

INTEGRATION OF RED CULTURE INTO IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES: VALUE IMPLICATIONS, PRACTICAL CHALLENGES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PATHS

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ABSTRACT

Red culture represents the spiritual wealth and cultural resources formed by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China throughout the historical processes of revolution, construction, and reform. It embodies functions such as political guidance, value shaping, historical education, and practical cultivation. Integrating red culture into ideological and political education in universities is not only an inherent requirement for implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, but also a realistic approach to enhancing the appeal, persuasiveness, and contemporary relevance of ideological and political education in higher education institutions. Based on existing studies, this paper analyzes the issue from three dimensions: value implications, practical challenges, and implementation paths. The study finds that the value of integrating red culture into university ideological and political education is mainly reflected in strengthening ideals and beliefs, cultivating patriotism and national sentiment, shaping cultural identity, and promoting educational innovation. However, in practice, several problems still exist, including insufficient resource integration, inadequate depth of content transformation, weak educational scenarios, limited coordination of practical activities, and lagging evaluation mechanisms. To address these challenges, future efforts should focus on optimizing the main channel of classroom teaching, strengthening digital resource platforms, promoting the integration of campus culture, expanding practical education spaces, and improving collaborative support and evaluation mechanisms. This study aims to provide theoretical insights and practical references for promoting the high-quality development of ideological and political education in universities in the new era and strengthening value-oriented educational practices.

Keyword: *Red culture, Ideological and political education in universities, Value implications, Implementation paths, Fostering virtue through education, Cultural identity*

1. INTRODUCTION

Red culture embodies the ideals, original aspirations, and spiritual pursuits of the members of the Communist Party of China. It constitutes an important resource for ideological and political education in the new era, characterized by strong Chinese features and profound value appeal. As ideological and political education in universities shifts from a focus on “knowledge transmission” toward the integrated cultivation of value guidance, competence development, and personality formation, the educational function of red culture has become increasingly prominent. Existing

studies generally hold that red culture—together with its resource forms, spiritual lineage, and historical narratives—provides vivid teaching materials, emotional connections, and practical educational settings for ideological and political education in universities, thereby serving as an important support for enhancing educational effectiveness [1,2].

In recent years, scholars have conducted continuous research on topics such as digitalized red cultural resources, red education in universities, integrated educational models, local red culture, and the great founding spirit of the Communist Party of China, generating a relatively rich body of research. These studies have not only focused on the empowering value of red culture for ideological and political education in universities but have also explored the educational functions of emerging carriers and scenarios such as digital technologies, intelligent media, and revolutionary heritage sites [3-5]. However, overall, existing studies still show certain limitations: analyses of problems and implementation paths tend to be fragmented, and the connection between value interpretation and practical construction remains insufficiently integrated. Based on this background, this paper builds upon previous research and discusses the issue within the analytical framework of “value implications—practical challenges—implementation paths,” aiming to form a relatively systematic analytical structure.

2. THE VALUE IMPLICATIONS OF INTEGRATING RED CULTURE INTO IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES

2.1 Red Culture as an Important Ideological Resource for Strengthening Ideals and Beliefs

The core mission of ideological and political education in universities is to guide young students in establishing a correct worldview, outlook on life, and system of values. Red culture itself embodies a distinct Marxist standpoint, the ideals and convictions of the Communist Party of China, and the shared ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It thus provides young university students with spiritual coordinates and ideological guidance. Studies point out that red culture can enhance university students' identification with ideological and political education through dimensions such as Marxist ideology, the socialist path and institutional system with Chinese characteristics, the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and the core socialist values [2]. This indicates that red culture is not merely a content resource for ideological and political education but also an important medium for strengthening political, theoretical, and institutional identification.

From the perspective of the spiritual lineage of the Communist Party of China, the great founding spirit serves as the source of the Party's spiritual genealogy and possesses a distinct value orientation and educational function. Integrating this spirit into ideological and political education in universities helps combine revolutionary tradition education, ideal and belief education, and education on the mission of the new era, thereby encouraging young students to strengthen their political consciousness through historical understanding and to reinforce their ideals and beliefs through spiritual inspiration [6].

2.2 Red Culture as an Important Value Resource for Cultivating Patriotism and Cultural Identity

Red culture embodies profound patriotic sentiments, collectivist values, and the principle of serving the people. The revolutionary history, heroic figures, and stories of struggle embedded in red resources can strengthen students' emotional identification and cultural memory through the dimensions of history, emotion, and experiential context [2]. Studies note that red resources serve as vivid materials and nourishing elements for ideological and political education in universities, playing an important role in helping young students strengthen their ideals and beliefs and cultivate patriotism and loyalty to the Party [1]. This suggests that red culture can transform abstract value principles into perceptible, understandable, and experiential cultural forms, thereby enhancing the appeal of ideological and political education.

Local red culture is particularly accessible and relatable. It is closely connected with regional history, campus culture, and students' lived experiences, thus narrowing the psychological distance between ideological and political education and students. Research argues that promoting local red culture into campuses, classrooms, and teaching materials is an important way to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of ideological and political work in universities [7]. Therefore, integrating red culture into ideological and political education in universities is not merely a supplement to educational content but also an important pathway for constructing cultural identity.

2.3 Red Culture as an Important Educational Resource for Promoting Innovation in Ideological and Political Education

In the new era, ideological and political education in universities must not only address the question of “what to teach,” but also resolve “how to teach” and “how to make students willing to listen, able to understand, remember, and act upon what they learn.” Red culture possesses strong narrative, visual, and practical characteristics, enabling

ideological and political education to shift from one-way transmission to multidimensional interaction. Research from the perspective of red art works indicates that these works possess multiple educational values in terms of political orientation, aesthetic cultivation, cultural enrichment, and educational innovation [8]. This insight suggests that red culture can not only provide political educational materials but also expand the expressive forms of ideological and political education through art, aesthetics, and cultural experience.

Moreover, the integrative educational value of red culture lies in its ability to connect multiple dimensions, including classroom teaching, campus culture, social practice, and self-reflection. Research emphasizes that red cultural education involves not only the concepts and methods of ideological and political education but also the processes of self-awareness, practice, and reflective self-production [9]. This indicates that integrating red culture into ideological and political education in universities carries significant implications for updating educational philosophies and reconstructing educational models.

3. PRACTICAL CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING RED CULTURE INTO IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES

3.1 Insufficient Development and Integration of Red Cultural Resources, with Fragmented Content Supply

Although red cultural resources are abundant, their use in ideological and political education in universities often faces problems such as fragmented distribution, inadequate integration, and low utilization efficiency. Particularly in the context of digitalization, the construction of resource platforms, as well as resource sharing, screening, and integration, still require further improvement [3]. In some universities, the use of red cultural resources is characterized by the phenomenon of “having resources but lacking transformation” and “having materials but lacking systematic integration,” and a systematic, hierarchical, and sustainable resource supply mechanism has not yet been established. Liu Xiaohua points out that promoting the deep integration of red cultural resources with the informatization of ideological and political education in universities requires the exploration of resources, the expansion of educational carriers, and the construction of a coordinated and collaborative informatized educational system [10]. This indicates that the integration of red cultural resources into ideological and political education in universities first faces the challenge of insufficient supply-side integration.

3.2 Insufficient Depth in the Transformation of Educational Content: The Need to Balance Historical Authenticity and Educational Depth

The integration of red culture into ideological and political education is not simply a matter of adding several revolutionary stories or red examples; rather, it requires the effective transformation of historical resources into educational resources and cultural resources into resources for moral cultivation. Existing studies have shown that during the integration process, red resources often face problems such as insufficient exploration of their contemporary value, superficial content transformation, and inadequate educational depth [1,3]. Huang Yan also notes that the lack of red cultural elements in classroom teaching and the insufficient integration between classroom instruction and practical teaching constitute major shortcomings in the current integration of red culture into ideological and political education in universities [11]. This suggests that some universities still emphasize the narration of knowledge over the generation of ideas, and historical description over the interpretation of values in red cultural education.

3.3 Limited Educational Scenarios and Communication Methods, Making It Difficult to Meet the Reception Characteristics of Young Students

In the context of the rapid development of all-media and intelligent media technologies, the ways in which young university students acquire knowledge, express emotions, and engage with media have undergone profound changes. If red cultural education continues to rely primarily on traditional classroom lectures and linear textual communication, its contemporary appeal and attractiveness may be weakened. Sun Yuebin and Zhang Lin point out that fragmented online communication, traditional single teaching methods, and report-style textual discourse have weakened the sense of contemporaneity, attractiveness, and effectiveness of red education, making the empowerment of intelligent media an urgent necessity [4]. Tian Shan further emphasizes that digital red cultural resources should be designed with the characteristics of “Generation Z” university students in mind, including the development of digital creative products and the construction of shared platforms [12]. This indicates that current red cultural education in universities still faces challenges such as insufficient scenario innovation and lagging communication methods.

3.4 Incomplete Collaborative Mechanisms and Evaluation Systems

The integration of red culture into ideological and political education in universities is a systematic project involving multiple actors, including universities, society, cultural venues, and local resource platforms. However, in practice, collaboration among these actors is often insufficient, institutional support is weak, and evaluation and feedback mechanisms remain incomplete, which affects the sustained improvement of educational outcomes [1,11]. In particular, with regard to the evaluation of red cultural education, some universities still rely on superficial indicators such as the number of activities or participants, lacking dynamic evaluation of students' value identification, emotional attitudes, and behavioral transformation. Li Honggang and Han Yuning propose the construction of a digital evaluation mechanism characterized by "precision evaluation + dynamic optimization" [3], which reflects the current weakness of existing evaluation systems.

4. PRACTICAL PATHS FOR INTEGRATING RED CULTURE INTO IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES

4.1 Strengthening the Main Channel of Classroom Teaching and Promoting the Deep Integration of Red Culture into the Curriculum System

Classroom teaching remains the primary arena for ideological and political education in universities. The integration of red culture into ideological and political education in universities should first be reflected in the systematic design of course content, teaching methods, and educational objectives. On the one hand, red culture should be organically incorporated into ideological and political theory courses, education on Party history and national history, as well as courses on current affairs and policies, thereby enhancing both the historical depth and contemporary relevance of course content. On the other hand, red culture should be extended to curriculum-based ideological and political education, achieving coordination between professional courses and value guidance. Cheng Xia et al. propose that elements of red culture should be organically integrated into discipline-based ideological and political education so that red genes can be embedded in the reconstruction of professional curricula [13]. This perspective provides important insights for expanding the educational boundaries of red culture.

At the same time, a curriculum system featuring the integration of educational objectives, content, and institutional mechanisms should be constructed. Research on the integration of red art works into ideological and political education for university students indicates that aligning educational goals, optimizing content systems, and promoting institutional coordination can effectively enhance educational effectiveness [8]. Therefore, strengthening the classroom as the main channel should not merely mean "adding content," but rather moving toward "curriculum reconstruction."

4.2 Enhancing Digitalization and Intelligent Media Construction to Innovate the Communication of Red Culture

Digital transformation has become an important direction for innovation in ideological and political education in universities. The construction of digital platforms for red cultural resources can break the constraints of time and space, enrich educational scenarios, and enhance the accessibility and sharing of resources [3]. Universities should strengthen cooperation with local red cultural venues, archival institutions, and museums to build integrated digital resource platforms that combine display, learning, interaction, and evaluation, thereby promoting the joint construction and sharing of high-quality red cultural resources.

On this basis, universities should actively utilize emerging technologies such as intelligent media, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and big-data recommendation systems to improve the precision, interactivity, and immersive experience of red cultural education. The functions of intelligent media in resource integration, precise identification, and scenario creation provide new technological support for enhancing the effectiveness of red education [4]. Meanwhile, the informatization pathway also requires universities to establish new learning communities and promote cooperation between museums and universities, forming an integrated educational pattern combining online and offline learning [10]. For "Generation Z" students, digital creative products, interactive learning methods, and visualized storytelling are more likely to achieve effective engagement [12].

4.3 Deepening Campus Cultural Immersion and Building an All-Environment Educational Pattern

The integration of red culture into ideological and political education in universities should not be limited to the classroom but should also be reflected throughout the entire process of campus cultural construction. Universities should incorporate red culture into campus landscapes, themed activities, student organizations, online culture, and daily management, thereby forming an educational pattern that combines "explicit education" with "implicit education." Huang Yan proposes that universities should cultivate a strong red cultural atmosphere on campus, diversify communication methods, and enhance the integration between classroom teaching and practical teaching

[11]. This perspective indicates that only when red culture becomes embedded in the campus cultural ecosystem can it truly extend from “course content” to the “lifeworld” of students.

In addition, local red culture and the red resources in the regions where universities are located should serve as important foundations for campus cultural development. Promoting local red culture into campuses, teaching materials, and classrooms can not only enhance the contextual relevance of education but also strengthen students’ understanding and identification with local historical culture [7].

4.4 Expanding Practical Education Spaces and Enhancing Students’ Experiential Engagement and Subjectivity

The vitality of red culture lies in practice. Universities should make full use of revolutionary heritage sites, memorial halls, museums, and red education bases as practical educational spaces, integrating classroom teaching with on-site teaching, situational teaching, and research-oriented practice. Zhao Zheng and Wang Fang point out that the use of revolutionary heritage can expand the content of ideological and political education, enrich educational carriers, and enhance the implicit educational functions of campus culture [5]. This suggests that the construction of practical educational spaces can not only strengthen students’ sense of presence and experiential engagement but also promote the transformation of red culture from the cognitive level to the emotional and behavioral levels.

For postgraduate students in particular, it is also important to combine the concept of the “mobile red classroom” with research-oriented practice teaching, guiding them to strengthen their identification with red genes through historical reflection and contemporary interpretation [13]. From a broader perspective, the inheritance of red genes requires coordination across different educational stages and multiple actors, promoting collaborative construction and integrated development of practical educational spaces [14]. This provides valuable reference for universities to build vertically connected and horizontally coordinated systems of red practical education.

4.5 Improving Collaborative Support and Evaluation Mechanisms to Continuously Enhance Educational Effectiveness

The integration of red culture into ideological and political education in universities cannot rely solely on a single department or occasional activities; instead, it should be supported by institutionalized and normalized mechanisms. First, a collaborative mechanism should be established in which the university Party committee provides unified leadership, ideological and political departments coordinate overall planning, professional teachers and counselors jointly participate, and universities cooperate with local institutions and cultural venues. Second, institutional arrangements should be improved through the incorporation of red cultural education into curricula, activities, and evaluation systems. Research on integrating the great founding spirit into ideological and political education in universities proposes the establishment of a “three incorporations” system and the formation of new educational mechanisms [6], which offers valuable reference for broader application.

At the same time, evaluation should shift from purely result-oriented assessment to a combination of process evaluation and developmental evaluation, focusing on changes in students’ theoretical cognition, emotional identification, value judgment, and behavioral practice. Sun Shaoyong and Ren Wen emphasize that the nurturing function of red resources in ideological and political education in universities is closely related to the integration of spiritual resources and the optimization of educational functions [15]. Therefore, the construction of evaluation systems should aim at the long-term goal of “cultivating virtue and shaping the soul,” rather than merely pursuing short-term visible performance indicators.

5. CONCLUSION

The integration of red culture into ideological and political education in universities represents an important pathway for implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and improving the quality of ideological and political work in the new era. The ideals and beliefs, patriotic sentiments, historical memory, and spiritual character embodied in red culture provide ideological and political education in universities with profound value resources, vivid narrative materials, and abundant practical resources.

At present, although certain progress has been made in integrating red culture into ideological and political education in universities, several practical challenges remain, including insufficient resource integration, inadequate depth of content transformation, outdated communication methods, and incomplete collaborative mechanisms. In the future, universities should adhere to systematic thinking and innovation-oriented approaches, promoting coordinated development in classroom teaching, digital platforms, campus culture, practical educational spaces, and evaluation mechanisms, so as to construct a red cultural education system that is more contemporary, attractive, and effective.

Only in this way can the advantages of red culture be effectively transformed into advantages in ideological and political education in universities, thereby further strengthening young students’ value identification, cultural confidence, and sense of mission and responsibility.

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