

Research on the Group Characteristics and Ideological and Political Education Strategies of College Students Born After 2000

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Abstract: At present, the college students born after 2000 have gradually become the main group of college students and the main force of the young generation. The college students born after 2000 are in the golden period of the rapid development of China's politics, economy, culture, and science and technology in the new era, and have formed their unique group characteristics ^[1]. The unique characteristics of college students born after 2000 bring new challenges and opportunities to carry out ideological and political education for college students in the new era.

Keywords: College students born after 2000; Group characteristics; Ideological and political education; Strategy research

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1. Introduction

China has always attached great importance to the ideological and political education of college students and has made new requirements and a series of decisions to carry out the ideological and political education of college students ^[2]. Since the autumn semester in September 2018, teenagers born after 2000 have gradually begun to study in colleges and universities, becoming the main body of college students ^[3]. This group of "post-00s" (those who were born after 2000, also known as late Generation Z) with unique characteristics, and their growth environment and growth process are different from those of millennials and early Generation Z (Gen Z). Therefore, combining the group characteristics of post-00s college students to carry out ideological and political education research has a very important role in promoting the cultivation of socialist successors and the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

2. Group characteristics of college students born after 2000

The "post-00s," a distinct cohort of young individuals who have recently embarked on their college journey and are yet to fully engage with society, exhibit different alternative consumption concepts, value systems, and

behavioral patterns compared to the millennials and early Gen Z ^[4]. Understanding the unique characteristics and behavioral norms of college students born after 2000 is crucial for advancing ideological and political education in universities in the modern era. It also serves as a means to foster the healthy development of post-00 students and instill in them proper values.

2.1. Consumption ethos

The family background, consumption level, usage, and attitude towards consumption among young college students born after 2000 are significantly influenced by current fashion trends, as they avidly pursue individuality and the latest trends ^[5]. As a distinctive consumer demographic, the “post-00” generation plays a crucial role in driving China’s social development and economic progress through its consumption patterns, behaviors, characteristics, and levels.

Given that the majority of “post-00s” come from one-child families, their upbringing and family environments tend to be notably superior to those of the millennials and early Gen Z. Research and analysis indicate that most college students born after 2000 possess a more informed consumption ethos, engaging in reasonable and practical spending habits that align with their daily lives and studies. However, there are still instances where some students exhibit imprudent spending behaviors, particularly in leisure activities and the acquisition of luxury items, often engaging in blind or premature consumption practices.

2.2. Personalized values

The “post-00s” are experiencing the rapid development stage of the Internet. They have access to a more diverse range of sources to stay informed about current affairs and hot topics, enabling them to receive and process online information more rapidly. Consequently, they tend to be more liberated and open-minded in their pursuit of values and ideas, displaying a greater sense of individuality.

A prominent characteristic of “post-00s” is their pursuit of personalized values ^[6]. In contrast to the materialistic aspirations and pursuit of freedom often associated with the millennials and early Gen Z, “post-00s” seek to realize their own worth and uniqueness. As China’s economy and society continue to develop, college students born after 2000 find themselves in relatively favorable growth environments with improved material conditions. Consequently, they prioritize personal emotional fulfillment and value realization over monetary wealth in their career and life decisions.

2.3. Learning styles

The family background and educational environment of “post-00s” are often more favorable compared to those of the millennials and early Gen Z ^[7]. Typically, they come from well-educated parents and grow up in single-child families. Throughout their upbringing, family education tends to be more democratic, fostering equal parent-child communication. Additionally, they enjoy a wider array of learning options and approaches. Their learning styles extend beyond traditional classroom theories and textbook knowledge, encompassing various interests, hobbies, and events as avenues for exploration.

2.4. Social networking

In the current era of widespread internet usage, the prevalence of social networking platforms and user registrations continues to rise ^[8]. College students, being the primary users of these platforms, have embraced internet usage, finding solutions to the challenges they face in their studies, daily lives, and work through online applications ^[9]. Among college students born after 2000, popular social networking platforms include Tencent QQ, WeChat, and Weibo. These platforms, known for their personalized and user-friendly designs,

diverse services, and rapid information updates, have become integral to the study, life, and entertainment of college students born after 2000. Utilizing Internet platforms for social communication is increasingly becoming a hallmark of rapid development in the new era.

2.5. Pragmatic outlook

The “post-00s” exhibit clear goals in their studies and life planning. In comparison to the millennials and early Gen Z, they tend to be more pragmatic. When deciding on their career paths and life choices, college students born after 2000 prioritize factors such as personal comfort and fulfillment, rather than solely focusing on national development and societal progress. The learning and developmental environment experienced by them has significantly influenced their perspectives on life and values. They are characterized as “realists,” individuals who carefully consider both national and collective interests alongside their own individual values when making decisions ^[10].

3. Opportunities for ideological and political education

The group characteristics of college students born after 2000 bring new opportunities to ideological and political education in the new era. The strong autonomy and consciousness of these college students constantly promote the development of ideological and political education ^[11].

3.1. Diverse means and methods for ideological and political education

The methods and approaches to ideological and political education for college students born after 2000 are more diverse. In contrast to millennials and early Gen Z, who primarily relied on face-to-face or classroom instruction, “post-00s” engage in ideological and political education through online broadcasts, virtual lectures, video presentations, and other digital mediums, enhancing their interest in learning and fostering a conducive learning environment.

3.2. Greater resources for ideological and political education

In the past, ideological and political education in colleges and universities primarily relied on textbooks, classroom materials, and other conventional resources. However, there was often a delay in addressing national and current political issues and hot topics. In contrast, college students born after 2000 have access to abundant educational resources through various channels. Educators now utilize cyberspace to acquire educational materials, enhancing the content of ideological and political education by integrating textbook knowledge with online resources. Additionally, they disseminate educational content such as lectures, forums, and open classes through multimedia platforms, facilitating resource sharing. This approach not only broadens educators’ perspectives and improves teaching quality but also ensures timely updates to educational materials to meet the evolving needs of “post-00s,” thereby enhancing the appeal of ideological and political education courses and promoting self-directed learning opportunities.

4. Risks and challenges for ideological and political education

The group characteristics of college students born after 2000 not only bring opportunities to ideological and political education but also some risks and challenges. To carry out ideological and political education in the new era well, the right solution must be applied to the problem and the existing difficulties and challenges must be analyzed.

4.1. Weakening of educators' authority

In comparison to individuals born in the 1980s and 1990s, who primarily relied on teachers, textbooks, and classroom instruction for knowledge acquisition, “post-00s” now access educational resources through various online platforms. As a result, teachers and textbooks no longer hold exclusive authority as sources of knowledge. The increasing autonomy of college students born after 2000 has undermined the traditional authority of teachers and raised questions about the credibility of educational content.

4.2. Influence on mainstream ideology

In the internet age, the influence of ideological and political education faces new challenges, with the “post-00s” generation increasingly exposed to online information ^[12]. However, the unfiltered nature of online content poses challenges for college students born after 2000 in shaping their ideological and moral values. Many “post-00s” lack the critical thinking skills necessary to decipher the deeper meanings and values embedded in online information. Moreover, the proliferation of negative content such as violence and materialism on the internet threatens the preservation of traditional Chinese culture. Additionally, the embrace of foreign ideologies by “post-00s” undermines mainstream ideology and cultural values.

4.3. Rise of egoism

Influenced by their family backgrounds and educational experiences, college students born after 2000 exhibit a growing sense of egoism ^[13], impacting their ideological development and value formation. While adept at leveraging resources to achieve personal goals, “post-00s” often prioritize self-interest over societal needs. This egoism manifests in their actions, reflecting a tendency towards self-centeredness and a reluctance to engage fully with societal responsibilities ^[14].

5. Ideological and political education path in colleges and universities

5.1. Adhere to the main position of ideological and political education

In the design of ideological and political courses, both the content and teaching methods must be innovated, while also strengthening ideological security education for “post-00s.” It is essential to deeply understand the ideas and needs of college students born after 2000 and then fully engage their sense of national identity and patriotic consciousness. Marxism should serve as the core of socialist ideological education, guiding the direction of ideological and political education for these students. Additionally, the rich traditional culture of China should be promoted to these students, thereby fostering a stronger appreciation and inheritance of Chinese cultural heritage among them. By doing so, the sustained development of ideological and political education for college students born after 2000 can be ensured.

5.2. Enhance the ideological and political education work system

Ideological and political education requires a robust operational mechanism to ensure its efficient and swift development ^[15]. For college students born after 2000, institutions should establish comprehensive management models and educational systems, leveraging the collaborative efforts of families, schools, and society in student education. This entails implementing personalized and humanized management approaches that respect the unique traits and individual living habits of college students born after 2000. Furthermore, there's a need to transform the educational management philosophies of teachers and administrators, fostering greater communication and interaction between educators and students.

5.3. Strengthen the ideological and political educator team

Currently, ideological and political education teams in colleges and universities often face challenges such as insufficient understanding and clarity regarding the traits of college students born after 2000, along with redundant management practices. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a high-caliber ideological and political education team capable of comprehending and effectively engaging with these college students. The distinct personality traits of “post-00s” necessitate the ideological and political education team to be well-versed in their characteristics and tailor their approaches accordingly. Only by refining the ideological and political education team and enhancing their theoretical and professional training can we optimize the ideological and political education trajectory for college students born after 2000.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, ideological and political education for college students born after 2000 stands as the foremost priority for colleges and universities in the new era, serving as the foundation for nurturing socialist successors and contributors. Understanding the characteristics, needs, and ideological shifts of “post-00s” is essential to enhancing their capabilities as the main drivers of societal progress. Therefore, it is imperative to optimize and innovate the management approach to ideological and political education in colleges and universities, with the aim of fostering a more pragmatic educational environment for college students born after 2000. This aligns with the comprehensive educational concept of pursuing five aspects of education concurrently.

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