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The Inheritance and Innovation of Red Culture in Ideological and Political Education in Universities in the New Era

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Abstract: Red cultural resources fulfill multifaceted value functions in university ideological and political education, including political guidance, moral cultivation, cultural inheritance, and practical instruction. These resources serve as a foundational pillar for shaping the ideological framework of contemporary students. However, currently, red culture education in universities faces significant practical challenges. These include a noticeable mismatch between traditional content provision and modern students' reception preferences, as well as the insufficient integration of educational formats with daily life contexts. Furthermore, the reliance on one-way narratives often lacks interactive engagement, leading to profound difficulties in transforming historical symbolic memories into genuine spiritual internalization among the youth. To address these pressing issues, this paper takes the inheritance and innovation of red culture as its primary starting point. It provides a detailed, comprehensive analysis of the value essence and practical challenges of integrating red culture into contemporary university ideological and political education. Building upon this theoretical foundation, the study proposes systematic and actionable approaches to overcome existing barriers. These strategies include revitalizing pedagogical discourse models, seamlessly embedding educational content into daily campus scenarios, fostering dynamic dialogue spaces for active student participation, and deepening hands-on practical experiences. Ultimately, this research aims to establish a more effective, resonant red culture education model that significantly enhances the overall quality of ideological and political education, thereby successfully cultivating young people's core values in the new era.

Keywords: red culture; political education; cultural heritage; educational innovation; moral education

1. Introduction

Red culture represents a significant spiritual heritage for the Chinese people, embodying values and traditions that have shaped the nation's identity [1, 2]. Integrating red cultural resources with ideological and political education in universities is essential for reinforcing the Party's leadership in higher education and fulfilling the mission of cultivating virtue and nurturing talent. By inheriting red culture and promoting the national spirit, college students can develop a stronger sense of purpose, solidify their ideals and beliefs, and better understand their roles and responsibilities in society. This integration also enhances the effectiveness of ideological and political education, ensuring that students are equipped to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development. Higher education institutions, as pivotal centers for talent cultivation, carry the profound responsibility of preserving the red legacy while preparing new generations to meet the challenges of the modern era. However, the traditional methods of red cultural education must evolve to align with the cognitive preferences and value orientations of young people today. By innovating upon the foundation of inherited practices, universities can ensure that red culture continues to play a vital role in fostering virtue and nurturing talent, thereby addressing the dynamic needs of contemporary education and societal progress.

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2. The Contemporary Value of Integrating Red Culture into Ideological and Political Education in Universities

2.1. Strengthen Cultural Confidence and Consolidate the Spiritual Foundation for Fostering Virtue and Nurturing Talents

Red culture, a valuable spiritual asset cultivated by the Chinese nation through its revolutionary, developmental, and reform journeys, represents a profound historical legacy and embodies unique value aspirations. In the contemporary globalized environment, where diverse cultural influences frequently intersect and sometimes clash, university students encounter significant challenges in maintaining and shaping their value systems. Red culture, with its distinct national identity and enduring spiritual essence, serves as a vital source of cultural support and a steadfast spiritual anchor for young learners. By integrating red culture into the ideological and political education framework of universities, students are encouraged to deeply engage with the rich heritage of Chinese civilization, fostering a stronger sense of identification with and pride in their national cultural traditions. The ideals, moral principles, and values inherent in red culture provide a wealth of spiritual resources that align with the fundamental mission of education to foster virtue and nurture talent. Through systematic exposure to red culture, students are guided to develop comprehensive worldviews, meaningful life philosophies, and robust value systems. This process not only cultivates unwavering cultural confidence but also establishes a profound spiritual foundation, enabling students to navigate the complexities of modern society with resilience and a clear sense of purpose [3]. Such integration ultimately contributes to the holistic development of individuals and the reinforcement of national cultural identity.

2.2. Cultivate Patriotism and Foster the Value Pursuits of Youth in the New Era

Patriotism and national devotion are integral components of China's rich traditional culture, with red culture elevating these values to a significant historical and ideological level. The heroic sacrifices of revolutionary predecessors, who risked their lives for national independence and the liberation of the people, serve as profound examples of genuine patriotism. By engaging with red culture, contemporary college students can develop a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between their personal aspirations, the nation's future, and the broader goal of ethnic rejuvenation. The narratives of selfless dedication and the courage to take on responsibilities found within red culture provide invaluable lessons for young individuals, guiding them in establishing meaningful life goals and value systems. In the face of complex global dynamics and significant developmental challenges, the youth of the new era are called upon to inherit and promote the patriotic spirit embedded in red culture. This process involves aligning their personal ambitions with the overarching objectives of national development. Red culture education plays a pivotal role in encouraging students to transcend narrow self-interest, fostering a global perspective and a noble character committed to serving society. By internalizing these values, young individuals can cultivate a strong sense of social responsibility and historical mission, equipping them to become exemplary contributors to the nation's progress in the new era. This holistic approach ensures that the youth are not only prepared to address contemporary challenges but are also inspired to actively participate in shaping a prosperous and harmonious future for the country.

2.3. Inspire the Spirit of Endeavor and Guide Young People to Shoulder the Mission of Our Times

Red culture represents the enduring spirit of perseverance and unyielding determination, chronicling the Chinese nation's remarkable journey through pivotal historical phases—standing up, achieving prosperity, and ultimately attaining strength. This cultural legacy encapsulates the challenges faced during revolutionary periods, the relentless efforts in national construction, and the innovative strides made during the reform and opening-up era. These milestones exemplify the courage and wisdom of the Communist Party of China and the people in overcoming obstacles and navigating

complex challenges. At present, China is positioned at a crucial stage in its pursuit of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, confronting new risks and uncertainties that demand the active participation of the younger generation [4]. Through red culture education, students are inspired to embrace a spirit of endeavor, fostering resilience and determination to tackle difficulties and persist through setbacks. The heroic actions and contributions of veteran revolutionaries and builders serve as powerful examples, motivating young individuals to innovate and lead boldly in their respective fields [1, 5]. By internalizing these values, students are equipped to contribute meaningfully to societal progress, ensuring that the red spirit continues to thrive across generations. This educational approach not only instills a sense of responsibility but also encourages creative exploration and proactive engagement in addressing contemporary challenges.

3. The Current Practical Challenges in Inheriting Red Culture within University Ideological and Political Education

3.1. A Mismatch Exists between Content Supply and Audience Reception Preferences

As red culture becomes integrated into teaching methodologies, challenges arise in aligning its presentation formats with the cognitive habits and aesthetic preferences of post-00s college students, who are deeply influenced by the digital media ecosystem. These students, raised in the mobile internet era, exhibit a strong preference for visually engaging and highly interactive information delivery formats. In contrast, traditional revolutionary narratives often carry profound historical significance and solemn characteristics, which may not resonate as effectively with this demographic. This discrepancy does not stem from conflicting values but rather from the difficulty in adapting communication strategies to bridge the gap. To enhance the appeal and persuasiveness of red culture education, it is essential to identify and refine "cultural convergence points" that connect revolutionary history with students' daily lives. Currently, some educational components lack effective communicative bridges, which diminishes their impact [6]. Furthermore, the preference of young learners for fragmented, personalized expressions contrasts with the grand narrative frameworks often employed in red culture education. This mismatch objectively affects the effectiveness and acceptance of such educational initiatives. By adopting innovative approaches that incorporate interactive and relatable elements, educators can better align the delivery of red culture content with the preferences of modern students, ensuring its relevance and resonance in contemporary ideological and political education.

3.2. Insufficient Integration between Educational Formats and Real-Life Contexts

An analysis of the organizational models for red culture preservation initiatives highlights that a considerable portion of educational practices occurs in highly formalized settings, such as memorial visits, thematic seminars, and specialized learning programs. While these structured activities are essential for fostering respect and understanding of red culture, they often lack the ability to seamlessly integrate into the everyday lives of college students. Campus life is multifaceted, encompassing academics, social interactions, entertainment, and leisure activities, yet red culture remains largely absent from these spheres. Educational efforts are frequently confined to specific times and venues, which limits their ability to resonate with students' daily routines, personal interests, and social behaviors. This compartmentalized approach restricts the impact of red culture education to isolated moments, rather than fostering a continuous and immersive experience. To achieve deeper cultural integration, it is crucial to develop strategies that embed red culture into the fabric of students' daily lives, ensuring it becomes a natural and enduring part of their psychological and social frameworks. Such efforts would enable red culture to transcend ritualized settings and establish a meaningful presence in the broader context of campus life.

3.3. A Displacement of Participation between Unidirectional Narration and Interactive Experience

In the dissemination of red culture, the top-down authoritative interpretation model plays a pivotal role in maintaining the precision and consistency of ideological transmission. However, contemporary college students, as digital natives, often prefer to engage in autonomous meaning-making through dialogue, discussion, and even moderate questioning. This generational shift reflects their aspiration to actively participate in the learning process rather than passively absorb information. When educational frameworks fail to incorporate sufficient opportunities for two-way interaction, students may unconsciously adopt the role of "spectators" instead of "co-creators of meaning." This misalignment in roles can significantly reduce their willingness to engage deeply and diminish their emotional connection to the material. While a one-dimensional approach to value promotion ensures systematic content delivery, it may inadvertently suppress students' critical thinking skills and hinder their ability to independently identify with and internalize the essence of red culture. This limitation could ultimately compromise the achievement of profound educational objectives, as fostering genuine understanding and emotional resonance requires a balance between structured guidance and interactive participation.

3.4. Insufficient Depth of Transformation between Symbolic Memory and Mental Internalization

Through engaging in red culture learning activities, such as visiting revolutionary sites, watching thematic films, and singing classic revolutionary songs, students are able to accumulate a wealth of symbolic elements and general historical knowledge. This symbolic memory serves as a foundational layer for fostering deeper identification with values associated with red culture. However, the transition from merely knowing historical facts to understanding their underlying significance and applying them in practice remains an area requiring further refinement. For many students, their grasp of red culture remains superficial, confined to conceptual understanding without evolving into profound spiritual principles that influence their value judgments and behavioral decisions. To transform knowledge into genuine conviction, educational strategies must incorporate richer practical applications and more sophisticated guidance mechanisms [7, 8]. Current approaches often lack diversity in methods that evoke emotional resonance and deepen students' awareness of values, thereby limiting their ability to form intrinsic connections between red culture and their personal development. This gap in educational design restricts the depth and sustainability of internalizing the red spirit. Addressing these limitations through innovative pedagogical frameworks and experiential learning opportunities could significantly enhance the lasting impact of red culture on students' growth trajectories.

4. Constructing Pathways for the Inheritance and Innovation of Red Culture in Universities in the New Era

4.1. Activating the Discourse System to Bridge the Gap between Content and Reception

Universities should strategically utilize advanced research on youth subcultures to creatively reinterpret red cultural resources in ways that align with contemporary trends and preferences. This reinterpretation must avoid trivializing or overly commercializing red culture, instead focusing on reframing its presentation through narrative structures, visual aesthetics, and communication platforms that are familiar to Generation Z. The goal is to maintain the integrity of its core values while making it more relatable to modern audiences. Educators need to thoroughly understand the communication styles and aesthetic inclinations of today's college students, transforming abstract revolutionary ideals into relatable, real-life scenarios. By adopting language and expressions that resonate with younger audiences, educators can effectively convey the enduring relevance of the red spirit in contemporary contexts. Technological advancements offer numerous opportunities to enhance the accessibility and engagement of red culture. Formats such as short videos, interactive dramas, digital storytelling, and creative memes can be employed to make the content more appealing while preserving its depth and seriousness. For example, when teaching about the "Long March Spirit," traditional linear

historical narratives could be replaced with immersive and interactive experiences [9–11]. Students could participate in virtual simulations of the Long March, taking on various roles and facing challenges that mirror the difficult decisions made by revolutionary pioneers. This approach allows them to experience firsthand the strength of ideals and convictions. Additionally, interactive features such as real-time comments and voting mechanisms can encourage students to share their personal insights and reflections. This fosters a dynamic and participatory learning environment, characterized by diverse perspectives and dialogues, ultimately deepening their understanding and appreciation of red culture.

4.2. Integrating into Daily Scenarios: Bridging the Gap between Format and Life

Educational formats often struggle to integrate seamlessly into daily life contexts, creating a disconnect between learning and lived experiences. To address this, it is crucial to move beyond rigid models such as "classroom-only sessions" or "celebration-specific programs" and adopt a low-threshold, high-frequency micro-integration approach that aligns with fragmented time slots in students' routines [12, 13]. Campus spaces, including cafeterias, libraries, and dormitory corridors, can be transformed into dynamic carriers of revolutionary memories, offering diverse educational opportunities. For instance, red-themed campus exploration routes could be designed to allow students to encounter traces of revolutionary history spontaneously during their daily activities. Establishing red culture discussion corners in dormitories can foster a welcoming environment for peer learning, encouraging students to engage in meaningful conversations about historical and cultural values. Additionally, educational apps could incorporate motivational pop-up notifications that deliver concise yet inspiring red-themed stories during study breaks or homework sessions, ensuring that students remain connected to these values even in digital spaces.

Taking the integration of the "Jinggangshan Spirit into Campus Life" initiative as an example, educators could link the region's spirit of perseverance and hard struggle with students' daily practices of frugality. For instance, cafeterias could display "Clean Plate Campaign: Inheriting Frugality" exhibition boards, blending the simplicity of revolutionary predecessors with modern sustainable living practices. This approach allows students to experience the relevance of these traditions during meals, reinforcing the connection between historical values and contemporary life. Furthermore, an online-offline integrated "Red Lifestyle Network" could be established to encourage students to share their insights on red culture through social media platforms, promoting organic peer-to-peer dissemination. By embedding red culture into everyday experiences such as meals, walks, and social interactions, this comprehensive approach effectively breaks down artificial barriers between educational activities and real life. It ensures that the red spirit is inherited and promoted naturally, fostering profound educational outcomes that resonate deeply with students' daily lives.

4.3. Building a Dialogue Space to Bridge the Gap between One-Way Communication and Interaction

Higher education institutions should actively encourage a transition in teaching models from "monologue-based lectures" to "issue-driven discussions." This shift aims to create an environment of equitable dialogue, enabling students to move from passively absorbing information to actively engaging in the construction of meaning. Educators must move away from traditional authoritative teaching styles and instead introduce thought-provoking, socially relevant topics that resonate with students. For instance, themes such as "The contemporary relevance of revolutionary sacrifice spirit" and "How to inherit the red legacy among young people in the new era" can be utilized to spark curiosity and encourage students to connect historical and cultural narratives with their personal experiences. To achieve this, teaching methods may include group debates, case studies, scenario simulations, and project-based learning. These approaches allow students to deepen their understanding through intellectual exchange and collaborative exploration. For example, when teaching about the "Spirit of Resisting U.S. Aggression

and Aiding Korea," instructors could pose a controversial question such as, "Do we still need this spirit in peacetime?" Students could be divided into opposing groups to debate this issue, incorporating real-life challenges faced by contemporary youth, such as employment pressures and life decisions. This exercise would encourage them to explore how the spirit of resilience and responsibility can be understood and applied in modern contexts. Throughout this process, educators transition from being "sole disseminators of truth" to "facilitators of collective thinking," guiding discussions while respecting students' independent thought. By fostering equal dialogue, a shared value consensus can be achieved, transforming red culture education from a process of external indoctrination into one of internalized cultivation and personal growth.

4.4. Deepening Practical Understanding: Bridging the Gap between Symbols and Internalization

To address the challenge of insufficient depth in transforming symbolic memory into spiritual internalization, an incremental practical teaching model centered on "physical presence" should be established. This approach enables students to achieve a qualitative leap from external cognition to internal identification through hands-on participation. The model should incorporate progressive practical modules tailored to students' cognitive development and disciplinary characteristics. For instance, junior students can engage in activities such as visiting and documenting red heritage sites, stepping outside the classroom to trace revolutionary journeys and capture historical imprints through photography. Mid-level students may participate in volunteer services and oral history collection in red villages, experiencing the spirit of dedication through service practices and sensing the power of faith through dialogues with veteran Party members and Red Army veterans [14, 15]. Senior students and graduate students should undertake planning and implementing red cultural tourism projects, applying professional knowledge to promote red culture while deepening their understanding of values through innovative preservation approaches. Taking "Carry forward the Lei Feng spirit" as an example, instructors can organize students to conduct community volunteer services, starting with basic cleaning tasks and gradually progressing to more complex responsibilities such as caring for elderly residents and assisting disadvantaged families. This progression allows students to grasp the true essence of "serving the people" through practical problem-solving. Additionally, a service reflection mechanism should be established to guide students in comparing their experiences with Lei Feng's deeds, identifying shared spiritual resonances through such comparisons. This immersive practical experience effectively bridges the gap between theoretical learning and real life, transforming the revolutionary spirit from an abstract symbol detached from students' daily experiences into an intrinsic logical foundation guiding their behavioral choices and value judgments. Ultimately, this approach achieves a profound transformation, moving students from knowledge to action, and finally to conviction, ensuring that the revolutionary spirit becomes a deeply internalized and actionable part of their lives.

5. Conclusion

The reform of red culture education is at a pivotal crossroads, with its success intricately tied to the overarching goal of cultivating virtue and fostering talent within higher education institutions. To achieve this, educators must not only understand the evolving characteristics of the current era but also address the psychological and developmental needs of young individuals. This necessitates a dynamic approach that integrates innovation into the process of cultural inheritance, ensuring that traditional values are adapted to contemporary contexts. By establishing a multi-dimensional model for red culture education, institutions can enhance and diversify educational content, formats, and methodologies, thereby creating a more engaging and impactful learning environment. Looking ahead, the integration of red culture into digital and intelligent educational platforms promises to unlock new potentials, enabling more personalized and interactive learning experiences. Such advancements will provide robust spiritual

and moral guidance, empowering the youth to navigate the complexities of the modern era while upholding core values and contributing meaningfully to societal progress.

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