

A Discussion over the Measures for University Ideological and Political Education in the New Media Environment

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ABSTRACT. *Ideological and political education is a significant foundation to run socialist universities with Chinese characteristics. In the time of new media, putting efforts in the ideological and political education for university students is a profound reflection of higher education itself. The development of new media has greatly changed the way university students learn and treat others. It has also affected their ideology, political viewpoints and morality. The new media environment is both an opportunity and challenge for the ideological and political education for university students. Recognizing the requirement of ideological and political education for university students in higher education, sensing the changes in ideological and political education for university students in the new media environment rationally and dealing with the risks and challenges for ideological and political education for university students brought by new media effectively have become the embedded requirement of university ideological and political education.*

KEYWORDS: *Ideological and political education; new media; media ability*

0. Introduction

The purpose of the supreme study lies in popularizing morality. Education is the foundation for the rise of a nation and the advance of the society. Higher education should not only impart knowledge and cultivate ability but also help university students establish correct view of world, life and value and locate the orientation of their life. On March 18th, 2019, President Xi presided over the school ideological and political education teacher seminar and emphasized that “to successfully carry out ideological and political education theory classes, the most fundamental method is to implement the educational guideline of the party on a full-out scale and solve the basic question of who to cultivate, how to cultivate and for whom to cultivate”, “We should see instilling morality as the basic task and carry out ideological and political education through the whole process of education”. Ideological and political education is a significant foundation to run socialist universities with Chinese characteristics. In the new age, putting efforts in the ideological and political education for university students is a profound reflection of higher education itself as well as the answer to the basic question for universities of who to cultivate, how to

cultivate and for whom to cultivate.

New media plays an important role in modern society. New media is an interactive media. Contrary to traditional media like television, radio and phone, which include no computing, new media transmits information both ways and include computing. The information for new media is easy to handle, store, transform and hyperlink, among which the most prominent characteristics are easy search and easy access. Compared to traditional media, new media features mutual transmission, especially the representative new media like Internet, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and big data. Users can interact with both the information producer and the information. On top of that, new media features fast transmission, convenience and inclusiveness. New media has changed the traditional news generation mechanism and news transmission pattern, created a new channel for people to access information, reformed people's way to learn, think and experience and exerted far-reaching effects on the ideological and political education for university students. University students are the mainstay users of we media and they are increasingly inclined to communicate with the outside through we media. Recognizing the requirement of ideological and political education for university students in higher education, sensing the changes in ideological and political education for university students in the new media environment rationally and dealing with the risks and challenges for ideological and political education for university students brought by new media effectively have become the embedded requirement of university ideological and political education.

1. The positive effects of new media on university ideological and political education

1.1 Achieve the exchange of university ideological and political education information

The two-way transmission of new media allows information recipient and information producer to interact.

In the new media environment, users and information producers can interact anywhere and any time, which strengthens the influence of new media on users. In the new media environment, the transmission of information has information from all over the world as the background and a large amount of participators as the subject. The participators can be both the information recipient and publisher. They can give feedback about the information any time. New media is the social platform and media tool welcomed by university students. The main premise of university ideological and political education has turned from traditional media like classroom, television, radio and newspaper to new media. University ideological and political education workers can transmit latest news and mainstream news to students any time and anywhere so that they can give timely guidance on view of world, life and value to university students. Through the interactive platform of new media, university ideological and political education workers can keep up to date with the ideological status of

university students, which changes the situation where teachers and students have asymmetrical information.

1.2 Enhance the subjectivity of university ideological and political education subjects.

In university ideological and political education, new media has created an environment where teachers and students can communicate on an equal basis. Traditional university ideological and political education focus more on the control over information and education, which would easily overlook the students' true feelings and requirements and stray from their thoughts.. The development of new media has changed the situation where education workers rule the roost and students follow and has given students independence. University students are no longer satisfied with only receiving information but sharing information and communicating on an equal basis with education workers. In the time of new media, both students and education workers are independent and have the freedom to address themselves. They interact with each other through the comments and reposts on new media. That not only raises the students' initiative but also corresponds with the educational regularity of education workers and students improving their psychological quality together.

1.3 Make university ideological and political education more attractive

Traditional university ideological and political education is often done by meetings, dialogues and reports whereas new media present the education contents in multiple forms like pictures, texts, sounds and images so as to add more information into it and make it more convincing and attractive. The virtual reality in new media can make people feel at the scene. By diverse and lively forms, it leaves deep impressions on the subjects of university ideological and political education and brings vividness and vitality to university ideological and political education. New media features decentralization, strong interaction, abundant information and resources, fast transmission and wide coverage. Through new media they can deliver vivid and direct information with both pictures and texts to university students, stimulate university students' curiosity and imagination in easy and desirable ways, which is beneficial to raising the interest and initiative of university students and making university ideological and political education more convincing and attractive.

2. Challenges confronting university ideological and political education in the new media environment

2.1 University students have weaker ability of moral judgment, which makes the work more difficult

The universal application of new media has brought university students a more convenient way to access knowledge and information. They can access

knowledge and information through Internet, phones and virtual reality. The interaction of new media has greatly raised university students' initiative, which is a serious challenge to traditional ideological and political education patterns. At the same time acquiring abundant information through new media, university students tend to lose their due moral judgment. Daniel Bell has argued that the mass media in modern society has created a superficial "junk food culture" that cuts down the depth of traditional culture and generates the decline of aesthetic distance for instant response, impact, sense of synchronization and incitement. Once aesthetic distance declines, there is no need for further thinking and the audience is surrounded by experience. University students can access different information through new media. These information can have advantage and disadvantage. They can be positive and negative. As there are differences in students' quality, they have different abilities to filter and distinguish between information, hence they could easily get affected.

After adopting the market-oriented economy, besides the identity of public opinion director, media is also profit maker. Media begins to change its operational ideology into audience-centered. In the new media environment news is easily accessed and transmitted. Affected by the absolute freedom and diverse values advocated by media, university students will have doubts about traditional values and even oppose them. The interaction of new media gives everyone the right to address themselves but there is no absolute speech right. Many university students choose to give up their original fixed values and turn to the values that fit their own benefit better, which is a shock to the values that are formed based on public interest and public opinion. The inclusiveness of new media makes the transmission of information transcend the boundary of nation, government, nationality and race. It brings different regional cultures, different nationalities, different cultures and different classes together. The diversity of culture makes it hard for people to stick to traditional ethics and morality. In the face of diverse moral standard advocated by exotic culture, university students often lose themselves, which adds to the difficulty of university ideological and political education.

2.2 The media ability of university ideological and political education workers has room for improvement

For now, although most university ideological and political education workers have mastered common new media skills and have had full understanding of the significance of the application of new media, they are still unskilled in searching, analyzing, processing and using new media information. In terms of the ability to obtain media information, there is still room for improvement. This can't meet the requirement of the new generation university students growing with the new media age. It will lead to the failure to attract university students and will must have adverse effect on the result of university ideological and political education. The insufficiency in the media ability of university ideological and political education workers lies in:

2.2.1 Weak awareness of new media

University ideological and political education workers have certain rational understanding about media and relatively recognize the importance of new media in politics, economy and culture and its profound effects on university students, but to some extent they don't think it necessary to learn it and even consider new media no more than a way to gather information. Media ability is mainly the responsibility of news and broadcast teachers. Due to the weak media ability of university ideological and political education workers, the actual effects of university ideological and political education are diminished.

2.2.2 Weak new media information ability

As much as some university ideological and political education workers can use computers and phones skillfully, they lack the ability to take advantage of new media to search and acquire latest news and the ability to distinguish and filter the acquired information so that when university students read the related information they might have misunderstandings. This is detrimental to the expected effect of university ideological and political education.

2.2.3 Undesirable effects of new media application

For the moment, it is a trend for university ideological and political education workers to tap into new media to conduct ideological and political education. However, some university ideological and political education workers refuse to take the initiative to acquire and interpret media information and fend off negative effects of media information. They are devoid of the ability to effectively create and transmit information and the ability to educate and guide university students through new media.

2.3 Challenge the authority of university ideological and political education management

As globalization is gaining momentum, at the same time new media pushing forward the communications among different areas of the world, it also brings unprecedented impact to the socialism ideology of our country. Western countries are now using Internet to seduce netizens in our country from the perspectives of thoughts and ideology in any possible forms, in an attempt to subvert university students' faith in communism and socialism and destroy our people's ideological stronghold.

First and foremost, as new media brings us new vision, it is also a major way for western countries to instill capitalism into our country. Through globalization, western countries spread their political opinions, values and life styles in our country, which make people easily let down their guard, mistakenly see the world

as a whole and consider less about ideologies. In the end, western ideology will take up their mind. This requires ideological and political education workers in our country to raise their vigilance and take active actions to deal with it.

Next, as western countries possess advanced transmission technologies, advanced transmission abilities and strong capital power, they have control over the speech in the world and make requirements to other countries with the same standard.

Such “transmission media imperialism” reflects the infiltration of western transmission system into third world. It is nothing short of the earlier colonialism. At the World Congress of International Telecom held in December,2012, America rallied 25 European countries to refuse to sign *International Telecommunication Regulations* and share the Internet management that is solely owned by America. Western countries led by America take advantage of their dominance in news transmission in the new media environment to attack the mainstream ideology in our country by publishing political, economic and cultural information. At the same time, they give negative reports on third world countries, trying to challenge the dominance of the mainstream ideology in our country. Interfered by exterior information especially provocative information and due to the lack of the ability to distinguish and the ability to think independently, some small part of university students are easily instigated to do something radical to express their emotion and that leads to campus accidents. Therefore, it is a serious question how to apply new media into ideological and political education and help university students establish strong faith in Marxism.

3. The exploration of the measures for university ideological and political education in the new media environment

3.1 Promote university ideological and political education workers’ ability to use new media

3.1.1 Convert education workers’ educational ideology

University ideological and political education workers should foster the correct ideology and understand that new media can bring new opportunities to them. In addition they should take active actions to deal with the challenges brought by new media. They are supposed to take the initiative to study the functions of new media and locate the values of new media accurately. They should neither overlook its influence nor overestimate its function. They should see new media as the new channel to conduct university ideological and political education so as to achieve the goal of educating people through university ideological and political education to full extent. In December,2016, President Xi pointed out at the National University Ideological and Political Education Conference that conducting university ideological and political education should change with circumstances, advance with time and reform with trend. They should follow the regularity of ideological and political work, education and the students’ growth and make continuous efforts to

enhance their ability.

In the new media environment, there are diverse ways to transmit information. Education workers should open their minds and seek truth from facts. They should learn to talk and communicate with university students on an equal basis and lessen their identity as the authority to bring themselves to an equal level with the students. Only by doing so can they get hold of the thoughts of university students and their development regularity. Meanwhile, they should exert themselves to change the way to conduct university ideological and political education from instillation to participation. By guiding university students to take part in the discussions and letting mainstream ideology guide public opinion, they will be able to influence and change university students' view on world, life and value.

3.1.2 Enhance the media ability of university ideological and political education workers.

Ideological and political education workers are the undertaker, organizer and initiator of ideological and political education activities.

They play a leading role in ideological and political education activities. To enhance the media ability of university ideological and political education workers, first, the learning of mass media knowledge and theory should be put into university ideological and political education workers' theoretical study. The study goals should be made clear. The study contents should be regulated. The study methods should be explored. So that the requirement to enhance media ability will be transformed from reports, files and meetings into real actions. What's more, ideological and political education workers should put more efforts into the theoretical research on media ability, especially the research on the relevance between media ability and ideological and political education in the new media environment, the research on how to make ideological and political education more up to date with time by improving students' media ability and the research on promoting the practice of media ability education.

3.2 Complete the new mechanism for university ideological and political education

3.2.1 Complete the team construction of university ideological and political education

To complete the team construction of university ideological and political education, on one hand, universities should expand the scale of university ideological and political education team and pick up the pace of university ideological and political education workers getting familiar with new media technologies especially their mastery and application of new media technologies. In doing so they can forge a new type of team that has good mastery of new technologies and the basic regularities and specific requirements for university ideological and political education works. On the other hand, they should search

for the mainstay forces in university students and guide them to take the lead in real life and on the Internet under the direction of socialist core value system so as to help university students to foster correct ideologies, push forward the healthy development of new media public opinion and transform educational influence into Internet discourse power and appeal.

3.2.2 Construct media platform for university ideological and political education

Universities should construct multiple media platforms and enrich their working methods to meet the requirements of different works related to different environments and groups. For example, they can establish campus We Chat official platform group to achieve the timely notification of university student related work information and students' effective reception of the information. They can strengthen the construction of student interaction community, theme education website, professional, academic website and "two micro and one terminal" and carry out ideological and political education in the ways that they prefer. They should especially bring vitality to university ideological and political education with new media and new technologies and integrate the traditional advantages of ideological and political education with information technology.

3.2.3 Enrich the content of university ideological and political education. Focus on guiding values.

The key to enriching the content of ideological and political education for university students lies in adhering to the directive thoughts of the party and guarding the frontier of university ideology in prevention of the invasion of western values and ideological trends into the ideology of our country through Internet or online public opinion. They should educate students with socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era and guide the students to strengthen their path confidence, theoretical confidence, systematic confidence and cultural confidence in socialism with Chinese characteristics and embed their passion for the nation, ambition of a powerful nation and the aspiration to contribute to the nation into their endeavor in adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, the construction of powerful modernized socialist country and the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation.

They should guide university students to foster and practice socialist core values; They should strengthen ideal and belief education; They should fill the education with knowledge, thoughts, characteristics of the time and specific targets; They should combine the first class and second class of ideological and political education class and construct the third class namely new media ideological and political education. At the same time the content should be close to reality, life and students.

3.3 Enhance university students' media ability

3.3.1 Education administration departments should pay extra attention to it and support it

Education administration departments should complete related laws and regulations to restrain the transmission of new media and guarantee a desirable environment for media ability education. Educational and cultural departments can push forward the development of media ability education by initiating, organizing and supporting various supervision and coordination mechanisms. For instance: Publish the overall planning for media ability education to attract attentions on media ability and media ability education from all aspects of the society so as to gather wisdom for large-scale and systematic media ability education. They can also try to include media ability classes into university education plans and set it as an indicator of education quality. Besides, they can organize the training of teachers and the compilation of related textbooks to offer security to university media ability education. Support the establishment of official or private media ability education agencies.

3.3.2 Establish a complete media ability education assessment system

Establish a complete media ability education assessment system and offer related systematic security. Universities should formulate university student media ability assessment system and media ability education assessment system according to their own conditions and the students' conditions. Establish a complete media ability assessment system means more than setting an assessment criterion. What matters most is to give universities and individuals an explicit media cognition orientation in this assessment system. In doing so they can make sure that university students are vigilant against the influence of the Internet and know how to analyze information on the Internet. What's more, they will be able to make use of media to transmit information according to their needs. The administrator of education department Chen Baosheng has addressed that "you should make the supply side assessment of university ideological and political education." In terms of innovation of methods, "you should focus on the assessment of affecting and educating people with culture and the assessment of carrying out works with new media technology." To get media ability education down to earth, they should also formulate detailed media ability education plans and make regular checks and assessments to make the media ability education for university students systematic, scientific and regulated.

3.3.3 Build up a scientific curricular system that fits university students' cognition

As the main premise of ideological and political education for university students, universities should take the initiative to make the media ability education for university students the official and systematic way to raise university students' media ability. Universities should base on facts and phase in media ability education. On one hand, they should make clear of the goals for media ability education for university students, including knowledge goals, ability goals and value goals.

The core is to strengthen university students' moral judgment and their ability to improve themselves and serve the society with media. They should establish content structure for media ability education, compile media ability education textbooks that

fit for general education and explore education patterns for media ability education. On the other hand, when setting special media ability education courses, universities should strengthen “two classes education” and take up the main channels and main stronghold for systematic ideological and political education for university students to take full advantage of “two classes” to cultivate university students’ media ability. For example, the basic theory, methodology and view on world of Marxism can provide theoretical instruction and methodological support for students to understand, interpret and criticize media information.

Acknowledgement

Jiangsu Province Social Science Fund Project(16ZXC003).

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