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The Practical Challenges and Solutions for Cultivating National Security Awareness Among Students at Private Universities-from the Perspective of "holistic education encompassing all aspects, stages, and elements"

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Abstract: Cultivating national security awareness is a vital component of ideological and political education in private universities, serving as a crucial step in enhancing students' risk identification capabilities, legal consciousness, and overarching sense of civic responsibility. In an increasingly complex global environment, equipping the younger generation with robust security perspectives is paramount. An in-depth examination of current national security education practices in private universities, analyzed from the comprehensive perspective of "holistic education," reveals several persistent and systemic challenges. These primary obstacles include relatively lagging curriculum development that fails to capture contemporary threats, insufficient depth and engagement in hands-on practical activities, and notably inadequate guidance within the rapidly evolving cyberspace domain. To effectively address these multifaceted issues, private universities must strategically integrate national security education throughout all institutional aspects. This comprehensive integration should encompass modernized curriculum design, the cultivation of a security-conscious campus culture, proactive daily student management, and robust online education frameworks. By actively consolidating diverse educational resources, diversifying practical engagement platforms, and significantly strengthening digital communication channels, institutions can create a more immersive learning environment. Ultimately, this holistic approach will substantially enhance the continuity, relevance, and overall effectiveness of national security education. It will successfully foster in students a progressive development of a profound sense of responsibility, ensuring their voluntary and lifelong commitment to actively safeguarding national security throughout both their academic journeys and subsequent daily lives.

Keywords: holistic education; private universities; national security; higher education; civic responsibility

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1. Introduction

College students represent a vital segment of the youth population, carrying the aspirations for the nation's future progress and societal advancement. Their awareness of national security plays a pivotal role in shaping the effectiveness of ideological and political education within higher education institutions. The "Three-Comprehensive Education" approach provides a holistic framework for fostering national security awareness in private universities. This approach emphasizes the involvement of all stakeholders in the educational process, ensuring continuous engagement throughout every stage of student development, and integrating educational efforts across diverse contexts such as classroom instruction, campus culture, administrative management, and digital platforms. Comprehensive education necessitates active participation from all university departments and personnel to support student growth. Whole-process education ensures that guidance is consistently provided during each phase of a student's

academic and personal journey. All-dimensional education incorporates national security awareness into various aspects of university life, creating a cohesive and immersive learning environment. Cultivating national security awareness cannot be achieved through isolated courses or singular efforts; it requires coordinated collaboration among multiple stakeholders, seamless integration across different stages of education, and the application of strategies tailored to diverse contexts. This paper explores the practical challenges and implementation strategies for enhancing national security education among students at private universities, aiming to offer actionable recommendations for improving its overall effectiveness and impact.

2. The Value Orientation of National Security Awareness Cultivation for Students in Private Universities from the Perspective of "Three-Comprehensive Education"

2.1. Addressing Educational Needs Amid Changes in the National Security Landscape

The evolving landscape of national security presents significant challenges for the ideological guidance of university students. As global power dynamics shift and uncertainties in the external environment grow, security risks in areas such as ideology, online discourse, and cultural dissemination have become increasingly subtle yet impactful. These risks can influence young students' value judgments and behavioral choices in profound ways. Students at private universities, in particular, are at a critical stage of forming their worldviews, life outlooks, and core values. When confronted with complex and often contradictory information, some may demonstrate limited discernment or insufficient awareness of potential risks. Consequently, strengthening national security education is not only a reflection of the holistic national security concept but also a vital measure for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of ideological and political education within private institutions.

China is currently navigating a dual phase characterized by a "golden period of development" alongside a "phase of heightened contradictions." Domestic reforms have entered a complex stage where various risk factors are deeply intertwined, necessitating enhanced national security governance capabilities and more robust ideological education at universities. National security concerns now extend far beyond traditional domains, encompassing areas such as politics, culture, society, technology, and cyberspace [1, 2]. In this context, private universities must take proactive steps to integrate national security education into classroom instruction, daily management practices, and campus culture development. By doing so, they can guide students to understand the intrinsic connections between national security and their personal growth, societal stability, and the nation's progress [3, 4]. This approach fosters a sense of responsibility and a proactive commitment to safeguarding national security throughout their academic journey and daily lives. Such efforts are essential for equipping students with the critical thinking skills and awareness needed to navigate the complexities of the modern world while contributing positively to the nation's overall security and development.

2.2. Fostering Students' Sense of Responsibility during the Process of National Rejuvenation

National rejuvenation is not merely an abstract concept disconnected from students' daily experiences; rather, it is deeply interwoven with their value systems, behavioral standards, and sense of accountability [5–7]. In the contemporary era, national security challenges have become increasingly multifaceted, characterized by cross-sectoral complexity, rapid dissemination through diverse channels, and heightened concealment. While traditional security risks remain significant, non-traditional concerns such as cybersecurity, cultural security, economic stability, and ecological preservation have emerged as critical areas requiring attention. The rapid flow of information in the digital age has amplified the influence of various social ideologies, public opinions, and value systems on the cognitive development of college students. This is particularly relevant for students at private universities, who are at a pivotal stage of forming their values and ideological perspectives. Without a foundational understanding of national security and the ability to critically evaluate information, these students may struggle with discerning

credible sources, engaging responsibly in online communication, and participating constructively in social activities. To address this, private universities should embed national security awareness into broader youth responsibility education, emphasizing the connection between individual growth and national progress. By leveraging ideological and political theory courses, thematic educational programs, campus cultural initiatives, and practical social engagements, institutions can guide students to internalize the importance of safeguarding national security. This process should highlight how national security is reflected in everyday actions, including academic pursuits, digital interactions, adherence to legal norms, and civic responsibilities. Through consistent and practical guidance, students can develop a heightened awareness of risk prevention, legal compliance, and accountability. This transformation enables them to align their values and behaviors with the broader goals of national rejuvenation, empowering them to actively contribute to the nation's development and security.

2.3. Promoting the Coordinated Development of Ideological and Political Education in Private Universities

The cultivation of national security awareness is intricately connected to the broader framework of ideological and political education in private universities. For students, national security is not an abstract or distant concept but is reflected in tangible actions such as responsible online communication, sound value judgments, adherence to rules, and active social participation. By embedding the comprehensive perspective of national security into ideological education, students can progressively grasp the interplay between their personal growth, societal stability, and the overarching framework of national security. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of their role in safeguarding these principles. In practical terms, private universities should integrate national security themes into various aspects of campus life, including curriculum development, student management, campus culture, and experiential learning activities. For instance, theoretical discussions in ideological courses can be expanded to include real-world applications, while daily management practices can guide students toward disciplined and standardized behavior [8]. Additionally, campus culture initiatives can create an environment that emphasizes safety and collective responsibility, while hands-on activities can provide students with opportunities to engage directly with national security-related scenarios. These multifaceted strategies address the limitations of fragmented and superficial educational approaches, transforming ideological education into a collaborative and dynamic process. As a result, fostering national security awareness not only enhances students' understanding of safety principles but also enriches the content and practical relevance of ideological education, ensuring it remains impactful and aligned with contemporary societal needs.

3. The Practical Challenges in Cultivating Students' National Security Awareness at Private Universities from the Perspective of "Three-Comprehensive Education"

3.1. Course Development Lags Behind, and Educational Content Lacks Sufficient Coherence

Currently, the development of national security education curricula in some private universities remains inadequate. Relevant content is predominantly delivered through ideological and political theory courses, general foundational courses, or specialized lectures, with specialized and systematic curriculum arrangements still lacking. Due to the fragmented nature of teaching materials, students' understanding of the comprehensive concept of national security often remains superficial, lacking deep insights into specific domains such as cybersecurity, cultural security, technological security, and social security. This fragmented approach limits students' ability to develop critical thinking skills and practical strategies for addressing real-world security challenges. When confronted with complex online public opinions or real-world security issues, many students demonstrate insufficient judgment skills and weak proactive response awareness, which further highlights the need for a more integrated and practical approach to national security education. From the perspective of the "Three-Pronged

Education" initiative, fostering national security awareness should not rely solely on individual courses but must be integrated throughout students' entire learning journey. This requires a comprehensive framework that connects theoretical knowledge with practical applications, ensuring students can relate academic studies and professional competencies to national security protection. However, in practice, the connection between specialized courses and national security education in some private universities remains weak. Influenced by course objectives, teaching responsibilities, and time constraints, many instructors lack a strong commitment to incorporating national security elements into their teaching, failing to leverage disciplinary characteristics for relevant educational content development. As a result, students tend to view national security education merely as theoretical knowledge within ideological courses, struggling to recognize the interconnections between academic studies, professional competencies, and national security protection [9]. This disconnect undermines the effectiveness of national security awareness cultivation and calls for a more cohesive and interdisciplinary approach to curriculum design and implementation.

3.2. Practical Activities Prioritize Form over Substance, Resulting in Insufficient Educational Outcomes.

Practical activities play a crucial role in enhancing national security awareness by helping students integrate theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. However, in certain private universities, these initiatives often lack depth and fail to achieve meaningful educational outcomes. Activities are frequently confined to superficial observances such as National Security Education Day events, themed class discussions, or Party and Youth League gatherings, without the development of sustained and impactful educational programs. The formats of these activities are often repetitive, relying heavily on lectures, static information boards, and simple knowledge quizzes, which do little to engage students or foster active participation. Institutions tend to focus more on organizing events and ensuring thorough documentation rather than prioritizing the design of content that resonates with students or enhances their learning experiences. Furthermore, many activities lack alignment with academic disciplines, digital engagement, or everyday behaviors, leading students to perceive them as routine tasks rather than opportunities for meaningful learning. The absence of authentic scenarios or practical challenges further diminishes the ability of these initiatives to connect security measures with personal conduct. As a result, while these activities may formally meet educational requirements, they often fail to cultivate essential attributes such as risk awareness, legal consciousness, and a sense of responsibility among students. This inadequacy ultimately undermines the effectiveness of national security education programs in private universities, leaving significant room for improvement in their design and implementation.

3.3. The Impact of the Network Environment Is Complex, and Guidance for Online Education Remains Inadequate.

The internet has become an indispensable tool for college students, serving as a primary channel for daily learning and information acquisition. However, it also introduces significant challenges in cultivating national security awareness among young learners. The rapid pace of online content updates, coupled with the diverse and often unverified sources of information, creates an environment where one-sided perspectives and overly entertaining materials can proliferate widely through platform algorithms. Students at private universities, who are in a critical stage of ideological development, often lack the necessary social experience and advanced skills to critically evaluate information. This deficiency can lead to cognitive biases when they encounter complex online narratives, ultimately hindering their ability to accurately comprehend national security issues. Furthermore, cyberspace itself has emerged as a pivotal domain for national security education, yet it is frequently exploited for the dissemination of erroneous statements and misleading information. Such content can distort students' historical understanding, value judgments, and sense of national identity. Despite these

challenges, many private universities fail to leverage digital platforms effectively for educational purposes. Official websites, WeChat public accounts, and short-video platforms are predominantly used for announcements and event promotions, with national security education content updated infrequently. Additionally, the communication formats employed often fail to engage students meaningfully, resulting in limited interaction and reduced appeal. The lack of sustained and dynamic content delivery further undermines the potential of digital education to foster national security awareness. To address these shortcomings, institutions must prioritize the development of innovative and interactive online educational strategies that resonate with students, ensuring the effective cultivation of national security awareness in the digital age [10–12].

4. Implementation Paths for Cultivating Students' National Security Awareness in Private Universities from the Perspective of "Three-Comprehensive Education"

4.1. Promote the Integration of Curriculum Content to Enhance the Systematic Nature of National Security Education

In fostering national security awareness among students at private universities, curriculum development serves as a foundational component. Addressing challenges such as fragmented course structures and insufficient integration of national security education into specialized disciplines, institutions should transition from relying solely on general foundation courses and thematic lectures to embedding this education into ideological and political theory courses, professional programs, and vocational competency training. This comprehensive approach ensures that national security education permeates the entire talent development process, aligning with the principles of holistic education. Specifically, private universities can customize national security education content to align with their academic programs by integrating it into curriculum designs, syllabi, and classroom instruction [13]. Faculty members should guide students in understanding key areas such as political security, cybersecurity, cultural security, economic security, and social security within the framework of a comprehensive national security perspective. Additionally, educators should demonstrate how national security connects with future professional practices, enabling students to recognize the relationship between their professional skills and the broader goal of national security protection. This approach prevents education from being limited to superficial knowledge dissemination and fosters a deeper understanding of its practical implications. Furthermore, cultivating national security awareness requires collaboration among ideological education instructors, subject teachers, counselors, and administrative staff, embodying the principle of whole-person education. Institutions should integrate national security education into classroom teaching, student management, and daily educational activities, ensuring continuous exposure across various contexts. This strategy promotes full participation, continuous integration, and comprehensive coverage, progressively enhancing the systematicity and practical effectiveness of national security education in private universities. By embedding national security education into diverse aspects of academic and extracurricular activities, private universities can create an environment where students are consistently engaged with the subject, fostering a robust and enduring awareness of national security issues.

4.2. Diversify Practical Education Approaches to Enhance the Educational Role of Campus Safety Culture

From the perspective of "holistic education," fostering national security awareness among students in private universities should extend beyond traditional classroom instruction and be consistently implemented through campus culture, practical activities, and daily management. Institutions must fully utilize the roles of counselors, class advisors, subject teachers, and student leaders to closely monitor students' ideological development. By integrating national security education into themed class meetings, specialized lectures, club activities, volunteer services, and campus cultural initiatives, students can better understand the intricate connections between national security,

personal growth, campus stability, and social responsibility within practical contexts. Private universities can also strategically leverage key dates such as the "First Lesson of the Semester," National Security Education Day, National Safety Education Day, and International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. These occasions provide opportunities to organize case discussions, knowledge competitions, scenario-based exercises, and thematic lectures, thereby enhancing the relevance, engagement, and practical impact of safety education initiatives. For students who exhibit weaker security awareness, engage in improper online behavior, or hold misconceptions, counselors should provide targeted guidance through personalized counseling sessions, classroom surveys, and home-school communication. These measures aim to strengthen students' adherence to rules and their ability to prevent risks effectively. Furthermore, universities should establish robust feedback mechanisms to address students' genuine concerns. By utilizing class representatives, psychological support officers, and student rights departments, institutions can promptly resolve issues related to academic challenges, daily life, and digital spaces, thereby mitigating potential conflicts. Integrating national security education into daily management, cultural activities, and student services ensures that practical initiatives do not become mere formalities. Instead, this approach transforms campus safety culture from an externally imposed concept into an intrinsic commitment among students. Ultimately, this comprehensive strategy enhances the effectiveness of fostering national security awareness and contributes to the holistic development of students in private universities [14, 15].

4.3. Make Effective Use of Online Communication Platforms to Enhance the Guiding Role of National Security Education on the Internet

The cultivation of national security awareness is a crucial element of ideological and political education in private universities. In the digital era, the ways students access information, express opinions, and engage in public discussions have undergone significant transformations, making it essential to extend national security education into online spaces. Private universities should strategically utilize digital platforms, such as official websites, WeChat public accounts, video channels, short-video platforms, and online classrooms, to consistently disseminate content related to the comprehensive national security concept, cybersecurity, cultural security, data protection, and fraud prevention. This approach integrates national security education more effectively into students' daily academic and online activities. In designing content, online national security education should transcend basic policy dissemination and slogan promotion, focusing instead on targeted and engaging delivery formats. Institutions can employ innovative methods such as micro-lectures, case analyses, online Q&A sessions, themed group activities, and knowledge competitions. These methods facilitate rational discussions on real-world cases and social issues, enhancing students' ability to critically evaluate information, improve online communication skills, and strengthen their awareness of lawful internet usage. Furthermore, counselors, ideological education instructors, subject teachers, and student leaders should collaborate to develop comprehensive online educational materials, fostering a multi-stakeholder approach that ensures national security education permeates all stages of student development. Private universities must also prioritize strengthening campus cyberspace governance by enhancing mechanisms for monitoring online public opinion and issuing timely risk alerts. For instances of online rumors, erroneous views, or misleading content, institutions should promptly provide educational guidance to help students clarify behavioral boundaries, improve rule compliance, and cultivate a sense of responsibility [6]. By optimizing online education content, expanding digital dissemination channels, and refining online guidance mechanisms, the reach and effectiveness of national security awareness cultivation among students at private universities can be significantly enhanced. This positions online platforms as a pivotal educational tool within a comprehensive framework that integrates all aspects of education, ensuring students are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of the digital age responsibly and securely.

5. Conclusion

The development of national security awareness is a gradual and multifaceted process that demands sustained and deliberate efforts from private universities. These institutions play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of security consciousness by embedding national security education into various aspects of their academic and extracurricular frameworks. This integration should be tailored to align with the unique characteristics of students and the specific realities of each institution. By incorporating national security themes into value-based guidance, behavioral norms, and the cultivation of social responsibility, universities can create a comprehensive educational environment. Such an approach enables students to progressively understand the intrinsic link between national security and their personal development, campus dynamics, and broader societal progress. Furthermore, this educational strategy equips students with the critical skills needed to identify potential risks, adhere to established rules, and take proactive measures to safeguard national security. Future research could explore innovative pedagogical methods and interdisciplinary approaches to further enhance the effectiveness of national security education, ensuring that it remains relevant and impactful in an ever-evolving global landscape.

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