Original Paper

From "Management" to "Leadership": The Challenges and Breakthroughs in the Transformation of Ideological Education Paradigms for College Students

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the transformation of the paradigm of ideological education for university students from "management" to "leadership," analyzing the practical challenges encountered during the transformation process, including faculty resources, educational environment, student initiative, innovation in teaching methods, and collaboration among multiple stakeholders. It proposes breakthrough strategies such as strengthening faculty development, creating a diverse educational environment, fostering student initiative, innovating teaching methods, and promoting collaboration among multiple stakeholders, aiming to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for the transformation of the ideological education paradigm for university students.

Keywords

Ideological Education for College Students, Paradigm Shift, Management, Guidance, Challenges and Breakthroughs

1. Introduction

With the development of the times, ideological education for university students faces new challenges and opportunities. The traditional "management"-oriented ideological education paradigm is increasingly unable to meet the needs of students in the new era, and the paradigm shift from 'management' to "guidance" has become an inevitable trend in the development of ideological education for university students. However, this transformation is not without its challenges, as it faces numerous practical difficulties. A thorough analysis of these challenges and the exploration of effective breakthrough strategies are of great significance for enhancing the effectiveness of ideological education for university students.

2. Real-world Challenges in the Paradigm Shift of Ideological Education for College Students

2.1 Weak Faculty: Dual Shortcomings in Professional Competence and Educational Capabilities

The effective implementation of ideological education for college students relies on a high-quality, professional faculty. However, the current faculty is unable to fully meet the actual needs of educational development, presenting a dual shortfall in professional competence and educational capabilities.

In terms of ideological cognition, some teachers exhibit a disconnect from the times. They have failed to update their ideological perspectives in a timely manner, lacking keen insight and deep understanding of current social trends, student ideological dynamics, and new requirements for ideological and political education. This ideological lag prevents them from effectively integrating ideological and political theories with real-world societal issues in their teaching, thereby unable to provide students with targeted and forward-looking guidance.

In terms of teaching quality, the issue of uneven teacher competence is particularly prominent. Some teachers lack modern educational concepts and still adhere to traditional teaching concepts, viewing ideological and political theory courses as a simple process of knowledge transmission, neglecting the importance of shaping students' values, cultivating their thinking abilities, and guiding their emotional attitudes. In terms of teaching methods, some teachers overly rely on the traditional "rote learning" teaching model, which is teacher-centered and unidirectionally imparts knowledge, neglecting the students'主体 status and individual differences. Such outdated teaching methods struggle to stimulate students' interest and initiative in learning, leading to low levels of enthusiasm for ideological and political theory courses, low classroom participation, and unsatisfactory teaching outcomes. For example, in some universities' ideological and political theory classrooms, teachers read directly from textbooks, while students doze off, creating a dull classroom atmosphere that fails to achieve the educational objectives of ideological and political education.

2.2 Limitations of the Educational Environment: The Conflict Between a Single Model and Diverse Needs

In today's diverse society, college students' ideas, values, and behaviors are becoming increasingly diverse, placing higher demands on the educational environment for college students. However, the current educational environment for college students is relatively monotonous and unable to meet the diverse needs of students, thereby limiting the effectiveness of ideological education.

From the perspective of teaching methods and formats, classroom instruction remains primarily teacher-centered, lacking interactivity and practicality. Teachers often dominate the classroom, while students remain in a passive receptive state, lacking opportunities for active participation and expression. This single-format teaching approach fails to stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and initiative, and cannot ignite their interest in learning or creativity. Additionally, the presentation of educational content is also relatively monotonous, primarily relying on static forms such as text and images, lacking vividness and appeal. For example, when explaining abstract ideological and political

theories, teachers often rely solely on text from textbooks and simple images for illustration, making it difficult for students to understand and accept the content, resulting in the educational content failing to truly internalize into students' ideological understanding and behavioral habits.

Furthermore, the practical components of ideological education for college students are relatively weak, lacking close ties to real-world societal contexts. Students lack opportunities to participate in social practice activities or volunteer services, making it difficult for them to apply the ideological and political theories they have learned to real-life situations. This disconnect between theory and practice in the educational environment weakens students' sense of identification and belonging toward ideological and political education, thereby affecting the targeted and practical effectiveness of such education.

2.3 Lack of Student Initiative: Mismatch Between Traditional Models and Subjective Awareness

In the process of ideological education for college students, student initiative is a key factor in ensuring educational effectiveness. However, students currently lack initiative overall, often adopting a passive learning approach and lacking the spirit of active thinking and exploration. This has become a significant obstacle to the transformation of ideological education paradigms in higher education.

The lack of student initiative is closely related to the long-term influence of traditional educational models. Under traditional educational models, teachers are regarded as authorities on knowledge and the dominant figures in the classroom, while students are viewed as passive recipients of knowledge. This educational model emphasizes students' obedience to teachers' authority and memorization of established knowledge, neglecting the cultivation of students' sense of agency and innovative abilities. Over time, students have become accustomed to passively accepting teachers' explanations and arrangements, lacking the ability and habit of actively posing and solving problems.

Additionally, the absence of effective guidance and incentive mechanisms in the educational process is another significant reason for the lack of student initiative. In ideological and political theory courses, teachers often focus on knowledge transmission while neglecting to stimulate students' interest in learning and cultivate their motivation. The lack of attention to individual differences among students and targeted guidance leaves them feeling lost and helpless during the learning process, struggling to find direction and motivation. Furthermore, the evaluation methods are overly simplistic, primarily relying on exam scores as the main criterion for assessing students' learning outcomes, while neglecting evaluations of the learning process and overall comprehensive qualities. This single-dimensional evaluation method causes students to overly focus on exam scores while neglecting the cultivation of their own abilities and the improvement of their comprehensive qualities, further weakening their learning initiative. For example, in ideological and political theory course exams, students often rely on rote memorization to cope with exams, lacking a deep understanding of knowledge and practical application abilities, resulting in educational outcomes that fail to be truly realized.

2.4 Outdated Teaching Methods: Traditional Approaches Are Out of Step with the Times

With the rapid development of the times and the continuous advancement of technology, college

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students' ideas, learning methods, and lifestyles have undergone profound changes. Traditional teaching methods are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of ideological education for college students, and the lack of innovation in teaching methods has become another challenge facing the transformation of ideological education paradigms in higher education.

Although some universities have begun to experiment with innovative teaching methods, the overall level of innovation remains insufficient. In terms of the application of modern technological tools, while some universities have introduced multimedia teaching and online teaching methods, the application of these tools remains limited in scope and depth. Diversified educational forms such as interactive classrooms, online videos, and apps have not been fully utilized, failing to leverage their advantages in enhancing teaching efficiency, interactivity, and engagement. For example, in some universities' ideological and political theory courses, although multimedia teaching equipment is used, the primary focus remains on teachers presenting PowerPoint slides and students watching, with limited interaction and communication between teachers and students, resulting in suboptimal teaching outcomes.

Additionally, teaching evaluation methods remain relatively monotonous, making it difficult to comprehensively and objectively assess students' learning outcomes. Currently, the evaluation of ideological and political theory courses in universities primarily relies on exam scores and regular assignments, lacking a comprehensive evaluation of students' learning processes, thinking abilities, innovative capabilities, and practical skills. This single-dimensional evaluation method fails to accurately reflect students' learning status and overall quality, making it difficult to stimulate their learning motivation and innovative capabilities. Additionally, teaching evaluations lack timely feedback and effective guidance, preventing students from promptly understanding their learning status and existing issues, thereby hindering targeted improvements and enhancements.

2.5 Challenges in Multi-stakeholder Collaboration: Structural Contradictions between Value Differences and Talent Shortages

The transformation of ideological education paradigms for university students is a systematic endeavor involving multiple stakeholders, including educational institutions, technology companies, and research teams. However, significant differences in value orientations and operational logic among these stakeholders lead to structural contradictions in collaborative mechanisms, undermining the effectiveness and stability of multi-stakeholder collaboration.

From the perspective of value orientations, different stakeholders have distinct goals and aspirations. Educational institutions, as the primary implementers of ideological and political education, emphasize the special requirements of ideological attributes, focusing on cultivating students' political literacy, moral character, and values. Technology companies, as the main entities engaged in technological research and application, pursue the commercial logic of algorithm optimization and product iteration, prioritizing the market competitiveness and technological innovation of their products. Research teams, on the other hand, focus on academic research and theoretical innovation, pursuing breakthroughs in

knowledge and academic progress. These differing value orientations often lead to issues such as inconsistent objectives and unbalanced interest distribution during collaboration, resulting in poor collaborative outcomes. For example, when developing intelligent educational products, technology R&D departments may prioritize product functionality and technical specifications while neglecting the educational suitability of the product and the special requirements of ideological and political education, making it difficult for intelligent products to truly meet the needs of ideological education for university students.

At the same time, the shortage of cross-disciplinary talent exacerbates the obstacles to collaboration among diverse stakeholders. The transformation of the ideological education paradigm for university students requires a large-scale, multidisciplinary faculty team that is proficient in both Marxist theory and artificial intelligence technology. However, such cross-disciplinary talent is currently in short supply, and a comprehensive talent cultivation system and reserve mechanism has yet to be established. Educational institutions lack professional teachers with information technology capabilities, making it difficult to effectively apply modern technological means in ideological and political theory course teaching; technology companies and research teams, on the other hand, lack a deep understanding and grasp of ideological and political education theory, making it difficult to develop intelligent educational products that align with educational principles and student needs. This shortage of cross-disciplinary talent hinders effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders, thereby impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of collaborative innovation.

3. Breakthrough Pathways for the Transformation of Ideological Education Paradigms in Higher Education Institutions

3.1 Strengthening Faculty Development

As the core force in ideological education for university students, the quality and capabilities of the faculty directly impact educational outcomes. Strengthening faculty development requires a multi-faceted approach to enhance teachers' overall competence.

3.1.1 Intensify Training for Existing Teachers

Regularly organize specialized training programs focused on cutting-edge theories in ideological and political education, the latest policies and regulations, and changes in students' ideological trends. This systematic training aims to enhance teachers' ideological and political qualities, ensuring they maintain firm political stances and a solid theoretical foundation. For example, in response to current changes in the international landscape, conduct specialized lectures to help teachers deeply understand national foreign policies and international relations, thereby guiding students to develop a correct understanding of the broader picture in their teaching.

Organize academic seminars to encourage teachers to share teaching experiences and exchange research findings, thereby broadening teaching perspectives. Explore innovative teaching methods by discussing the integration points between different disciplines and ideological and political education.

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For example, incorporate psychological theories into ideological and political education to help teachers better understand students' psychological needs, thereby enhancing the targeting and effectiveness of education.

Conduct digital literacy training to enable teachers to proficiently master the application of modern technology in teaching. Hold information technology workshops to teach teachers how to use multimedia production software, online teaching platforms, and other tools to enrich teaching formats and improve teaching effectiveness. For example, train teachers to use virtual reality (VR) technology to create teaching materials, allowing students to experience historical events as if they were there, thereby enhancing the fun and immersion of learning.

3.1.2 Timely Introduction of High-quality Teaching Staff

Actively attract talent with interdisciplinary backgrounds to join the ideological education team. Interdisciplinary talent can introduce knowledge and methods from different fields into ideological and political education, bringing new perspectives and vitality to teaching. For example, introduce teachers with backgrounds in philosophy, sociology, psychology, and other disciplines to interpret ideological and political education content from a multidisciplinary perspective, broadening students' knowledge and ways of thinking.

Recruit talent with rich practical experience, such as business managers and social workers. They can integrate real-world cases and experiences into teaching, helping students better understand the application of ideological and political theories in real life. For example, inviting corporate executives to share their experiences in ideological and political education within corporate culture building can help students understand the important role of ideological and political education in corporate development.

Take the national artificial intelligence training program for college counselors held by the Ministry of Education in May 2025 as an example. This training program focused on improving artificial intelligence literacy and aimed to help college counselors adapt to the needs of educational reform. Through the training, counselors were able to master the application of artificial intelligence technology in student ideological education, such as using big data to analyze students' ideological trends and leveraging intelligent counseling systems to provide personalized guidance to students, thereby enhancing the precision and effectiveness of ideological and political education.

3.2 Creating a Diverse Educational Environment

A diverse educational environment can meet students' varied learning needs and enhance the effectiveness of ideological education for university students.

3.2.1 Enriching Teaching Methods and Content

Integrate various teaching methods to process and present textbook content. Utilize virtual reality technology to create immersive historical scenarios, such as battlefields from the revolutionary war period or sites of significant historical events, allowing students to experience the heroic deeds of revolutionary forebears firsthand and deepen their intuitive understanding and emotional resonance

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with history. For example, when recounting the history of the War of Resistance Against Japan, VR technology can transport students to the midst of a war-torn battlefield, enabling them to personally feel the courage and patriotism of the soldiers.

Organize social practice activities to integrate ideological and political education with social reality. Conduct volunteer service activities to cultivate students' sense of social responsibility and spirit of dedication through helping others; conduct social surveys to help students understand the current state and issues of social development, and enhance their understanding and support for national policies. For example, organize students to participate in community poverty alleviation work, allowing them to gain a deep understanding of the living conditions in impoverished areas and appreciate the significance of poverty alleviation policies.

3.2.2 Strengthening Campus Culture Construction

Campus culture is an important vehicle for ideological education among university students. Creating a positive, healthy, and civilized campus cultural atmosphere can subtly influence students' thoughts and behaviors. Organizing diverse cultural activities, such as academic lectures, artistic performances, and sports competitions, can cultivate students' comprehensive qualities and team spirit. For example, organizing cultural performances with a red culture theme can showcase revolutionary history through songs, dances, and plays, allowing students to receive ideological and political education while enjoying the arts.

Strengthening campus environment construction involves creating campus landscapes with ideological and political educational significance. Installing statues of famous figures and cultural corridors within the campus can showcase the achievements and famous quotes of outstanding individuals, fostering a rich cultural atmosphere. For example, statues of great thinkers such as Marx and Engels can be erected at the center of the campus, accompanied by related introductions and quotations, allowing students to be influenced by these ideas in their daily lives.

3.3 Stimulating Student Initiative

Students are the main body of ideological education in higher education institutions, and stimulating their initiative is key to improving educational outcomes.

3.3.1 Utilizing Model-Led Educational Methods

Invite outstanding alumni and industry experts to give lectures to students, sharing their growth experiences and life insights. The success stories of outstanding alumni can serve as role models for students, inspiring their motivation to learn and their spirit of striving; the professional insights of industry experts can broaden students' horizons, helping them understand industry trends and demands. For example, invite alumni who have achieved outstanding accomplishments in the field of science and technology to return to campus and share their entrepreneurial experiences, encouraging students to dare to innovate and strive for success.

Organize activities to showcase the achievements of outstanding students, using channels such as campus radio, bulletin boards, and WeChat official accounts to publicize their exemplary deeds,

fostering a positive atmosphere of mutual learning and competition. For example, establish honorary titles such as "Academic Role Model" and "Moral Exemplar" to recognize and promote students who excel in academics, moral conduct, and social practice, inspiring others to emulate them.

3.3.2 Establish a Diversified Incentive Mechanism

Establish a diversified incentive mechanism to recognize and reward students who excel in ideological education. Offer material and spiritual rewards such as scholarships and honorary certificates to stimulate students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. For example, establish a "Political Education Excellence Scholarship" to reward students who excel in political theory learning, social practice, and volunteer service.

Provide development opportunities as incentives, such as recommending outstanding students to participate in academic exchange activities and internship programs, to provide a platform for students' growth and development. For example, provide students with special talents in ideological and political education with opportunities to participate in domestic academic seminars, allowing them to exchange ideas with experts and scholars and enhance their academic level and comprehensive quality.

3.4 Innovate Teaching Methods

Innovating teaching methods is an important way to adapt to the needs of the times and improve the quality of ideological education for college students.

3.4.1 Expanding Educational Formats through Technological Means

Conduct online teaching through online teaching platforms to achieve real-time interaction and communication between teachers and students. Through online live streaming, video conferencing, and other methods, break the constraints of time and space to allow students to participate in learning anytime, anywhere. For example, during the pandemic, universities utilized online teaching platforms to conduct ideological and political theory courses, ensuring the normal progression of teaching.

Developing ideological and political education apps to provide students with convenient learning channels and abundant learning resources. Apps can include features such as course videos, learning materials, online tests, and discussion communities to meet students' diverse learning needs. For example, students can watch video replays of ideological and political theory courses anytime on the app, take online tests to assess their learning outcomes, and discuss issues with peers in the discussion community.

3.4.2 Enhancing Classroom Engagement through Diverse Teaching Methods

Employing case-based teaching methods, select representative real-world cases for analysis and discussion to guide students in applying theoretical knowledge to solve practical problems. For example, when explaining the concept of the rule of law, select typical legal cases and have students analyze the legal issues and solutions involved in the cases to deepen their understanding and recognition of the rule of law.

Employ scenario simulation teaching methods to create specific scenarios, allowing students to assume different roles in simulated scenarios and experience the thoughts and behaviors of those roles. For

example, when explaining professional ethics, simulate workplace scenarios and have students take on roles such as employees or leaders to experience the ethical requirements and responsibilities associated with each role.

Conduct group discussion teaching methods, dividing students into groups to discuss and exchange ideas around specific themes. Through group discussions, stimulate students' thinking, and cultivate their teamwork and communication skills. For example, when explaining social hot topics, organize students into groups to discuss, allowing them to express their own views and opinions, and jointly explore solutions to the issues.

3.5 Promoting Collaboration among Multiple Stakeholders

The transformation of the paradigm of ideological education for college students requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including educational institutions, technology companies, and research teams.

3.5.1 Establish and Improve Collaborative Mechanisms

Establish cross-departmental coordination bodies responsible for coordinating resources from all parties to jointly advance ideological education for university students. These coordination bodies can hold regular joint meetings to collectively study and resolve issues in ideological education, formulate work plans, and implement policy measures. For example, a coordination body composed of university departments such as the Propaganda Department, Student Affairs Office, and Academic Affairs Office can jointly discuss how to integrate ideological and political education into professional course instruction and student management.

Establish a resource-sharing platform to achieve the co-construction and sharing of high-quality educational resources. Educational institutions, technology companies, and research teams can upload their teaching resources, technological achievements, and research findings to the shared platform for use by other entities. For example, universities can upload excellent ideological and political theory course videos and lesson plans to the platform, technology companies can share case studies and tools on the application of artificial intelligence in ideological and political education, and research teams can provide the latest research findings and theoretical guidance.

3.5.2 Strengthen Cross-disciplinary Talent Cultivation

Strengthen the cultivation of cross-disciplinary talent to foster a composite teaching force that is well-versed in the essence of Marxist theory and understands the operational mechanisms of algorithms. Universities can establish cross-disciplinary majors or courses to cultivate talent with dual backgrounds in ideological and political education and information technology. For example, they can establish a dual-degree major in "ideological and political education + artificial intelligence" to enable students to systematically study ideological and political education theory and artificial intelligence technology knowledge.

Organize cross-disciplinary training and exchange activities to promote communication and collaboration among personnel from different fields. Hold interdisciplinary seminars, workshops, and

other events, inviting experts in ideological and political education, information technology, and other fields to exchange ideas and share experiences, thereby enhancing the cross-disciplinary literacy and capabilities of all participants. For example, regularly organize seminars on the integration of artificial intelligence and ideological and political education, enabling educators and technical personnel to jointly explore how to leverage artificial intelligence technology to enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

4. Conclusion

The transformation of the ideological education paradigm for college students from "management" to "guidance" is an inevitable requirement of the times. Although the transformation process faces many practical challenges, these challenges can be effectively overcome through strengthening faculty development, creating a diverse educational environment, stimulating student initiative, innovating teaching methods, and promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration, thereby facilitating the smooth transformation of the ideological education paradigm for college students. Higher education institutions should actively adapt to changes in the times, continuously explore and innovate, enhance the relevance and effectiveness of ideological education, and contribute to the cultivation of well-rounded socialist builders and successors who are morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and vocationally developed.

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