (teacher-student and student-student), advancing deep learning (Saihong Li, 2023).

5.1.2 Innovating "Knowledge-Practice Integration" Platforms to Enhance Youth's Praxis Capabilities

To address gaps in youth's practical competencies, Ideological and Political Theory Courses must transcend classroom boundaries by establishing platforms for integrating knowledge with practice. Key approaches include:

Project-Based Learning: Design cultural dissemination tasks as concrete projects (e.g., planning overseas social media campaigns on "Chinese Festival Culture" or producing short video series on local intangible cultural heritage). Adopt the framework of the "Strengthening the Nation through My Actions" initiative, emphasizing thematic depth, program design, sustained implementation, and outcome demonstration.

Practicum Base Development: Establish stable off-campus bases at museums, cultural parks, media agencies, and tech firms, extending the "second classroom" of these courses into society. This not only provides authentic praxis settings but also aligns with the "Curriculum-Based Ideological Education Demonstration Project" mandate to build support systems including red education bases.

Capacity-Building Workshops: Conduct regular skill workshops (e.g., new media operations, short video production, cross-cultural communication, public speaking) led by industry experts for targeted competency development.

5.1.3 Implementing Dual Credit-Reward Incentives to Motivate Youth Engagement in Praxis

Sustained motivation is paramount for youth participating in cultural dissemination initiatives. To this end, cultural praxis activities and outcomes—including project proposals, video productions, and social

impact—should be incorporated into the assessment framework of Ideological and Political Theory Courses, with dedicated academic credits awarded for participation (Ke Liu, 2024). Drawing insights from the study constructing an Ethical Ecosystem Based on Benevolence-Culture, we observe that healthcare programs implement the "Triple Benevolence Initiative" through a point-based quantitative assessment system. This mechanism quantifies students' practical contributions for evaluation, conferring honors such as the "Youth Envoy for Chinese Cultural Dissemination" title and selecting annual outstanding projects. Merit-based scholarships, innovation funds, and material rewards are granted to exemplary teams or individuals.

5.2 Establishing a "Multi-Stakeholder Collaborative" Support Framework to Strengthen Faculty Capacity and External Ecosystem Reinforcement

5.2.1 Establishing "Interdisciplinary + Cultural Empowerment" Faculty Development Programs to Enhance Teacher Competencies

To address faculty competency gaps, implement a regularized training mechanism for instructors. Organize cross-disciplinary teaching research and collective lesson preparation among Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers and faculty of literature, history, philosophy, arts, new media communication, and computer science. This collaboration breaks disciplinary silos, enriching pedagogical knowledge bases and instructional perspectives (Zijun Li, 2024; Ao Shen & Qiaomu Huang, 2023). Concurrently, conduct "In-Depth Seminars on Chinese Culture" featuring lectures and workshops by cultural scholars, ICH inheritors, and veteran journalists. These initiatives enhance faculty competencies in: Interpreting traditional and contemporary cultural paradigms; analyzing youth cultural dynamics; guiding student development; Fostering innovative pedagogies.

5.2.2 Constructing a "Tripartite Synergy" Resource Integration Mechanism to Break Cross-Sectoral Barriers

Advancing the deep integration of micro-classrooms (ideological education) with macro-society necessitates dismantling institutional barriers by establishing a university-government-business (UGB) tripartite collaborative education mechanism.

Deepening University-Local Synergy: Higher education institutions should proactively establish strategic partnerships with local departments of publicity, culture/tourism, and education to jointly develop "Mobile Ideological Education" practicum bases (Xiuxiu Pan, Hongyun Pu, & Yun Zhu, 2024). Drawing on the model of the Yuan Zhou Stone Carving collaboration—where universities and local entities disseminated traditional craftsmanship—transform local museums, cultural centers, science museums, and ICH projects into living pedagogical resources for these courses. Co-develop curricula and facilitate cross-institutional personnel exchanges. Emulate the agricultural universities' "Three Teams and One Unit" model for rural revitalization by creating organizational structures with clearly defined responsibilities and efficient operations.

Expanding University-Business Collaboration: Proactively partner with internet firms and cultural media companies possessing technological and platform advantages. Enterprises can provide universities with

technical support for VR/AR content development, platform traffic support for new media dissemination, and even establish joint initiatives that transform authentic corporate needs for cultural globalization into student practicum projects (Qingbo Yang, 2023).

Co-Creating Inter-University Synergy: Establish regional/national teaching resource consortiums for Ideological and Political Theory Courses. Leverage digital infrastructure to develop shared platforms for distributing premium resources—including exemplary courseware, video cases, virtual simulations, and especially high-quality regional cultural education assets—maximizing the impact of these resources (Ruilin Ma, 2023).

5.2.3 Implementing International Cultural Promotion Initiatives to Address Digital and Global Challenges

Amid complex international discourse environments, Ideological and Political Theory Courses must guide youth in executing strategic and impactful global promotion campaigns. Establish youth international communication teams by selecting students with advanced linguistic proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and profound identification with Chinese culture to form the "Generation Z Vanguard for Global Cultural Dissemination" (Yong Liu, 2017). Mentor these teams to transform Grand National narratives into micro-level, personal, and emotive stories tailored to target audiences across countries/regions, creating premium content aligned with overseas social media dynamics. For instance: Convert the jade culture and craftsman spirit from the Introduction to Gemology course into refined short videos; Trans create "Wei Medicinal Heritage" (from Chinese Medicinal Formulation Technology) into visual narratives. Build global youth dialogue networks connecting with international youth organizations, Sino logical institutes, and university associations. Through hybrid (online-offline) engagements, conduct "Youth Cultural Dialogues" to foster mutual understanding, dispel prejudices, and amplify Chinese youth's voice globally via authentic, equitable exchanges.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, within the grand context of building a country with a strong socialist culture, Ideological and Political Theory Courses in higher education shoulder the sacred mission of empowering youth to become agents of Chinese cultural dissemination. Given current challenges—including insufficient adaptability in educational frameworks, gaps in youth's praxis capabilities, and deficiencies in external support ecosystems—we must adopt integrated internal-external strategies: Internally, enhance cultivating foundational virtues and forging ideological conviction while honing competencies and mastering practical skills; Externally, pioneer narratives that vitalize historical legacy and praxis spaces that translate action into impact. Concurrently, construct a unified multi-stakeholder collaboration system spanning all educational levels to: Strengthen faculty capacity; Consolidate institutional resources; Navigate global challenges.

Thus, these courses can become both a catalyst for youth's cultural confidence and a crucible for honing cultural dissemination competencies, channeling youthful dynamism toward the creative transformation

and innovative development of China's cultural heritage, its global dissemination, and ultimately, the realization of a culturally empowered nation.

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