

A Three-Dimensional Exploration of Promoting Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities Through Cultural Confidence

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Abstract. Cultural confidence holds significant importance for societal development and shaping a national image. Promoting ideological and political education in colleges and universities through cultural confidence is an inherent requirement to establish cultural awareness and inherit Chinese civilization. It is also a practical necessity for firming ideals and beliefs and nurturing a new generation for the times. Moreover, it is a crucial measure for advancing the high-quality development of ideological and political education in colleges and universities. There exists a profound internal logic between cultural confidence and ideological and political education, as the two share a high degree of coupling in educational content, goals, and value orientation. To promote ideological and political education through cultural confidence, efforts must be made from three dimensions: optimizing top-level design, enhancing teachers' capabilities, and expanding the educational environment.

Keywords: Cultural confidence, Ideological and political education in colleges and universities, Cultural education, Excellent traditional Chinese culture

1. Introduction

Cultural confidence generally refers to the respect, recognition, and confidence in one's own culture. It encompasses not only the affirmation of cultural values, the inheritance and development of cultural traditions but also a firm belief in one's national culture within the context of globalization. It plays a critical role in promoting social development, shaping a national image, and enhancing a country's soft power. As an essential part of talent cultivation in colleges and universities, ideological and political education carries the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and instilling moral values. Currently, "cultural education" has gradually become a mainstream concept in the cultivation of talents in colleges and universities. Thus, enhancing students' cultural literacy and solidifying their cultural confidence is a necessary implication for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and improving the effectiveness of ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

2. The Value Implications of Promoting Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities Through Cultural Confidence

Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, profound, and enduring force in the development of a nation and its people. Promoting ideological and political education in colleges and universities through cultural confidence helps deepen students' understanding of Chinese civilization, guide them to cultivate cultural awareness, strengthen their ideals and beliefs, and inspire a sense of responsibility. This approach enhances the effectiveness of ideological and political education and continuously advances its high-quality development in colleges and universities.

2.1. Cultivating Cultural Awareness: The Inherent Requirement of Inheriting Chinese Civilization

Chinese civilization, with over 5,000 years of historical accumulation, has gradually formed a unique value system and national character through practice, profoundly influencing the Chinese people and becoming the shared ideological foundation of the

Chinese nation. Today, as the world undergoes unprecedented changes, various ideological and cultural currents clash, and the struggle in the realm of ideology has become increasingly complex and intense. Culture has increasingly become a vital pillar for the strength and prosperity of a nation and its people. Therefore, it is the responsibility and obligation of every Chinese person to deeply understand the excellent traditional Chinese culture that embodies national wisdom and to carry forward the Chinese civilization that reflects the national character. Colleges and universities, as key battlegrounds of ideological work, can effectively promote ideological and political education through cultural confidence. On the one hand, this helps students consciously resist the infiltration of erroneous ideologies and strengthens their awareness of the importance of studying the excellent traditional Chinese culture, thereby consolidating their ideological development. On the other hand, it enhances students' sense of cultural identity, continuously solidifying the shared ideological foundation of the Chinese nation.

2.2. Strengthening Ideals and Beliefs: The Practical Need to Cultivate a New Generation for the Times

Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, profound, and enduring force in the development of a nation and its people. For the Chinese nation, with its vast and profound culture, there is even greater reason and confidence to strengthen this cultural pride. Promoting ideological and political education in colleges and universities through cultural confidence helps students not only appreciate the unique charm of China's excellent traditional culture but also develop a correct value orientation. Chinese traditional culture is rich in moral concepts, philosophical thinking, and interpersonal wisdom, which provides abundant theoretical content and intellectual support for ideological and political education in universities. Therefore, promoting ideological and political education through cultural confidence offers two key benefits: On the one hand, the rich intellectual resources within traditional Chinese culture can guide students in forming a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values, while enhancing their personal moral development. This approach better fulfills the fundamental task of fostering virtue and instilling moral values (立德树人). On the other hand, it helps guide students to strengthen their ideals and beliefs, nurturing a generation with ideals, skills, and a sense of responsibility—individuals who are ready to meet the challenges of their times.

2.3. A Key Measure for Advancing the High-Quality Development of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

As China enters a new phase of development, its society faces new contradictions, risks, and challenges, and the ideological and political education in colleges and universities also encounters new situations and tasks. Currently, ideological and political education is plagued by issues such as monotonous teaching methods, lackluster course content, weak faculty development, and a disconnect between theory and practice. To address these problems in the construction of ideological and political courses, there is an urgent need to inject new sources of vitality into the field. Chinese excellent traditional culture, as an important component of cultural confidence, has witnessed the rise, decline, and resurgence of the Chinese nation. It contains profound philosophical thought and national spirit, representing the wisdom and essence of Chinese civilization. This rich cultural heritage provides solid theoretical support and high-quality teaching resources for ideological and political education in colleges and universities. Promoting ideological and political education through cultural confidence offers two major advantages: On one hand, it allows the rich intellectual resources of Chinese traditional culture to expand the knowledge system of ideological and political education, addressing the lack of content related to national characteristics. This helps enhance the appeal and emotional impact of teaching, thereby increasing students' interest in learning. On the other hand, it enables ideological and political education in universities to draw from the intellectual wisdom and spiritual power embedded in traditional Chinese culture—nurturing the soul, enlightening the mind, and fostering moral integrity. This improves the effectiveness of cultivating virtue through education (立德树人) and drives the high-quality development of ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

3. The Internal Logic of Promoting Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities Through Cultural Confidence

Promoting ideological and political education in colleges and universities through cultural confidence has a profound internal logic. The two are highly coupled in terms of educational content, goals, and value orientation. Cultural confidence not only enriches ideological and political education with abundant intellectual content and injects powerful spiritual energy but also provides theoretical support for the “cultural education” approach in universities, continuously strengthening the theoretical foundation of ideological and political education.

3.1. Cultural Confidence Intersects with the Educational Content of Ideological and Political Education

Ideological and political education guides students in forming a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values through the study of basic principles, theoretical systems, modern history, moral cultivation, legal knowledge, and current affairs and policies. This education aims to help students view issues dialectically, while continually enhancing their awareness of the law and moral

cultivation. In the new era, ideological and political education in universities emphasizes achieving educational goals through culture, focusing on incorporating humanistic resources such as ethics, philosophy, national traditions, and literary achievements into the curriculum. By using real-life case studies, such as historical stories and heroic deeds, it enhances the appeal and relevance of ideological and political theory [1]. Cultural confidence aims to enrich students' cultural, national, and political perspectives through high-quality historical and cultural resources with distinct national characteristics, thereby continuously elevating students' political understanding and fostering ideological consensus [2]. These valuable cultural resources provide ample evidence and materials for ideological and political education, expanding its educational content, reinforcing its theoretical foundation, and highlighting the distinctive Chinese characteristics of ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

3.2. Cultural Confidence Aligns with the Educational Goals of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

"The essence of ideological and political education is the inculcation and enlightenment of the dominant social ideology" [3]. As a crucial vehicle for disseminating and interpreting national ideological theory, societal value consensus, and national spirit, ideological and political education in universities is characterized by its ideological nature and value orientation. On the one hand, when faced with diverse ideologies, ideological and political education reinforces mainstream ideologies and value systems, guiding students to resist the infiltration and impact of alternative ideologies, thereby safeguarding national ideological security. On the other hand, through the promotion of national and cultural ideologies, it strengthens students' sense of belonging and identity with their country and nation, aiming to enhance their ideological and moral qualities and to foster consensus on shared thoughts and values. Cultural confidence, by preserving and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, cultivates students' pride and confidence in their national culture. It inspires students to engage more actively in learning and exploring their own cultural history, helping them form correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. In the context of the global exchange and dissemination of various cultural elements—such as language, script, art, philosophical theories, value concepts, and lifestyles [4]—cultural confidence helps students maintain cultural self-identity. It thereby embodies both ideological significance and value orientation. Therefore, it is evident that in terms of educational goals, cultural confidence and ideological and political education in colleges and universities are highly aligned.

3.3. Cultural Confidence Aligns with the Value Orientation of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

First, both cultural confidence and ideological and political education are highly aligned in terms of enhancing national identity. Cultural confidence emphasizes a deep sense of recognition and pride in one's own outstanding cultural traditions and rich history. This recognition not only strengthens collective cohesion but also fosters national pride and self-confidence. Similarly, ideological and political education aims to enhance students' national identity by educating them about their country's history, culture, and social development, fostering a love for their nation and people, and encouraging a positive social attitude. Second, they are closely aligned in shaping attitudes toward life. Cultural confidence encourages individuals to draw wisdom and strength from their own culture, helping them form a positive outlook on life, which enables them to face risks and challenges more effectively. Likewise, ideological and political education, through systematic theoretical instruction and practical activities, guides students to develop a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values. It also enhances their sense of social responsibility, which in turn shapes their positive attitude toward life. Third, both cultural confidence and ideological and political education are highly aligned in promoting the harmonious development of individuals and society. Cultural confidence underscores the intrinsic value and societal role of culture, helping individuals grow through cultural identification and thereby achieve harmonious personal and societal development. Ideological and political education, on the other hand, focuses on the coordination between individual growth and societal development. It guides students to pay attention to societal needs as they pursue personal development, ultimately promoting the harmonious development of both individuals and society.

4. Practical Pathways for Promoting Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities Through Cultural Confidence

Promoting ideological and political education through cultural confidence must be grounded in classroom teaching, focusing on optimizing top-level design, creating specialized ideological and political education courses, enhancing teachers' abilities to make the subject more appealing, and expanding the scope of teaching environments to innovate new collaborative education models.

4.1. Optimizing Top-Level Design and Creating Specialized Ideological and Political Education Courses

Promoting ideological and political education through cultural confidence is a long-term, complex, and comprehensive system that requires careful top-level design and strategic planning. Schools must take into account their specific circumstances and integrate related course design, cultural and sports activities, and daily ideological and political education efforts. On one hand,

selecting the right teaching materials is crucial. The content on cultural confidence must align with the principles of ideological and educational instruction. Colleges can focus on their unique characteristics and practical teaching needs, uncovering local educational case studies. Stories of local figures, traditional culture, and exemplary values such as patriotism, hard work, and innovation can be integrated into ideological and political education [5]. This approach enriches and supplements classroom teaching, ensuring effective top-level design that organically combines Chinese culture with course knowledge, enhancing the cultural education function of teaching and improving classroom quality. On the other hand, it is essential to adapt the discourse system to resonate with students' daily lives. Colleges should interpret the core ideas of cultural confidence using language that is relevant to students' experiences and preferred communication styles. When selecting classic stories from Chinese culture and the values of key historical figures as teaching content, it is important to use formats and language that students find engaging and relatable. This helps convey the underlying philosophical and moral concepts, guiding students toward forming correct values and cultivating good moral character.

4.2. Enhancing Teacher Capabilities and Increasing the Appeal of Ideological and Political Education

The key to effective ideological and political education lies with the teachers. Ideological and political education (IPE) teachers are the main force in classroom teaching and are the primary support for promoting IPE through cultural confidence. The professional competence of IPE teachers directly affects the effectiveness of promoting cultural confidence in universities. First, teachers must continuously enhance their professional abilities. Chinese culture is rich and profound, filled with philosophical depth. Teachers need to expand their knowledge of China's excellent traditional culture through continuous study and research, exploring the underlying theoretical logic and contemporary relevance. By deepening their understanding and enhancing their teaching abilities, teachers can convey the essential philosophical ideas embedded in traditional Chinese culture in IPE classrooms. This approach helps guide students to accurately grasp the value orientation, thus achieving the goal of using culture to educate. Second, teachers should focus on optimizing their teaching design. They need to be skilled at integrating educational resources related to cultural confidence, organizing these resources based on the objectives of ideological and political education, and transforming them into timely and relevant materials for the classroom. Systematic planning and design of classroom content are crucial. Moreover, teachers should emphasize innovating teaching methods to make lessons more engaging and appealing. Students are the central participants in the classroom, and their role as learners must be respected. Teachers should understand students' interests and adapt their teaching strategies to align with the students' age and psychological characteristics. By using teaching methods that resonate with students and making lessons more interactive and enjoyable, teachers can stimulate students' interest in learning. This enhances their engagement, allowing them to appreciate the vastness and contemporary relevance of Chinese culture, ultimately fostering a stronger sense of cultural identity and confidence.

4.3. Expanding Teaching Spaces and Innovating Collaborative Education Models

The purpose of promoting ideological and political education in colleges and universities through cultural confidence is to guide students with the moral principles and national spirit contained in excellent traditional Chinese culture, strengthening their ideals, political stance, and cultural confidence. It also aims to encourage students to consciously inherit and pass on China's cultural heritage. Therefore, to improve the effectiveness of this approach, it is essential not only to strengthen the classroom as the primary channel but also to expand the range of teaching environments and adopt collaborative education models. On one hand, the "social classroom" should be fully utilized to enhance practical education. By exploring the educational resources inherent in China's traditional culture, activities such as museum visits, tours of historical sites, and trips to cultural heritage centers can provide students with firsthand exposure to the depth and richness of Chinese cultural history. These experiences help students understand and appreciate Chinese culture, grasp their role in today's society, and feel the charm of traditional culture in a practical context. On the other hand, efforts should be made to improve campus culture and leverage its educational influence. The campus environment has a subtle, long-lasting impact on students. Utilizing resources like university history museums, libraries, and student activity centers to promote Chinese traditional culture is essential. Organizing lectures, book clubs, and events centered on the inheritance of traditional culture allows excellent cultural elements to be fully integrated into campus life. This "hidden curriculum" influences students' thoughts and attitudes, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of Chinese traditional culture and fostering greater cultural confidence and identity.

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