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Research Article

Innovative Methods of Ideological and Political Education for College Students Based on Ideological Cognition Science

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Abstract

This study takes the innovative method of college students' ideological and political education as the research objective, and uses literature analysis method, subject reference method, questionnaire method and other research methods to investigate and analyze the role played by the official WeChat public platform of colleges and universities in Shanxi Province in ideological and political education with a variety of data statistical analysis methods based on the brief description of the official WeChat ideological and political education and the operation mode of universities and colleges. From the perspective of cognition science of ideology, the study makes an objective analysis of the application of official WeChat in ideological and political education in colleges and universities and its shortcomings, and based on this, puts forward some strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of official WeChat in ideological and political education in colleges and universities in combination with the cognitive psychology of college students.

Keywords

College Students' Ideological and Political Education • Ideological Cognition Science • Official Wechat

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The ideological and political education in colleges and universities shoulders the important task of promoting the growth of college students and assisting them to form correct world outlook, and outlook on life and values (Ifenthaler *et al.*, 2014). Its success or failure is directly related to the all-round development of the society. With the rapid development of mobile internet technology, all kinds of new media have gradually come into people's vision and formed a "hidden" influence on college students' ideas. Under this background, the value appeal of ideological and political education cannot be realized simply by the traditional way of ideological and political education. As a frontier of ideological education, colleges and universities should adapt to the development of the times, innovate teaching methods, and apply new media to ideological and political education.

As a new self-media software, Wechat has attracted 900 million users since its launch in 2011 (Deanna & David, 2004) and has been widely accepted and applied among college students. While bringing convenience to students' study and life, Wechat also has a profound impact on their ideological morality and behavior habits. How to carry out ideological and political education for college students with WeChat as the carrier has become the focus of attention and research.

At present, there are few researches on WeChat and college students' ideological and political education in China, mainly focusing on (Leron & Hazzan, 2006) the influence of WeChat on the ideological and political education of college students, the path and problems of the application of WeChat in college students' ideological and political education, as well as the function, connotation and characteristics of WeChat. There is no concept of ideological and political education abroad, but there are similar concepts such as national education or political education, and they tend to inspire students' political, ideological and individual cultivation through practice (Blakemore, Winston & Frith, 2004). Thus, it can be seen that both domestic and foreign countries attach great importance to ideological and political education, but with different ways of education.

Based on the above analysis, this study attempts to introduce the cognitive science of ideology into the ideological and political education of college students, and makes an objective analysis of the application of official WeChat in ideological and political education in colleges and universities and its shortcomings. Starting from the cognitive psychological law of college students' ideological and political education, this study probes into how the official WeChats play their functions and advantages in the ideological and political education, improves the effectiveness of the ideological and political education, and becomes the comprehensive platform of college students' ideological value guidance and campus service.

Ideological Cognitive Science and the Ideological and Political Education of Official WeChat in Colleges and Universities

Ideological cognitive science

Ideology (Gross, 1996) is a kind of sensory thought of things and a process of understanding and recognizing things. Cognition (Kember, Charlesworth, Davies, Mckay & Stott, 1997) is a process in which the human brain

processes and uses information about itself and things other than itself, as shown in Figure 1. In the course that college students receive ideological and political education, their brain can automatically search the memory related to the learning content, integrate the new and old knowledge, realize the ability to solve problems by using the knowledge, and internalizes the learned ideological and political theory (Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011).

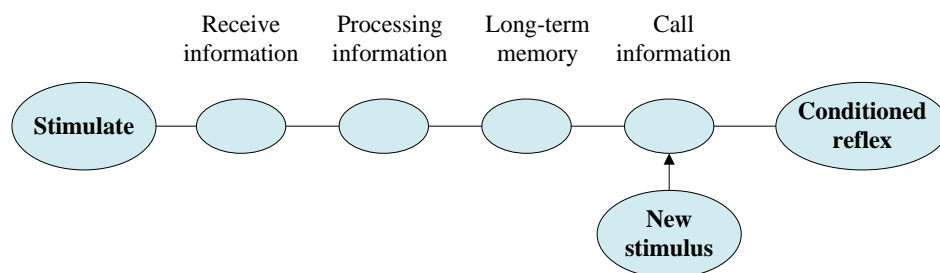


Figure 1. Cognitive process of the human brain.

Ideological and political education by the official WeChat in colleges and universities

WeChat (Levinson, 2012) is a free application that provides instant messaging services. Due to its low cost, cross-platform applications, good privacy, real-time voice, text, picture, video and other advantages (Adey, 1995), WeChat has about 900 million users since its launch in 2011 and has become a way of life for people.

The public platform of WeChat is a functional module of WeChat. Individuals or enterprises such as media and governments can realize propaganda, communication and service expansion through the platform. The public platform of official WeChat in colleges and universities is an important carrier of public opinion news in colleges and universities, with important mission of molding good image of colleges and universities, spreading positive energy, and guiding students' ideology and values. (Isernia & Smets, 2013). The ideological and political education by the official WeChat in Colleges and Universities (Mcnamara, 2006) is a new form of ideological and political education under the WeChat environment. In order to promote the users (mainly college students and teachers) to master the ideological and political theory, ideological and political educators take the public platform of WeChat as the carrier, educate and influence students with certain ideas and political views in an organized, purposeful and planned manner, and then arouse their consciousness of molding their own ideological and moral qualities.

Research on the Effectiveness and Strategy of College Students' Ideological and Political Education from the Perspective of Ideological Cognition Science

The process of ideological and political education for college students internally involves the process of college students' ideological cognition. Therefore, with the help of the Shanxi Provincial College Work Committee Propaganda Department, this study makes an investigation and analysis of the ideological and

political education by the official WeChat operators in colleges and universities and 4,752 college students in Shanxi Province from the perspective of ideological cognitive science.

Effectiveness of the ideological and political education in the official WeChat of colleges and universities

Attracting attention and increasingly widening the coverage. According to the investigation, more than 90% of the students have registered their WeChat accounts, and about 60% of the students have paid close attention to the public account of the school. The college students also spread it through the function of sharing in the moments while receiving the ideological and political education, which also makes the ideological and political education coverage in colleges and universities widen increasingly. However, among the students with WeChat accounts, there are significant differences in the situation where the students with different academic qualifications pay attention to the public WeChat accounts. As shown in Figure 2, the number of the graduate students who pay attention to the public WeChat accounts is the least while the number of the undergraduate students is the most. This also shows that the attention of college students needs to be further improved in order to continue to expand the impact of ideological and political education.

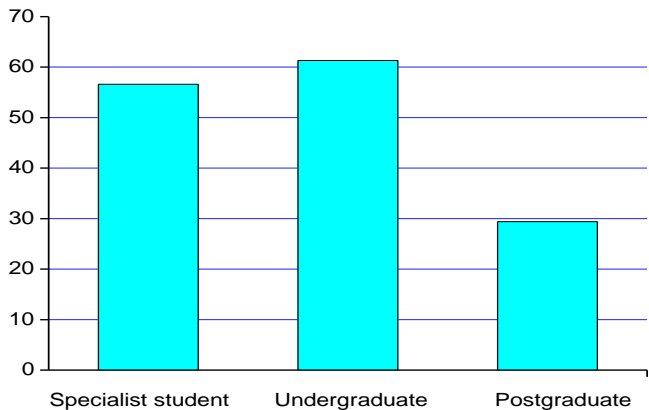


Figure 2. Students with different academic qualifications pay attention to the official WeChat public account of colleges and universities.

Participation of the main body and the enhancement of the guidance of public opinion. The public platform of official WeChat in colleges and universities provides a debate field for the ideological and political education of college students. Colleges and universities play a guiding, controlling and inspiring role in the process of interaction can help students set up correct values through correct guidance on social hot topics. Figure 3 shows an investigation of the interaction between the public platform and the users concerned, and it can be seen from the investigation results that although the interaction platform between the official WeChat in colleges and universities and the college students has been formed at present, the frequency is still low, and the quality is still to be improved.

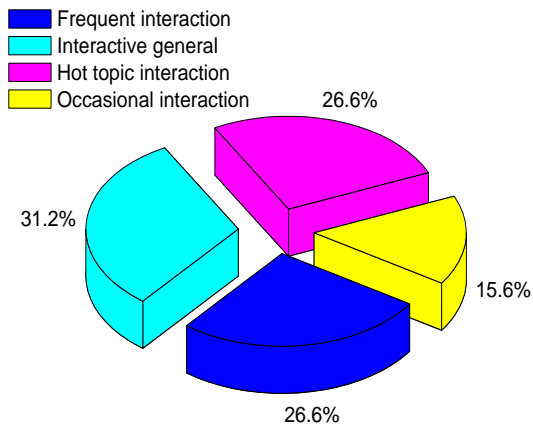


Figure 3. University official WeChat public platform and user interaction.

The function of accepting ideas and educating people becoming more prominent. Table 1 shows the types of information published by the official WeChat of colleges and universities. From the statistics, it can be seen that the contents of ideological and political education published by the official WeChat of colleges and universities are wide-ranging and life-like and recessive, which enables college students to receive ideological and political education in a subtle way. However, we also find that the information contents published by different school running levels is significantly different.

Table 1
Types of Information Published by Official WeChat

Type of information	School level		
	Bachelor	Specialist	Adult college
Hotspots at home and abroad	41.5%	23.2%	0%
News facts related to the school	50.1%	45.3%	3.2%
Hot event paradox	42.4%	37.6%	3.2%
Party policy interpretation	43.9%	32.7%	1.6%
Model education	43.9%	28.3%	3.2%
Psychological counseling	37.6%	18.9%	3.3%
Traditional cultural heritage	50.1%	28.2%	1.7%
Legal education	41.7%	24.4%	1.7%
World outlook, outlook on life, values	41.6%	21.4%	3.2%

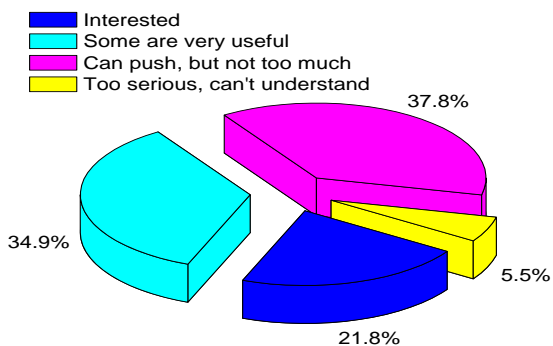


Figure 4. Attitudes to push relevant ideological and political education content.

The results of the survey on the contents of ideological and political education pushed on the public platform of WeChat of colleges and universities as shown in Figure 4 show that most students can accept it, and only 5.6% students show that they are too serious and unreadable. The results of the survey shown in Figure 5 show that more than 55% students believe that pushed content has a positive impact on the formation of their own correct values and helps them understand current politics and relevant theoretical knowledge of ideological and political education.

Deficiencies and causes of ideological and political education of college students from the perspective of ideological cognitive science

At present, the official WeChat in colleges and universities have made great progress in the attention, but among many followers, most of them are in the "zombie" state, and fewer people actually participate in the political education by the official WeChat in colleges and universities. This study surveys the official WeChat administrators and college students respectively in terms of the problems existing in the ideological and political education by the official WeChat of colleges and universities. Table 2 shows the outstanding problems the official WeChat administrators think in the ideological and political education, and Table 3 shows the shortcomings college students consider in ideological and political education by the official WeChat in colleges and universities.

Table 2
Outstanding Problems the Official WeChat Administrators Think in the Ideological and Political Education

Outstanding issues	Response		Percentage of cases
	N	Percentage	
Managers are not high enough in ideological politics	13	7.70%	21.8%
Working style is not enough	40	21.10%	60.8%
Less original content	31	17.50%	50.1%
Strong political theory	13	7.70%	22%
Lack of political theory	12	6.40%	18.7%
Student participation is not high	39	21.20%	60.9%
Not enough school investment	32	17.80%	51.7%
Other	1	0.60%	1.7%

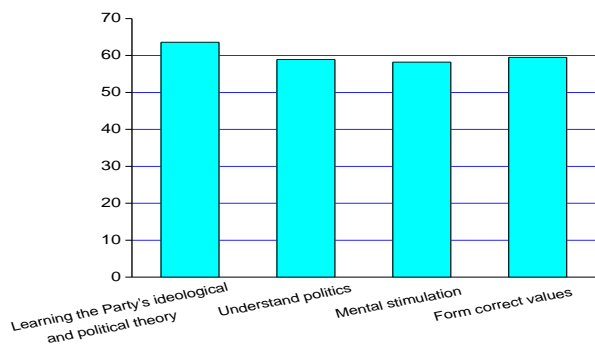


Figure 5. Impact of the official WeChat public platform on its learning.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, this study analyzes the ideological cognition of college students, and summarizes the main problems existing in the current ideological and political education by official WeChat of colleges and universities as follows:

Lack of originality and poor cognitive power. Originality is the core feature of the transmission of the ideological and political education by official WeChat of colleges and universities in micro media (Uhrmacher, 1997). From the survey results of Table 3, we can see that 46.5% college students think that the ideological and political education has less originality, and far away from the actual life of students, most focusing on the news and the main perspective.

Table 3
Shortcomings College Students Consider in Ideological and Political Education by the Official WeChat

Insufficient existence	Response		Percentage of cases
	N	Percentage	
The expression is not popular enough	871	13.92%	31.3%
Outdated, serious	1123	17.91%	40.4%
Less original content	1304	20.83%	46.5%
Strong political theory	1065	17.52%	38.4%
Not close to the actual student	607	9.73%	21.8%
Manager is not professional	853	13.67%	30.6%
Other	384	6.42%	13.9%

Old-fashioned expression and weak attraction. In understanding the information of WeChat, college student often pay more attention to the things with strong visual and auditory stimulation (Malone, Storr, Paynter, Morgan & Ilic, 2013). In observing the official WeChat of high attention, we can see that they are novel in the form of content. The result of the survey shows that 40.4% students think that official WeChat of colleges and universities is old-fashioned in form and serious in contents.

Vague interactional guidance and insufficient confusion addressing. The investigation of WeChat administrators in colleges and universities shows that at present, the interactive communication between the public platform of WeChat in colleges and universities and students is mainly based on campus activities, management, enrollment, employment, etc., and through the investigation on what aspects students hope to get as shown in Table 4, college students generally consider communication, psychological problems and ideological confusion are the main directions they need guidance and help (Steffener, Habeck, O'Shea, Razlighi, Bherer & Stern, 2016), which shows that educators at present have a low dialogue frequency to solve the problems college students meet in their growth, and fail to help them form a correct understanding.

Table 4
College Students' Guidance Needs

College students' guidance needs	Student education level		
	College students	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Confused mind	23.1%	45.4%	1.2%
Communication problem	24.9%	49.5%	1.1%
Psychological problem	22.2%	44.8%	1.0%
Legal concept	19.9%	42.3%	1.2%
Other	0.8%	2.2%	0.1%

Strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education of college students from the perspective of ideological cognitive science

Increase the intensity of sensory stimulation and push the news cover settings in an innovative manner.

The cognitive science of ideology holds that only when the external stimulus reaches a certain level can the human brain notice the stimulus (Shuell, 1987). Nowadays, in an era of information explosion, how to attract college students to pay attention to the ideological and political education information in the circulation of hundreds of millions piece of information is a problem which needs to be solved by the official WeChat of colleges and universities. The cover is the information first presented in front of the students, so we should first innovate the cover design, and increase the stimulation intensity to the sensory perception of college students, which can be carried out from three aspects, namely, creative setting of cover titles, clever setting of cover pictures, and concise content guide (Hardiman, Rinne, Gregory & Yarmolinskaya, 2012). Figure 6 is a cover screenshot of the official WeChat pushing message.

Combine the characteristics of network cognition and improve the appeal of the education mode by the official WeChat in colleges and universities. Autonomy and flexibility are the cognitive psychological characteristics of college students' attention to WeChat (Yates and Chandler, 1991), therefore, colleges and universities should adopt an open and integrated educational method (Marsh, Butler & Umanath, 2012), arouse the students' initiative, and collect educational contents and materials from them; on the other hand, colleges and universities should also take the role of gatekeepers, screening and filtering the collected materials, carrying out deep processing, and with the help of the advantages of large data, making ideological and political education more persuasive.



Figure 6. Cover image of the official WeChat push message from the university.

Conclusions

Under the background of new media, the value appeal of ideological and political education cannot be realized simply by the traditional way of ideological and political education. On the basis of relevant references

at home and abroad, this study establishes the research goal of innovative methods of ideological and political education for college students based on ideological cognitive science, with concrete conclusions as follows:

(1)On the basis of briefly expounding the basic theories of ideological cognitive science and the ideological and political education by official WeChat in colleges and universities, this study analyzes the relationship between them, and establishes the research objective of analyzing the effectiveness of the ideological and political education by official WeChat in colleges and universities from the perspective of ideological cognitive science.

(2)Taking Shanxi Province as an example, this study analyzes the effectiveness of the ideological and political education by official WeChat in colleges and universities with questionnaires from two aspects: official WeChat administrators and college students.

(3)From the perspective of ideological cognitive science, this study summarizes the problems existing in the ideological and political education by official WeChat in colleges and universities, and based on this, puts forward some strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education of college students.

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