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# Research on the Contemporary Challenges and Innovative Approaches to Ideological and Political Education for Youth in the New Era

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**Abstract:** Youth represent the future of the nation and the hope of the nation. Youth ideological and political education directly influences the development of the country and the cultivation of young talents. Currently, in the context of rapid national development and significant global changes, youth ideological and political education faces multiple challenges, including the mismatch between educational models and the characteristics of young people, intensified conflicts of values and challenges from diverse ideologies, and the disconnect between educational media and discourse dissemination. This paper systematically analyses the theoretical foundations and fundamental principles of ideological and political education for youth. It explores innovative pathways through dimensions such as educational methodology, delivery platforms, and content development, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of such education.

**Keywords:** new era; youth ideological and political education; outstanding traditional culture; innovative pathways; media

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## 1. Introduction

Ideological and political education for youth constitutes a pivotal component in cultivating a new generation capable of contributing to national development. Presently, as the country enters a period of social and economic transformation, the ideological perspectives, value orientations, and behavioural patterns of the youth demographic exhibit novel characteristics, imposing fresh and heightened demands upon youth education. Theoretical perspectives emphasizing social responsibility and civic engagement provide a foundation for guiding youth development, continuously enhancing its relevance and appeal, has become a pressing and significant issue requiring resolution. This paper, grounded in the historical context of the new era, focuses on analysing the challenges currently facing ideological and political education and explores innovative pathways, aiming to provide valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of youth ideological and political education.

## 2. Theoretical Foundations of Youth Ideological and Political Education in the New Era

The growth and development of youth in the new era are grounded in a scientific theoretical foundation, forming a comprehensive theoretical framework for ideological and political education concerning youth development.

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### *2.1. Marxist Perspectives on Youth*

Marxist perspectives on youth constitute the theoretical foundation for ideological and political education.

Firstly, youth possess abundant creativity. Marx and Engels once lavished praise and affirmation upon the young generation. Marxist perspectives highlight that youth embody vitality, creativity, and passion, playing an important role in societal development and innovation. "The task of truly establishing a communist society must be undertaken by the youth."

Secondly, youth require solid knowledge. Lenin emphasised that mastery of all modern knowledge is a prerequisite for fulfilling the tasks of communist construction. Educational institutions should aim to cultivate youth with robust scholarly foundations [1].

Thirdly, youth require scientific theoretical grounding. Unleashing young people's talents cannot be separated from theoretical education. When observing and analysing the real world and overcoming challenges, youth must correctly apply the Marxist stance, viewpoint and methodology. By grasping historical laws, they strengthen their conscious action; through exploration and pioneering endeavours, they accumulate wisdom adept at struggle.

### *2.2. Theory of Ideological and Political Education*

The theory of ideological and political education reveals its intrinsic laws, providing theoretical guidance for practical youth ideological and political education.

On the one hand, ideological and political education guides young people to strengthen their theoretical conviction. It focuses on cultivating their ability to analyse issues using the Marxist stance, viewpoint, and methodology, providing scientific theoretical guidance during the critical period of forming their worldview, outlook on life, and values. This enables them to correctly analyse and resolve life's challenges. Only by deeply rooting a firm belief in Marxism within their hearts can young people in the new era effectively navigate the complex realities of an information-driven society, where diverse ideologies clash and various isms coexist in a chaotic mix.

On the other hand, ideological and political education guides young people in establishing correct value orientations. Guided by Marxist theory, it deepens education on ideals and convictions, leading young people to profoundly understand and embrace core socialist values. Through vivid case studies, it helps young people grasp value connotations and develop sound value judgement capabilities, enabling them to uphold correct value orientations amidst complex and changing social environments.

### *2.3. Theories Related to Youth Development*

Ideological and political education must accurately grasp the laws governing youth development, paying particular attention to youth discourse and psychological characteristics.

On the one hand, it must adapt to youth discourse. Traditional ideological and political education has faced challenges such as limited appeal and rigid formats. Today, it must align with societal progress and information technology trends, building upon young people's interests, habits, and communication preferences. By conveying values through language that resonates with youth, it establishes crucial platforms for their ideological and political development.

On the other hand, it must grasp the psychological characteristics of young people. While most contemporary youth exhibit positive, enterprising mindsets, some face anxiety stemming from societal pressures and diverse ideological influences, leading to issues such as wavering ideals and a lack of social responsibility. In response, ideological and political education must adeptly identify shortcomings in the educational process, leveraging the physical and psychological developmental traits of young people alongside pedagogical principles to synergise explicit and implicit educational approaches.

### 3. Fundamental Principles of Ideological and Political Education for Youth in the New Era

Ideological and political education for youth in the new era must adhere to the "two integrations": integrating theory with practice and implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talent.

#### 3.1. Upholding Cultural Identity

Integrating China's outstanding traditional culture into youth ideological and political education can guide young people to cultivate profound cultural confidence and strengthen cultural consciousness, thereby enhancing national pride.

Firstly, young people must inherit and innovate upon outstanding traditional culture. This heritage embodies profound philosophical thought, humanistic spirit, value concepts, and ethical norms [2]. It is essential to delve deeply into its intrinsic spiritual essence, integrating traditional virtues and moral principles into personal cultivation and national development.

Secondly, youth must fortify cultural confidence. As China stands at a pivotal juncture in a significant period of national development, the multifaceted influence of online information on young people's ideologies cannot be underestimated. It is imperative that we strengthen cultural confidence, continuously enhance the cohesion and guiding power of socialist ideology, and effectively prevent and mitigate ideological risks.

Finally, young people should develop aspirations for contributing to societal and cultural development. They should cultivate ethical values, appreciate the essence of traditional culture, strive to enhance the nation's cultural influence, and actively participate in initiatives that promote social progress and national development.

#### 3.2. Upholding Moral Education as the Foundation

Higher education institutions must regard fostering virtue and nurturing talent as the fundamental mission of education, striving to cultivate responsible and capable citizens with noble character and comprehensive qualities. Firstly, fostering virtue and nurturing talent represents an outstanding educational tradition of the Chinese nation. The Great Learning states unequivocally: "The way of the great university lies in illuminating virtue, in loving the people, and in attaining the highest perfection." Since ancient times, the Chinese nation has regarded fostering virtue and nurturing talent as the fundamental mission of education [3]. Secondly, young people should focus on cultivating "great virtue". Ideological and political education should actively guide young people in their daily work and life to not only cultivate personal integrity but also develop social morality through serving society, while placing greater emphasis on cultivating "great virtue".

#### 3.3. Upholding Core Values

In the new era, young people's worldviews, outlooks on life, and values are not yet fully established. With the rapid development of internet technology, various erroneous ideologies can easily disrupt young minds. Therefore, ideological and political education must play a guiding role in values. Firstly, it should guide young people to actively practise core ethical and civic values, integrating them into daily life so that they become principled, socially responsible, and exemplary individuals [4]. Secondly, provide young people with value guidance and fundamental principles at the national, societal, and individual levels, guiding them to strengthen their ideals and convictions, enhance their moral cultivation, and make sound value judgements throughout their growth and development.

#### 3.4. Upholding Collaborative Education

Ideological and political education for young people constitutes a systematic endeavour requiring broad societal participation. It is essential to harness diverse educational

resources both within and beyond the campus, fostering collaborative efforts through the shared development and utilisation of high-quality educational resources.

Firstly, provide practical platforms. By establishing collaborative education platforms both within and outside the campus, a holistic educational framework involving multiple stakeholders throughout the entire process can be formed [5]. Integrating social practice resources will offer young people diverse opportunities for practical training.

Secondly, enhance educational capabilities. Ideological and political education must actively establish effective channels for connecting with diverse educational resources, constructing a collaborative mechanism for resource sharing and complementary strengths. This involves integrating faculty from all disciplines into ideological and political education to elevate the professional standards and educational capabilities of the teaching team.

Thirdly, institutional safeguards must be established. Educational institutions should collaborate with governmental bodies, communities, enterprises and other educational stakeholders to build bridges for practical engagement, jointly fulfilling responsibilities for youth development. Governments should strengthen policy support, providing robust institutional guarantees for young people's participation in social practice.

#### **4. The Current State and Challenges of Ideological and Political Education for Youth in the New Era**

##### *4.1. Educational Models Out of Step with Youth Characteristics*

Currently, ideological and political education in some higher education institutions exhibits a disconnect between teaching methods and the ideological characteristics, cognitive habits, and practical demands of the youth demographic.

Firstly, there is a neglect of value guidance. Some teachers of ideological and political courses focus primarily on imparting knowledge and theory. Although their case studies are detailed, they lack innovation and appeal, failing to consider young people's preference for highly interactive and participatory learning methods. This makes it difficult to stimulate young students' interest and enthusiasm for learning [6].

Secondly, there is a lack of interactive exchange. Course content tends to be theory-heavy and didactic, failing to connect with students' specific learning and life experiences. Consequently, there is insufficient interaction, emotional resonance, or mutual understanding of discourse with young students.

Thirdly, deficiencies in theoretical and digital literacy. Some newly recruited young teachers lack proficiency in Marxist theory and practical social experience, resulting in inadequate student engagement and an inability to evoke emotional resonance. Concurrently, educators lack digital media communication skills suited to contemporary demands, failing to effectively meet young people's practical needs and psychological expectations.

##### *4.2. Intensifying Value Conflicts and Challenges from Diverse Ideologies*

Against the backdrop of economic globalisation and rapid information technology advancement, ideological pluralism and complexity have intensified, posing adverse influences on young people's worldviews and value orientations. Particularly concerning are trends such as extreme individualism and misinterpretation of historical events, which can mislead inexperienced youth. Ideological and political education faces significant challenges in guiding youth towards sound value orientations and fostering critical thinking. Its theoretical value and practical significance are increasingly prominent, necessitating urgent breakthroughs in theoretical exploration, cultural confidence, and value guidance.

#### *4.3. Disconnect Between Educational Media and Discourse Transmission*

In the new era, emerging media play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political discourse dissemination through their timely and efficient transmission. However, this also increases the complexity and uncertainty of media communication. As primary disseminators of discourse, educators often adopt an authoritative stance, delivering one-way theoretical indoctrination while failing to provide timely responses to students' cognitive uncertainties. This deprives young people of their voice, gradually extinguishing their desire to express self-awareness and creating an imbalance in discourse. Consequently, there is a need to reduce teachers' one-way communication, appropriately integrate digital and institutional communication platforms, and adopt methods favoured by young people to enhance the effectiveness of educational discourse.

### **5. Innovative Pathways for Youth Ideological and Political Education in the New Era**

#### *5.1. Innovation in Educational Methods: Enhancing Interactivity and Effectiveness*

Ideological and political education must prioritise the application of modern educational technologies to innovate teaching methods, conduct diverse thematic education programmes, and integrate value guidance into young people's daily learning and lives.

Firstly, establish blended online-offline teaching models. To meet young people's diverse learning needs and enhance the interactivity and effectiveness of ideological and political education, an integrated "online + offline" educational pathway should be constructed, utilising modern information technologies such as the internet, big data, and artificial intelligence to support teaching.

Secondly, teaching methodologies should be innovated. By employing big data analytics and artificial intelligence, ideological and political education can create immersive experiences through advanced technologies like VR and AR to simulate real-world scenarios. Additionally, classroom teaching should incorporate case studies, scenario-based learning, and seminar-style discussions to enhance interactivity.

Finally, organise offline teaching activities. Stimulate students' interest in traditional culture through themed speech contests, poetry recitation competitions, and calligraphy/painting contests. Conduct "walking ideological and political education classes" by utilising cultural venues such as historical archives and museums.

#### *5.2. Innovation in Educational Platforms: Establishing a Multi-Media Education Framework*

The rapid advancement of information technology has catalysed reforms in ideological and political education, with diverse new media platforms becoming pivotal channels for young people to access information.

Firstly, establish new media platforms for theoretical advocacy and education. Leverage new media platforms to strengthen interaction with young students, fully harnessing the strategic value of short videos, live streaming, and interactive platforms as primary arenas for ideological and political education. Guide students to keep abreast of developments and changes across ideological domains in the new era.

Secondly, broaden discourse dissemination channels for young students. Aligning with young students' interests, integrate digital technology with ideological and political education. Utilise digital media to broaden discourse channels and establish learning exchange platforms for young students. For instance, leverage digital media platforms to help students understand societal developments and encourage responsible civic engagement. Enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education through online resources. Concurrently, institutions must strengthen oversight of self-media platforms and promptly address young people's concerns regarding societal hot topics.

### 5.3. Innovation in Educational Content: Enhancing Timeliness and Relevance

Effective ideological and political education for young people requires a deep understanding of education's intrinsic principles, upon which innovation must be built to better align with contemporary demands and enhance educational outcomes.

Firstly, enhance social practice. Practical engagement is pivotal for strengthening educational efficacy and fostering student development. Firstly, ideological and political education must not only impart theoretical knowledge but also reinforce practical components, such as organising young students to participate in skills competitions and social practice activities to elevate their competency levels. Secondly, integrate high-quality educational resources both within and beyond the campus: establish off-campus practical bases, leveraging university science parks, educational and community service sites, and volunteer service stations to conduct regular social practice activities; enhance students' comprehensive qualities by inviting industry experts and entrepreneurs to deliver specialised lectures or workshops on campus.

Secondly, integrate outstanding traditional culture. Firstly, systematically incorporate education on China's outstanding traditional culture into curricula and teaching materials, playing a vital role in nurturing young minds and enriching their spiritual lives. For instance, deeply explore regional cultural heritage, traditional festivals, and intangible cultural heritage skills, creatively transforming the essence of traditional culture into distinctive teaching content.

Finally, advancing online learning initiatives. Comprehensively strengthening online ideological and political education for youth, leveraging digital technologies to enhance the effectiveness of online nurturing. For instance, lectures covering theoretical topics and case study analyses should be organised, featuring expert scholars and experienced educators to address youth concerns with thorough theoretical insights. Additionally, online reading groups, virtual exhibitions, and digital events should be conducted to deepen young people's understanding of core values. By deeply integrating ideological and political education with new media, comprehensive advancement of youth ideological and political education can be achieved.

## 6. Conclusion

Ideological and political education for young people in the new era constitutes a systematic undertaking, contributing to societal development and the well-being of young people, and the healthy development of the younger generation. Confronted by challenges such as diverse ideologies, discursive structures, communication media, and the online ecosystem, youth ideological and political education requires continuous exploration and practice to adapt to the demands of the times, address the concerns of young people's growth, and continually pioneer new horizons in this field.

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