

Three Logical Implications of the Spirit of the Educator

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Abstract: The educator ethos of the new era has emerged through three key processes: being rooted in China's rich cultural heritage, drawing from Marxist theoretical essence, and serving the national goal of building an "educational powerhouse." Teachers are both the driving force and the key to realizing this vision. Their teaching attitudes, methodologies, and professional responsibilities directly determine whether this educational ambition can be achieved. Ultimately, educators' competencies and qualities stem from proper ideological guidance. Therefore, studying the emergence logic of educator ethos in contemporary China, exploring its profound connotations, and extracting its modern relevance to cultivate today's educators constitute essential research topics for advancing the "educational powerhouse" strategic goal during China's modernization process.

Keywords: Educator spirit; Exit logic; Rich connotation; Contemporary value

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1. Introduction

In September 2023, President of the CPC first proposed the "educator's spirit" in his letter to outstanding teachers nationwide, outlining it as embodying "the ideal of serving the nation with a broad-minded vision and sincere dedication, the moral integrity of setting examples through words and actions, the pedagogical wisdom of enlightening minds and teaching according to individual aptitude, the scholarly attitude of diligent learning and innovative practice, the compassionate heart of loving students and dedicating oneself, and the grand pursuit of cultural edification through global vision" ^[1]. He provided profound and scientific explanations regarding the rich connotations, contemporary value, practical demands, and implementation requirements of this educator's spirit. The educator's spirit is not spontaneously formed. Instead, it has gradually developed by being rooted in the fertile soil of China's excellent traditional culture, drawing essence from Marxist theory, and serving the goal of high-quality educational development. In 2025, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Outline for Building a Strong Education Nation (2024–2025)" (hereinafter referred to as the

Outline), which clearly outlined nine major tasks targeting the grand goal of “building a strong education nation.” The implementation subject and key factor of this “education power” initiative lies with teachers. Teachers’ teaching attitudes, methods, and responsibilities directly determine whether this goal can be achieved. Whether teachers possess the required skills and qualities depends on proper ideological guidance. Therefore, studying the emergence logic of the educator’s spirit in the new era context, exploring its rich connotations, and extracting contemporary value to cultivate modern educators has become an essential task for realizing the “education power” strategic goal during China’s modernization process.

2. The logic of the emergence of the spirit of the educator

The emergence of the educator’s spirit manifests in the public eye as a “spiritual” state. However, studying this phenomenon cannot be confined to merely examining its spiritual dimension. Instead, it requires a comprehensive analysis that integrates the formation process, historical context, and theoretical foundations of the educator’s spirit to demonstrate how this spiritual essence emerges.

2.1. The formation process of the educator’s spirit

“Motion, in the broadest sense—when understood as a mode of existence and an inherent attribute of matter—it encompasses all transformations and processes occurring in the universe, ranging from simple positional shifts to mental activities” ^[2]. In his work *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels provided a detailed analysis of motion progressing from physical objects to mental processes. He demonstrated that motion extends beyond physical phenomena to include the formation of consciousness. Therefore, the development of educators’ consciousness serves as a vivid manifestation of materialist dialectical motion. This cognitive evolution arises through interactions between individual elements and collective systems, ultimately shaped by both internal and external influences on the educational subject.

The educator’s spirit is gradually cultivated through the dynamic interplay between individual practitioners and collective educational systems. Rooted in educators themselves, this ethos manifests differently across various roles—whether as full-time ideological and political education instructors, secondary school teachers, or extracurricular practice instructors. While each educator’s approach varies according to their discipline, professional identity, and career stage, the core spirit of education maintains unified principles and objectives when guiding broader teaching communities. Within individual contexts, educators share common traits: Secondary school teachers cultivate foundational scientific thinking through knowledge instruction; ideological and political educators guide students in understanding the Party’s latest theories and policies; while practical instructors engage learners through hands-on activities to achieve educational goals. The shared mission of enhancing students’ foundational competencies and developing future-ready talents for national development drives educators to collaborate. Ultimately, the formation of this educator’s spirit emerges through both the evolving practices of individual educators and the systematic cultivation of students’ skills, collectively advancing the grand vision of building a “strong educational nation.”

The educator’s spirit emerges through the combined influence of internal and external factors. The primary internal drivers include continuous self-transcendence and a pioneering, innovative spirit. Throughout history, renowned educators have consistently pursued lifelong challenges of self-improvement. As Tao Xingzhi, a celebrated educator, famously stated: “Spirit resides within us — how much we open up determines how

much we possess. It is not about wealth, but about willingness to unleash our potential”^[3]. This reveals that the educator’s spirit is forged through persistent self-transcendence and higher aspirations. The innovative drive of educators serves as a crucial internal catalyst for this spiritual development. Progress in education requires pivotal innovations, with educational innovation being particularly vital among these. Historically, educators have consistently pushed boundaries while adhering to core principles, persistently innovating teaching methodologies to realize educational philosophies and explore their true essence.

The external factors shaping educators’ professional ethos primarily consist of historical context and family environment. The evolving social landscape provides educators with essential objective foundations, while their teaching practices align closely with contemporary developmental needs. Each historical phase presents distinct primary social contradictions, prompting educators to design curricula that address these societal challenges. Moreover, family upbringing profoundly influences the formation of educators’ character traits and subtly shapes their professional spirit. As renowned educator Chen Heqin recalled: “I never had a single meal with him since age six — we dared not get close to our father”^[4]. This early experience with his father’s strict discipline ultimately led Chen to advocate for gentle approaches in childhood education during his later years.

2.2. The historical background of the spirit of the educator

“Every era has its own spirit, and every era has its own values”^[5]. The emergence, development, and perfection of the spirit of education are gradually completed by educators in teaching practice.

Firstly, the spirit of education carries a profound cultural heritage, representing both the inheritance and development of China’s outstanding traditional culture. “Chinese traditional culture forms the foundation of our nation’s values, continuing to powerfully shape cultural identity”^[6]. As early as the Hundred Schools of Thought during the Pre-Qin period, educators from various schools like Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism, and Yin-Yang School engaged in intellectual exchanges, each developing unique educational philosophies. These provided fertile ground for the formation of China’s later educational ideologies and the spirit of education. Over time, aligned with the centralized governance needs of feudal dynasties, Confucian educational thought gradually became dominant. “What religion must possess, Confucius lacked; what Confucius possessed—a spiritual essence religion could not attain. This is his belief that all humans possess rationality and can be fully trusted”^[7]. Thus, Confucian education emphasized moral cultivation as its core. For Confucius, the founder of this philosophy, “grounding oneself in virtue” enabled one to “master skills”, “achieve more through practice”, and ultimately “pursue scholarly refinement.” Moral education also stressed “inner cultivation”, advocating that individuals should focus on self-improvement. “Exerting oneself within one’s capacity is effortless and achievable. Relying on others proves strenuous and uncertain”^[8]. The Confucian ideal of “teachers transmitting wisdom, imparting knowledge, and resolving doubts” is reflected in maxims like “establishing the mind for heaven and earth, securing destiny for the people, continuing lost learning for past sages, and ushering in peace for future generations” and “cultivating oneself, harmonizing families, governing states, and bringing peace to the world.” This has become a vital source of educational ethos, embodying the ideals of selfless dedication and sincere patriotism; the moral integrity of setting examples through words and actions; the pedagogical wisdom of enlightening minds and tailoring instruction to individual needs; the diligent attitude of scholarly inquiry and innovative practice; the compassionate heart of teaching with joy and selfless devotion; and the grand pursuit of cultural edification through global vision. These elements collectively form the essential spiritual foundation of educators.

Secondly, the spirit of education is a genetic inheritance from the Party’s century-long educational practices.

As early as the New Democratic Revolution period, the Party emphasized the crucial role of education and launched the ideological movement of “education for national salvation.” During the May Fourth Movement period, the Party prioritized integrating Marxist theory with the actual conditions of the workers’ movement to develop education and dissemination that aligned with China’s realities. Simultaneously, the Party gradually established red education, cultivated revolutionary talents, and improved the red education system as key projects to save the nation from peril. During the Anti-Japanese War and Liberation War periods, the Party founded multiple red schools covering basic education, Marxist theoretical education, cultural arts education, and soldier training, laying the foundation for the post-establishment educational system of New China. In the Socialist Revolution and Construction period, Mao Zedong personally formulated the “Hundred Flowers and Hundred Schools” policy in cultural education, providing fundamental guidance for the New China’s educational development. The most significant feature of educational reform was its emphasis on popularizing education among workers and peasants while safeguarding the basic right to education. Regarding educational entities, the Party and state prioritized ideological transformation of intellectuals, asserting that intellectuals were also crucial to the proletariat. With the deepening development of socialist education, the teaching profession flourished as generations of educators selflessly contributed, providing diverse talents for New China’s construction. During the Reform and Opening-up and Socialist Construction periods, the Party and state formally established the “Education Revitalizes the Nation” strategy, legally safeguarding the basic rights of teachers and learners. The promulgation of regulations and policies such as the “Law of the People’s Republic of China on Teachers” has stimulated the enthusiasm of teachers to actively implement the strategy of “Education Revitalizing the Nation”, making significant contributions to China’s efforts in building a modern education system. As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, the CPC Central Committee, with the President of the CPC at its core, has demonstrated visionary leadership by accurately grasping the critical requirements for education in this new era, proposing the strategy of “Building a Strong Education Nation.” It is imperative to prioritize the strengthening of teacher workforce development as the most crucial foundational task in building a strong education nation^[9]. Particularly, the introduction of the “Outline of the Plan for Building a Strong Education Nation (2024–2025)” further highlights the Party and the state’s heightened emphasis on education since the dawn of the new era.

2.3. Theoretical support of the educator spirit

The formation of the educator’s spirit cannot be separated from the guidance of scientific theory. When studying the educator’s spirit as a spiritual process, it is necessary to consider the scope of spiritual research. The Marxist theory of spiritual production is the theoretical support of the educator’s spirit.

The scope of spirit studies: Spirit studies emerged as a product of philosophical speculation within the theoretical framework of Western philosophy, with its conceptual boundaries primarily established through philosophical inquiry. As early as the ancient Greek era, Plato attributed the essence of the world to the “Forms” and “Spirit”, thereby formulating the theory of idealism (Theory of Ideas). The study of spirit reached its zenith during the German classical philosophy period. Following Kant’s Copernican revolution that shifted ontological research to epistemology and delineated the boundaries of rationality, Western philosophy regained emphasis on logical reasoning. Hegel, the synthesizer of classical philosophy, elevated spirit studies to unprecedented heights by integrating spirit with logic. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel asserted: “Spirit is the unshakable foundation and starting point for all human action; it is humanity’s ultimate purpose and goal; it is the self-consciousness of all beings existing in thought as an independent entity”^[10]. However, while pushing spirit studies

to their peak, classical philosophy overlooked fundamental laws governing the world. By incorporating ontology into the spirit system, it produced a series of “world-reversing” conclusions. Therefore, when conducting spirit studies in educational contexts, we must explore both the process of spirit’s transition from mystified religious theology to secular realms within specific theoretical frameworks and pay attention to the material production theories underlying spirit.

Marx’s theory of spiritual production serves as the theoretical foundation for educators’ spirit. Marx conducted a comprehensive analysis and critique of classical philosophy’s theories on spiritual inquiry. First, he challenged Hegel’s concepts of absolute spirit and absolute idea, restoring order to the inverted world and infusing dialectics with materialist attributes, thereby exposing Hegel’s logical fallacy. Second, he launched a comprehensive critique of Feuerbach’s incomplete materialism, asserting that “social life is essentially practical. All mystical elements that entice theory into mysticism can be rationally resolved through human practice and its understanding”^[11]. This “Theses on Feuerbach” also became the embryonic form of his genius conception. Finally, in *The German Ideology*, Marx elaborated on the materialist conception of history. In summary, he viewed spirit as the content of productive activities, meaning its emergence depends on material production. Therefore, Marx considered the material aspect as the primary essence of spirit, possessing material attributes. In other words, he believed that spiritual production constitutes one of the fundamental forms of human social production, serving as a crucial foundation for fulfilling people’s spiritual needs and achieving the leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. According to Marx’s historical materialism, educators’ spirit belongs to the category of social ideology, not merely a product of abstract speculation, but rather formed through the long-term teaching practices of numerous educators. Constrained by societal material conditions, it manifests different forms across historical periods, varying under different historical circumstances and principal social contradictions. Therefore, the spiritual research under the perspective of Marxist theory is the combination of materiality, scientificity, and practicability, which has become the theoretical support for the study of educators’ spirit.

3. The rich connotation of the spirit of an educator

Through generations of educators’ practice, the essence of the educator’s spirit has gradually enriched while its framework has become fundamentally complete. President of the CPC elaborated on six dimensions of this ethos: the ideal of serving the nation with selfless dedication; the moral integrity of leading by example and setting societal standards; the pedagogical wisdom of enlightening minds and tailoring education to individual needs; the scholarly commitment to diligent study and innovative exploration; the compassionate heart of teaching with joy and selfless devotion; and the grand vision of cultural edification through global engagement. These comprehensive discussions fully address the contemporary demands of the era—meeting the needs of the times, the people, and development—to redefine the educator’s spirit in the new era.

3.1. The ideal and belief of having a great self and serving the country with utmost sincerity

“Be a great mentor for students in their studies, careers, and character development” embodies the highest ideals of educators^[12]. This principle not only sets exemplary standards for teachers’ conduct from the perspective of grand ideals and beliefs, but also requires discussion through two key aspects: embracing selfless dedication and serving the nation with utmost sincerity.

From the perspective of embracing a “greater self”, this concept stands in contrast to the “small self.”

Fundamentally, it requires educators to adopt a macro vision encompassing students, schools, society, and education. At its core, this “greater self” embodies collectivism transcending individualism, where teachers align student development with the fundamental interests of the people and national collective welfare. Only by adhering to this principle can educators cultivate the era’s talents capable of “reassuring the Party and contributing to the nation’s prosperity” through their teaching practices.

From the perspective of serving the nation with utmost sincerity, if embracing a grand vision constitutes the guiding principle for educators’ ideals and beliefs in teaching, then serving the nation with utmost sincerity serves as the benchmark for testing these ideals within the realm of convictions. Different professions have varying requirements for this commitment. For educators, the best way to fulfill this duty is by keeping pace with the times, improving teaching methods, prioritizing student needs, and focusing on the goal of building a “strong educational nation”, cultivating talents that meet contemporary development goals. This has become one of the key criteria for evaluating successful teaching practices.

To sum up, the ideal and belief of having a great self and serving the country with utmost sincerity requires teachers to “keep the country and the nation in their hearts, pay attention to the times and society in the great practice of the Party and the people, draw nourishment and enrich their thoughts” and cultivate a new generation of people who are willing to work hard and dare to take responsibility ^[13].

3.2. The moral sentiment of speaking as a model for scholars and acting as a model for the world

Teachers should consciously set examples through their words and actions, continuously improving their moral cultivation. By demonstrating exemplary conduct, they influence and inspire students, becoming mentors who guide learners in academic pursuits, professional endeavors, and personal growth. They should become respected role models in society and exemplars worthy of emulation” ^[14]. This ethical requirement for teachers to align words with deeds not only inherits the Confucian tradition of moral education but also highlights how leading by example has become a vital approach in nurturing young minds and shaping character in the modern era.

The principle of “words as moral exemplars” requires educators to prioritize sincerity and emphasize the importance of verbal instruction. Educational approaches vary widely, including utilizing modern technology, conducting social practice research, and implementing group-based learning. Among these methods, verbal instruction proves most effective. This approach not only encompasses teachers’ linguistic techniques when imparting knowledge but also involves maintaining integrity throughout the teaching process. It serves as a crucial pathway for educators to guide students in self-reflection and cultivate personal character.

The Code of Conduct for Educators requires teachers to exemplify ethical behavior and cultivate students’ proper values through personal example. While verbal guidance is important, educators must primarily shape students through their actions. As the saying goes, “It takes a hundred years to grow a tree, but ten years to educate a person.” To nurture socialist successors who meet the demands of our era, educators must adhere to the principle that “moral integrity precedes teaching, and self-discipline precedes nurturing.” By refining their own moral character, resisting the temptations of fame and profit, and becoming exemplary mentors, teachers can effectively guide students in establishing correct values.

“A teacher’s influence on students stems not only from their knowledge and abilities, but more importantly from the values they uphold in personal conduct, national responsibilities, public service, and private ethics” ^[15]. Therefore, educators must adhere to the moral principle of “leading by example through words and actions”, while

strengthening self-reflection alongside teaching. Only through this dual approach can teachers genuinely cultivate and instill proper values in students.

3.3. The wisdom of educating the mind and teaching according to individual aptitude

Enlightening the mind and teaching according to the aptitude of students are the requirements for teachers in the new era in terms of teaching methods. It requires every educator to learn to carry out active and effective teaching activities according to the different aspects of different students.

Intellectual Enlightenment and Emotional Nurturing constitute the dual dimensions of holistic development. Intellectual Enlightenment requires educators to master students' psychological growth patterns, cognitive development stages, and subject-specific knowledge. Teachers should implement age-appropriate instruction at each developmental phase. Emotional Nurturing involves actively listening to students' academic challenges and life dilemmas, providing timely emotional support, fostering meaningful spiritual connections, and serving as dedicated mentors for emotional well-being.

Teaching according to individual aptitude is the essence of the unique wisdom in China's traditional education, embodying the great wisdom of nurturing talents. Teachers should learn to recognize and acknowledge differences among students in their teaching practices, thereby embracing variations and shortcomings. During instruction, educators should focus on each student's strengths and weaknesses, align with their interests, and guide them to leverage their advantages while addressing their limitations. By adopting diversified and targeted teaching methods, we can maximize the exploration and cultivation of each student's unique interests and specialties, guiding them to thrive in fields that align with their personal passions.

From this perspective, the educational wisdom of enlightening minds and nurturing hearts through tailored teaching methods not only carries forward China's millennia-old educational heritage but also embodies the distinctive requirements of building a "strong education nation" in the new era. Educators should focus on students' holistic development while respecting individual differences, fully leveraging their crucial role as guides in shaping young minds.

3.4. Diligent study, earnest practice, truth-seeking, and innovative attitude

Diligence, learning, and practice, seeking truth and innovation, are a vivid interpretation of teachers' dedication to education and practical teaching in the new era. They contain the relevant requirements for the improvement of teachers' quality in the new era, as well as the requirements for the innovation of teaching methods and means.

Diligent Learning and Devoted Practice emphasize that teachers must continuously learn to enhance their professional competence and teaching capabilities. Diligent learning requires both the accumulation of knowledge and a dedicated teaching attitude. To motivate educators in the new era, they must constantly update their knowledge and maintain a scholarly mindset to keep pace with the times, thereby imparting the latest theories and knowledge to students. Devoted practice demands that teachers transform theoretical knowledge into dynamic teaching practices, achieving the integration of knowledge and action. This commitment to deepening pedagogical expertise is also an essential path for professional growth.

Seeking truth and innovation are the requirements for teachers' development in the new era. Seeking truth requires teachers to pursue truth and continuously explore the essence and laws of education. In educational practice, teachers should uphold a pragmatic attitude, dare to face real-world challenges, question existing teaching concepts, and summarize patterns by integrating students' cognitive needs. Innovation is one of the core principles

of Marxist theory. The President of the CPC emphasized: “Over the past century, our Party has adhered to the unity of emancipating the mind and seeking truth, as well as the unity of consolidating fundamentals and pursuing innovation. This has continuously opened up new horizons for Marxism, giving rise to Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of ‘Three Represents’, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, providing scientific theoretical guidance for the cause of the Party and the people”^[16]. Innovation requires teachers to inherit traditions while courageously experimenting with new teaching philosophies and methods, driving profound innovations that meet objective demands. Seeking truth and innovation serve as crucial drivers for teachers’ progress.

In conclusion, the dedicated attitude of diligent study, steadfast practice, truth-seeking, and innovation serves as a crucial foundation for teachers’ professional growth and educational innovation. Educators should uphold this commitment to continuous learning, courageous exploration, and bold innovation, thereby contributing to the thriving development of education in the new era.

3.5. The benevolent heart of loving teaching, loving students, and being willing to contribute

The benevolent heart of loving teaching and students, and being willing to contribute, as an important part of the spiritual connotation of educators, is not to be underestimated. It profoundly reflects teachers’ deep feelings for the cause of education and their meticulous care for students.

Joyful teaching means educators should transform educational practice into an intrinsic joy rather than merely a professional obligation. When teachers embrace joyful teaching, they not only achieve personal fulfillment but also ignite students’ thirst for knowledge. Caring for students reflects a teacher’s profound and genuine affection, directly demonstrating the noble ethos of the teaching profession. Educators should focus not only on academic progress but also on holistic development, balancing academic guidance with psychological support to foster well-rounded growth.

The willingness to dedicate oneself embodies the highest form of compassion in educators. The teaching profession confronts numerous challenges that demand significant time and effort from teachers. Yet many educators remain selfless, choosing to serve remote areas and rural regions where education is most urgently needed. It is precisely this unconditional dedication—loving their students, nurturing talents, and giving selflessly—that ensures a continuous supply of skilled professionals for societal progress.

“Education is a noble pursuit of ‘compassion and love for humanity’. Love forms the soul of education – without it, there can be no true education”^[17]. The benevolent dedication to teaching with passion and selfless devotion constitutes not only a fundamental professional ethic in education, but also reflects, and more importantly, the great love of the teaching profession.

3.6. The pursuit of cultural and moral development with a global vision

In the new era, educators should not only cultivate their own students, but also have a big vision of education and pursue the pursuit of cultural education with a global vision.

To embrace the world means educators should cultivate a global vision, stay attuned to worldwide educational trends, uphold the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and actively engage in international exchanges and cooperation. This mindset encourages educators to adopt a broader perspective when addressing educational issues, embracing openness and inclusiveness to learn from the strengths of diverse

countries' education systems. By adopting this approach, they can refine their own teaching methods through mutual learning and improvement.

Cultivating cultural awareness through education is the fundamental mission of educators, who strive to preserve China's outstanding traditional culture. By implementing educational strategies, teachers can foster students' cultural identity and confidence, nurturing them into modern individuals with cross-cultural communication skills. Moreover, educators should lead by example, demonstrating cultural values through their daily conduct, thereby becoming role models and guides for their students.

Therefore, as educators pursue the path of promoting culture in the new era, they should embrace the world and cultivate people with culture. Teachers are required to adopt a more open and inclusive attitude, absorb the advantages of education from other countries, inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and contribute to cultivating a new generation of people with a global vision and cultural confidence.

4. The contemporary value of the spirit of educators

4.1. Inject new content into the spiritual spectrum of Chinese Communists

“For a century, the Communist Party of China has upheld the great founding spirit of the Party, building a spiritual lineage of Chinese Communists through prolonged struggle and forging a distinct political character”^[18]. In its century-long journey of struggle, the Communist Party of China has established a spiritual lineage with distinctive contemporary characteristics. The spiritual lineage of Chinese Communists is not only a product of the integration of Marxist cultural theory with the Party's century-long practical endeavors, but also a spiritual force driving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The educator spirit, as profoundly articulated by the CPC Central Committee with the President of the CPC at its core in response to the strategic needs of “strengthening education” and the requirements for educational entities, represents both an innovative inheritance of the red gene and an inevitable choice for realizing the “education power” strategy in the new era. The integration of the educator spirit into the spiritual lineage of Chinese Communists embodies the combination of Marxist educational philosophy with Chinese educational practices, revealing the underlying principles of spiritual civilization construction.

The spiritual essence of educators has historically been deeply rooted in the ideological lineage of Chinese Communists. From its founding, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has regarded education as a vital instrument for social transformation. In its early days, the Party mobilized revolutionaries to sow revolutionary seeds through workers' night schools and peasant literacy programs. During the Yan'an period, it established the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University to train revolutionary cadres, demonstrating how educational practices seamlessly aligned with revolutionary objectives. Pioneering educators like Xu Teli and Cheng Fangwu embodied their belief in “educating for national liberation”, with their selfless dedication—coming “with a heart full of devotion” yet leaving “without taking a single blade of grass”—mirroring the Party's original aspirations. This shared heritage not only laid the historical foundation for the systematic inheritance of the educator spirit but also provided inherent conditions for integrating it into the CPC's ideological framework.

Secondly, the spirit of educators demonstrates profound value alignment and methodological coherence with other spiritual elements in the Chinese Communist Party's ideological lineage. Most notably, it shares a people-centered value framework with other spirits within this spectrum. The grassroots education philosophy of renowned educator Tao Xingzhi—“life is education”—resonates with the Party's mass line. Zhang Guimei, a modern-day educator, exemplifies selfless dedication through her pioneering efforts to establish a girls'

high school in remote border regions. This value convergence manifests in three key aspects of the new era: defining educational objectives, shaping pedagogical approaches, and clarifying beneficiary demographics. Methodologically, the spirit of educators aligns with the Party's principle of "case-specific analysis" in governance. Its emphasis on "tailored teaching" and "nurturing both intellect and character" mirrors the Party's approach to addressing specific challenges. Similarly, the reform movement to eliminate the "five rigid criteria" in education shares the same vision as China's comprehensive institutional reforms that advocate "self-reform."

Ultimately, integrating the spirit of educators into the spiritual lineage of Chinese Communists stems from practical strategic needs. "Building a modern socialist powerhouse imposes new and higher demands on teacher development, as well as on the entire Party and society's respect for teachers and education" ^[19]. Against the backdrop of unprecedented global changes in a century and the grand strategy of national rejuvenation, education has become even more crucial as a cornerstone of national development. Incorporating the educator spirit into the Communist Party's ideological framework provides stronger spiritual support for high-quality educational advancement. The emergence of Huang Danyan-style teaching teams demonstrates the enduring vitality of revolutionary heritage in education, while the implementation of the "double reduction" policy highlights the organic integration of the Party's educational policies with educational wisdom. When the educator spirit merges deeply with the vanguard consciousness of Communists, it will foster a high-quality talent cultivation ecosystem, creating an optimal environment for advancing Chinese-style modernization.

4.2. Stimulate the main motivation of teachers

"We must prioritize the strengthening of teacher team building as the most crucial foundational task in building a strong education nation, improve China's distinctive teacher education system, and vigorously cultivate a high-quality professional teaching force characterized by noble ethics, excellent expertise, rational structure, and vitality" ^[20]. The goal of "building a strong education nation" in the new era and the demand for high-quality educational development have raised higher requirements for teacher team building. The value pursuit and practical character embodied in the spirit of educators serve as the spiritual source that inspires the primary motivation of teachers. This motivation not only manifests as individual professional awareness among educators but also highlights the collective intention of teachers to serve national strategies. Under the goal of achieving a "strong education nation", guiding teacher development with the spirit of educators is both an important path to resolve practical challenges in education and a strategic support for building a high-quality education system.

The educator's spirit establishes a shared value framework for teachers through exemplary conduct and comprehensive guidance. Yu Yi's motto, "Devoting my life to teaching while continuously learning to teach", elevates professional refinement into a means of realizing life's purpose. In the face of educational utilitarianism, this ethos guides educators to uphold their fundamental commitment to nurturing minds. Through integrated ideological-political education across primary, secondary, and higher education, teachers combine disciplinary characteristics with humanistic values aligned with students' developmental needs, deeply integrating subject instruction with patriotic education. This spiritual leadership enables teachers to awaken collective value consciousness under its guidance. Such guidance restores education to its essential mission of "cultivating well-rounded individuals", while empowering educators to internalize pedagogical practices as pathways to self-actualization, thereby igniting intrinsic motivation.

The reform and innovation demands inherent in the educator's spirit inject sustained momentum into teachers' professional development. At the individual level, educators' practice philosophy of "unity of knowledge

and action” throughout their teaching careers facilitates the transformation of cutting-edge pedagogical theories into student-centered educational practices. From a collective perspective, the exploratory spirit inherited through the educator’s ethos within educational communities helps foster an innovative ecosystem for education. Educator Gu Mingyuan’s pioneering work on “subject-oriented education” has inspired countless teachers to establish new teacher-student relationships, while Li Jilin’s creation of situational education systems demonstrates educators’ courage to break conventions. Guided by this educator’s spirit in the new era, such group innovation manifests as transformative wisdom for contemporary teachers to leverage intelligent technologies in classroom instruction, thereby cultivating next-generation talents.

The educator’s spirit guides modern teachers to inherit past teaching experiences while fostering their proactive development. Through cultural immersion, educators transcend passive roles in completing teaching tasks, evolving into dynamic agents of educational reform. This self-awareness catalyzes the optimization of educational ecosystems. When teachers transition from “task-executing instructors” to “educational researchers”, differentiated instruction can truly take root. Similarly, when educators shift from “knowledge transmitters” to “lifelong learners”, classroom transformation can sustain its momentum.

4.3. Leading the realization of the value reconstruction of the education system in the new era

Since the new era, there have been structural contradictions in the spiritual values of China’s education system, which are mainly reflected in the insufficient integration between teachers’ professional teaching standards and mainstream spiritual values. Therefore, it is urgently necessary for the value guidance of educators’ spirit to achieve a value reconstruction of the education system in the new era.

First, educators should harness the spiritual attributes of the educator’s ethos. Firstly, it fulfills the function of preserving educational culture. The modern adaptation of Tao Xingzhi’s “life is education” philosophy demonstrates how the educator’s spirit anchors the essence of education. Teachers in the new era should strive to transform traditional educational wisdom into innovative models that cultivate vitality, character, learning capacity, and creativity. Secondly, it advances the ethical construction of teachers’ moral values. With the deepening development of modern education, particularly the significant increase in teacher ethics evaluation authority under the “Guidelines for Building High-Quality Teacher Teams in the New Era”, the educator’s spirit becomes crucial in guiding teachers’ ethical conduct. Finally, it promotes institutional innovation. Establishing an integrated system encompassing talent selection mechanisms, resource allocation frameworks, and evaluation reform paradigms provides educators with standardized systems to practice the educator’s ethos.

Second, advancing the construction of China’s educational discourse system under a global perspective. With the deepening of globalization, building an educational discourse system with Chinese characteristics has been placed on the agenda. Since the new era, through initiatives such as establishing Confucius Institutes, systematic interpretations have been made of the educational thought lineage from Confucius to Tao Xingzhi, constructing an Eastern educational philosophy system that “takes benevolence as its foundation and integrates knowledge with action.” This has contributed Chinese wisdom to enriching the international repository of educational ideas and addressing challenges in global education. In terms of educational systems, institutional innovations with Chinese characteristics, such as the “Special Post Program” and “Silver Age Teacher Action”, have also been included by UNESCO in the “Best Practices in Global Teacher Development.” The institutional export of China’s teacher training model exemplifies how the spirit of educators provides spiritual impetus for building China’s educational

discourse system under an international perspective.

In summary, the process of educators' spirit evolving from cultural awareness to institutional awareness is essentially a reconstruction of the education system in the new era. When the pursuit of becoming "great educators" becomes the common aspiration of millions of teachers; when Tao Xingzhi's educational philosophy is deeply integrated into smart classrooms; and when teachers gradually develop behavioral consciousness, evolving into new-era educators who love and excel in teaching—this represents the driving force for reconstructing the education system in the new era through the spirit of educators, providing China solutions to global educational challenges, and serving as an indispensable impetus for high-quality educational development.

Disclosure statement

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