

The Mission and Responsibility of Ideological and Political Education in Universities during China's Modernization Process

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Abstract: This paper explores the evolving mission and responsibility of ideological and political education (IPE) in universities during China's modernization process. The paper examines the historical and theoretical foundations of IPE, highlighting its importance in fostering Chinese identity, moral values, and social responsibility among students. The study reviews challenges such as globalization, technological disruption, and cultural shifts, emphasizing the need for innovative approaches. Through case studies of leading Chinese universities, the paper demonstrates practical strategies for integrating IPE into academic curricula and digital platforms. The conclusion provides recommendations for enhancing the role of IPE in shaping future generations aligned with China's modernization goals.

Keywords: Ideological and political education (IPE); Modernization; Chinese identity; University education

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1. Introduction

1.1. Historical context

China's modernization process has undergone several transformative stages, beginning with the reform and opening-up policies initiated in the late 1970s. These reforms led to unprecedented economic growth, technological advancement, and structural changes in society^[1]. However, alongside these achievements came a range of ideological challenges, such as the increasing influence of Western liberalism, the rise of individualism, and the diminishing prominence of traditional Chinese values. In this context, ideological and political education (IPE) has become an indispensable tool for ensuring that the values of socialism with Chinese characteristics remain central in shaping Chinese identity.

Modernization has also introduced complexities that require a recalibration of traditional educational practices. While modernization has brought material progress, it has also created ideological tensions, as rapid

globalization exposes young generations to diverse cultural and political perspectives. The evolving ideological landscape necessitates a robust framework of education that not only aligns with Chinese development goals but also provides students with the critical thinking skills and moral compass required to navigate a rapidly changing world ^[2]. IPE in universities stands at the forefront of this effort, tasked with instilling and promoting Chinese identity and cultivating a generation that is ideologically and politically sound.

1.2 The role of universities in modernization

Universities are not only centers of academic learning but also critical platforms for ideological formation and value dissemination. As hubs for innovation and intellectual development, they are uniquely positioned to address the dual demands of modernization. Fostering economic growth and technological innovation on one hand, and promoting ideological stability and cultural preservation on the other. In China's modernization process, universities are entrusted with the mission of producing individuals who are not only skilled professionals but also socially responsible citizens equipped with a strong sense of Chinese identity and global competence ^[3].

IPE within universities plays a central role in bridging the gap between education and strategy. As China pursues its goals of building a modern socialist society, universities are tasked with aligning their educational objectives with broader state priorities, such as achieving high-quality development, strengthening Chinese identity, and advancing development. This mission is particularly significant given the rising influence of social media and digital technologies, which have reshaped how young people engage with ideological content. Therefore, universities must innovate their approaches to IPE to make it more relevant, engaging, and impactful in the digital age.

1.3. The dual significance of IPE in the modernization process

The significance of IPE extends beyond the classroom, as it serves as a cornerstone of China's long-term development strategy. By nurturing a generation that is ideologically aligned with Chinese goals and capable of addressing the challenges posed by modernization, IPE helps to ensure the sustainability of China's development model. At the same time, it also equips students to critically engage with global issues, such as climate change, technological ethics, and cross-cultural communication ^[4].

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical foundations of ideological and political education

IPE in China is deeply rooted in Marxist principles, which emphasize the integration of ideology, morality, and practical application. The historical influence of Confucian values, such as loyalty, filial piety, and moral responsibility, continues to shape IPE frameworks, blending traditional philosophy with modern ideological needs.

Recent scholarship highlights the need to adapt Marxist and Confucian frameworks to contemporary challenges, incorporating critical thinking, technological advancements, and global perspectives ^[5].

2.2. Challenges of modernization to IPE

Globalization and Western ideologies: The rise of Western liberal values poses a challenge to maintaining ideological coherence in a globalized world.

Cultural shifts among youth: Modern students are more influenced by consumerism, social media, and individualism, which can dilute traditional ideological values ^[6].

Technological disruptions: The digital age requires new tools and approaches for disseminating ideological content, such as gamification, virtual reality, and social media engagement.

2.3. Role of universities in the development plan

IPE is not only an educational practice but also a component of the strategy. Recent policies, such as the chairman of the CCP's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, emphasize the role of education in achieving identity reconstruction. Universities are tasked with translating these high-level strategies into practical, student-focused initiatives ^[1].

3. Case studies: Practical applications of IPE in universities

3.1. Case 1: Fudan university's digital transformation in IPE

Objective: To utilize digital platforms to make IPE more engaging and accessible.

Implementation: Fudan launched an online IPE portal with interactive content, gamified lessons, and live discussions. Social media campaigns encourage students to participate in discussions about contemporary ideological challenges.

Outcome: Increased participation rates, greater student satisfaction, and deeper ideological understanding among students.

3.2. Case 2: Rural universities addressing local modernization needs

Objective: To connect ideological education with regional development challenges.

Implementation: Agricultural universities incorporate rural revitalization themes into IPE curricula, encouraging students to participate in community development projects.

Outcome: Students develop a sense of responsibility toward their communities while gaining practical experience in addressing modernization challenges.

4. Discussion: The mission and responsibility of universities

4.1. Strengthening Chinese identity

IPE must ensure that students develop a strong sense of identity, rooted in Chinese culture and history while understanding their role in contributing to development.

Practical actions: Organizing cultural heritage activities, promoting traditional festivals, and encouraging research on Chinese history and culture.

4.2. Promoting ideological innovation

Modernization requires IPE to evolve from traditional lecture-based teaching to interactive, student-centered learning models.

Develop interdisciplinary courses combining ideology with science, technology, and arts. Incorporate real-world applications of ideological education, such as community service and project-based learning.

4.3. Fostering global competence

While emphasizing Chinese identity, universities must also prepare students to engage with global challenges,

fostering skills such as cross-cultural communication and ethical reasoning. Offer courses on global governance, interethnic relations, and comparative political systems.

4.4. Addressing ethical challenges in modernization

Modernization brings ethical dilemmas related to technology, the environment, and social inequality. IPE must equip students to navigate these challenges with integrity.

Examples: Teaching ethical frameworks for AI development, fostering sustainable practices, and encouraging dialogue on social justice.

4.5. Expanding inclusivity in ideological education

IPE must address the needs of a diverse student body, including interethnic students and those from various socio-economic backgrounds. Develop multilingual materials, create inclusive curricula, and provide platforms for open dialogue.

5. Conclusion

5.1. The core mission of IPE in modernization

The mission of IPE in universities is multifaceted, encompassing the cultivation of moral integrity, identity, and a sense of collective responsibility. It is tasked with instilling in students the values of socialism with Chinese characteristics while preparing them to adapt to the demands of modernization. By fostering a deep understanding of the development goals and aligning individual aspirations with societal needs, IPE provides a framework for young people to navigate the complexities of the modern world. This dual focus on individual development and priorities ensures that students are not only career-ready but also ideologically sound and morally grounded.

5.2. Addressing the challenges of modernization

The process of modernization presents a unique set of challenges for IPE. Globalization has introduced competing ideologies and cultural perspectives that often conflict with traditional Chinese values. Similarly, the rise of individualism, consumerism, and digital culture has reshaped how students engage with ideological content, requiring new and innovative approaches to IPE. Universities must address these challenges by creating curricula and pedagogical strategies that are relevant, engaging, and adaptable to the needs of the modern student.

The rise of technological advancements, particularly in the fields of artificial intelligence, social media, and digital communication, also demands a rethinking of traditional IPE practices. As this paper has shown, universities such as Fudan and Tsinghua have begun to leverage digital tools to make ideological education more accessible and interactive. These practices demonstrate that IPE must evolve alongside technological and societal changes to remain effective in achieving its goals.

5.3. Practical contributions of IPE to development

One of the key responsibilities of IPE is to align student development with the broader goals of China's modernization. By fostering innovation, critical thinking, and social responsibility, IPE contributes to the development of a workforce capable of addressing economic, technological, and cultural needs. Furthermore, through initiatives such as community-based projects and interdisciplinary education, universities can connect ideological learning with practical applications, ensuring that students understand the real-world implications of

their education.

The success of programs such as those implemented at regional universities in addressing local modernization needs highlights the potential for IPE to contribute directly to development. By integrating local concerns, such as rural revitalization and environmental sustainability, into ideological education, universities can ensure that their graduates are prepared to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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