

Study on the ideological and behavioral characteristics and influencing factors of contemporary college students

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Abstract. As the main force of society's future, the study of contemporary college students' ideological and behavioral characteristics and the factors influencing them is of great significance. This paper investigates the ideological and behavioral characteristics and the main influencing factors of contemporary college students through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The research finds that the ideological and behavioral characteristics of contemporary college students are diversified, with strong self-awareness and innovation consciousness. The main factors influencing their thoughts and behaviors are society, school, family, and personal factors. Based on these characteristics and influencing factors, this paper offers corresponding strategies and recommendations to provide reference for ideological and political education in universities.

Keywords: contemporary college students, ideological and behavioral characteristics, influencing factors, educational strategies

1. Introduction

The rapid development of society and the swift evolution of the information age have led to continuous changes in the ideological and behavioral characteristics of contemporary college students. Understanding and grasping these characteristics and influencing factors are of great significance for ideological and political education in universities. This study aims to investigate contemporary college students in order to deeply understand their ideological and behavioral characteristics and the factors influencing them, thereby providing a reference for ideological and political education in higher education institutions.

2. Ideological and behavioral characteristics of contemporary college students

In contemporary society, amidst the backdrop of the information explosion era, the ideological and behavioral characteristics of college students are gradually showing trends of diversification and individualization [1]. They are facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges, which have led to continuous changes in their lifestyles and modes of thinking.

2.1. Active thinking, strong ability to accept new things, but lack of discernment

Contemporary college students are open-minded, positive, and their value pursuits are diversified, individualized, and liberalized [2]. They are quick thinkers, adept at accepting new things, and possess a broad-mindedness. Growing up in the age of information explosion, they have a strong ability to accept new technologies, ideas, and concepts, making them an important force driving social progress. However, the vast and complex information on the internet, with a mix of accurate and false information, has led to a gathering and clash of diverse ideas. College students are still in a stage where their thoughts are maturing, and amidst the massive amount of information, there is a mixture of false, exaggerated, and misleading content. This interference makes it difficult for students to discern truth from falsehood, and they can even be misled by incorrect information. Due to a lack of sufficient life experience and judgment, some students are easily deceived by online rumors, false advertisements, and other harmful information, which can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health and growth.

2.2. Strong self-awareness and innovation ability, but lack of sense of collective identity

Contemporary college students are more inclined to pursue individuality and uniqueness, with their thinking and actions becoming more “niche,” and they place greater importance on their own feelings [3]. They are not satisfied with passively receiving knowledge but are good at actively exploring and innovating. They dare to challenge authority, do not adhere to traditional ways of thinking and behavior, and are adept at considering problems from multiple perspectives in search of unique solutions. The self-media era that contemporary college students live in has made them accustomed to an environment that seems open but is in fact closed. This prevents them from stepping outside themselves to understand the external world, and they focus more on pursuing their sense of self-worth [4]. As a result, some students are overly concerned with their personal interests and achievements, neglecting the collective interests and honor. They are unwilling to contribute to the collective or cooperate with others, focusing solely on their own benefits and future. Additionally, family education and the social environment are also important factors influencing the collective sense of honor in contemporary college students. Some parents excessively indulge their children, leading to a lack of collective awareness and a sense of honor. Moreover, some negative social trends and values can have a detrimental effect on college students’ sense of collective honor.

2.3. Over-reliance on the internet, prominent psychological issues, weak resilience

Contemporary college students are “digital natives,” having grown up alongside the development of the internet. “Always online” and “unable to function without the internet” are accurate depictions of their reality [5]. While the widespread use of the internet has brought convenience and speed to daily life, it has also caused many college students to become overly dependent on the virtual world, losing their connection to the real world. They often lack communication and interaction with others in real life, leading to estranged relationships and emotional deficiencies. Contemporary college students, who generally come from relatively good family backgrounds, have received more care from their grandparents and parents, and have experienced fewer setbacks. However, they are now faced with the severe test of employment pressure, as well as the challenge of managing complex interpersonal relationships. At the same time, being in their prime years, their emotions are rich and complicated, but they lack the experience and mature mindset to cope. As a result, some college students exhibit excessive reactions and fragile mental states when faced with setbacks and pressure.

3. Main factors influencing the ideological and behavioral characteristics of contemporary college students

There are multiple factors influencing the ideological and behavioral characteristics of contemporary college students. This paper categorizes the main factors into four aspects: social, school, family, and individual factors.

3.1. Social factors

The social environment is also one of the important factors influencing college students’ ideological and behavioral characteristics. Social values, cultural traditions, and moral concepts can all affect students’ thoughts and behaviors. In contemporary society, the rapid dissemination of information and the frequent exchange and collision of various cultures have a significant impact on the ideological and behavioral patterns of college students. At the same time, some negative social trends have a considerable influence on the thinking of contemporary college students [6].

3.2. School factors

The school is one of the key environments for students’ growth, and the educational methods and quality of education in schools also affect the ideological and behavioral characteristics of college students. Studies have shown that school education has a significant impact on students’ ideological behaviors, including their learning attitudes, thinking patterns, and interpersonal relationships. The educational philosophy, curriculum design, and teacher quality at schools all influence students’ ideological and behavioral characteristics. Traditional, preachy forms of ideological and political education are not suitable for the needs of college students’ development in the age of internet information. They are ineffective in promoting changes in students’ thoughts and behaviors, and fail to motivate students’ enthusiasm for learning [7]. Some schools focus too much on knowledge transmission and neglect the cultivation of students’ moral character and emotional development, leading to a lack of cultural literacy and a sense of social responsibility among students. Furthermore, some teachers lack good professional ethics and personal charisma, which prevents them from having a positive influence on students.

3.3. Family factors

The family is one of the most important environments for individual development and has a profound impact on college students' thoughts and behaviors. Research shows that factors such as the family environment, parenting style, and family economic conditions can all affect students' ideological and behavioral characteristics. Parents are the first and most important teachers in a child's life, and their educational approach plays a decisive role [8]. Parents' values, educational methods, and the atmosphere in the home all have a deep influence on a child's thoughts and behaviors. Some parents overly pamper their children, which leads to a lack of independence and self-management abilities, fostering a dependency mindset. On the other hand, some parents are overly strict and set excessively high expectations, which results in children lacking confidence and autonomy. These unreasonable parenting styles can all negatively affect the development of children's ideological and behavioral characteristics.

3.4. Individual factors

Individual growth experiences, personality traits, interests, and hobbies also influence the ideological and behavioral characteristics of college students. For example, some students may place more emphasis on personal interests, while others may prioritize collective interests. Some students may prefer independent thinking and self-directed learning, while others may prefer traditional educational methods and learning styles.

4. Countermeasures and suggestions

In response to the unique ideological and behavioral characteristics of contemporary college students, it is essential to delve into the underlying influencing factors. Therefore, this paper proposes a series of targeted educational countermeasures and suggestions aimed at guiding students to establish correct values and cultivate their ability for holistic development.

4.1. Strengthening value education

Contemporary college students are living in an era of information explosion, where various values and ideological concepts collide. This has led to some students experiencing confusion in their values and disarray in their thoughts. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen value education, enhance students' moral judgment, and foster their ability to make value-based decisions, while respecting and guiding their personal development. In today's diverse social context, the values of college students also show a trend of diversification. Universities should clearly recognize that counselors are the main force in students' ideological and political education. Counselors should focus on guiding students to establish correct worldviews, life views, and value systems, and help them develop healthy mental qualities and moral concepts.

4.2. Focusing on mental health education

With the increasing intensity of social competition, college students' psychological pressure is also on the rise. This not only affects their physical and mental health but also directly influences their future career development. Paying attention to students' mental health is an essential aspect we cannot overlook. When faced with multiple pressures such as academic performance and employment, students are prone to psychological issues like anxiety and depression. Therefore, universities should strengthen mental health education, provide psychological counseling and support services, and help students address psychological problems while enhancing their mental resilience and coping abilities. University counseling centers should regularly promote psychological knowledge, eliminate misunderstandings about psychological counseling, and teach students scientific methods for self-regulation. When issues arise, students should seek professional counseling support in a timely manner [9]. Counselors should also actively engage in mental health education, paying close attention to students' psychological well-being, and promptly identifying and addressing any mental health issues. At the same time, students should actively confront their psychological problems, seek help and support, and use various means to alleviate psychological stress, maintaining a healthy mindset and lifestyle.

4.3. Strengthening practical education

Contemporary college students live in a rapidly changing world, and they are no longer satisfied with merely acquiring knowledge from textbooks; instead, they place more emphasis on practical experience. For them, practice is the only standard for testing truth. It is only through personal involvement that they can truly understand the meaning and value of knowledge. Therefore, universities should align with this trend and enhance practical education to meet students' needs for practice and experience. By engaging students in various practical activities such as social practice, volunteer service, and technological innovation, universities can guide students to gain a deeper understanding of society and national conditions, while strengthening their sense of social responsibility and commitment. Furthermore, practical education helps improve students' overall quality and practical abilities, laying a solid foundation for their future development. During practical education, universities can organize various activities,

such as field studies and surveys in rural areas, businesses, and communities, allowing students to experience social realities firsthand, understand the national and public conditions, and foster a sense of social responsibility and engagement. In addition to social practice, volunteer service is another important form of practical education. By participating in various volunteer activities such as teaching assistance, environmental protection, and cultural heritage, students can apply what they have learned, demonstrating care for others and contributing to society. Moreover, technological innovation is also a key tool for practical education. Through research projects, innovation competitions, and entrepreneurial contests, students can fully utilize their creative thinking and practical skills. Encouraging students to participate in comprehensive practical projects, such as the “Internet+ College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition,” can enhance their problem-solving and analytical skills, as well as improve their overall competence [10].

4.4. Strengthening teacher ethics and conduct

Teachers play a vital role as guides for students, and their ideological behaviors and the influence of their words and actions have a profound impact on students. Universities should strengthen teacher ethics and conduct, raising teachers’ ideological awareness, moral quality, and educational standards, while creating a positive educational atmosphere and academic environment. At the same time, universities should enhance teacher evaluation and management, and take serious measures against teachers who deviate from ethical standards. Within the higher education system, counselors play an indispensable role. Counselors have multiple roles in university education: they are not only guides for students’ ideological education and life services, but also act as bridges and links between students and the institution. Therefore, universities should fully recognize the importance of counselors, providing them with a supportive working environment and development opportunities to help them better fulfill their responsibilities and make greater contributions to students’ growth and development.

4.5. Actively utilizing the role of the family

In university life, as students mature, the influence of family education gradually diminishes, yet its role cannot be overlooked. Parents should pay attention to their children’s growth process, maintain open communication with them, and understand their thoughts, dynamics, and needs. Parents should also establish correct educational views, emphasize the cultivation of a sense of family and social responsibility, and promote their children’s all-round development. Parents can actively participate in school educational activities, engage in in-depth communication and cooperation with teachers, and jointly focus on their children’s growth and development.

5. Conclusion

In contemporary society, college students, as the future pillars of the nation, have particularly significant ideological and behavioral characteristics, as well as influencing factors. To address this challenge, it requires the joint efforts of families, schools, and society, working together to promote educational reform and development. Only by doing so can we guide college students to establish correct ideological views and behavioral habits, thereby laying a solid foundation for their future development.

Firstly, the family is the first classroom for children, and family education has a profound impact on college students’ thoughts and behaviors. Parents should focus on cultivating their children’s independence, sense of responsibility, and moral concepts, guiding them to establish correct values and life views through everyday education. At the same time, parents should also establish a good communication mechanism with their children, paying attention to their growth process, and identifying and solving problems in a timely manner.

Secondly, as an important place for students’ growth, schools play a crucial role. Schools should focus on developing students’ overall quality, including academic ability, innovation capacity, and teamwork spirit. Additionally, schools need to strengthen students’ ideological education, guiding them to develop correct ideological views and behavioral habits. To better achieve this goal, schools can organize a variety of campus cultural activities, enhancing students’ participation and sense of belonging.

Furthermore, the social environment also influences the ideological and behavioral characteristics of college students. In the information age, college students are exposed to a wide range of information and cultures, some of which may contain negative content. Therefore, the government should strengthen the regulation of the online environment to prevent harmful information from negatively impacting students’ thoughts. At the same time, we should advocate for social positive energy, promoting outstanding individuals and deeds, and guiding college students to establish correct values and life views.

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